

## STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

**Class Title: Game, Fish and Parks Law Enforcement Officer**

**Class Code: 090580**

**Pay Grade: GI**

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### **A. Purpose:**

Enforces park, boating, snowmobile, conservation, and criminal statutes, and department rules to manage and protect natural resources and the users of those resources, with a strong emphasis on preventing rather than reacting to violations, to create and maintain a safe atmosphere to afford everyone the opportunity to enjoy natural resources, department programs, recreational services, and facilities.

### **B. Distinguishing Feature:**

Game, Fish and Parks Law Enforcement Officers are certified law enforcement officers who patrol assigned regions to manage and protect natural resources and ensure public safety. Conservation Officers manage wildlife, fisheries, water, and land resources; enforce wildlife, criminal, and water laws; and implement department programs in an assigned district.

### **C. Functions:**

*(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)*

1. Enforces department laws and regulations, snowmobile and boating laws, conservation laws, and criminal laws to ensure compliance, protect public resources, and promote public education and safety.
  - a. Conducts regular patrols on department-owned and managed land to monitor activities and intercept potential problems.
  - b. Enforces licensing requirements and compliance with park, conservation, snowmobile, and boating laws.
  - c. Interfaces with federal agencies to conduct law enforcement activities on federal lands.
  - d. Implements laws pertaining to preservation of cultural resources and endangered species.
  - e. Conducts investigations and resolves cases by collecting evidence, interviewing witnesses, interrogating suspects, preparing forms and reports and testifying in court.
  - f. Implements safety programs with emphasis on accident prevention through education.
  - g. Issues citations, completes reports, and files necessary reports with States Attorneys.
  - h. Arrests violators, transports to detention facilities, and relays information to appropriate authorities.
  - i. Keeps a daily log of law enforcement activities, tracks and tags evidence and ensures proper storage; follows procedures to secure a chain of evidence; maintains proper, legal documentation; and follows cases through disposition, testifying if necessary.
  - j. Coordinates law enforcement activities with area law enforcement agencies to ensure correct jurisdictional authority.
  - k. Coordinates and participates in search and rescue efforts.
  - l. Investigates accidents by securing the scene, taking testimony from witnesses, completing and distributing reports, and testifying if necessary.
  - j. Serves as first responders during medical, fire, etc. emergencies.

2. Develops and manages a training program for certified seasonal law enforcement staff, and acts as a mentor to assigned seasonal law enforcement officers to ensure they are prepared for their work.
  - a. Participates in hiring certified seasonal law enforcement officers by reviewing applications, providing recommendations to managers, and conducting background checks.
  - b. Plans and organizes training functions by preparing agendas, hiring instructors, developing schedules, and teaching.
  - c. Teaches assigned staff about defensive tactics, firearms, and law enforcement techniques.
  - d. Provides training to assigned staff about the rules and statutes they are expected to enforce.
  - e. Oversees training progress by providing a task list and signing off on tasks as they are accomplished satisfactorily; maintains an on-call status to back up staff and answer their questions.
  - f. Prepares staff work schedules and monitors hours.
  - g. Conducts a survey of certified seasonal law enforcement officers to solicit information on the effectiveness of the training program, evaluates responses, and develops and recommends changes.
3. Maintains public relations with park and trail users, landowners, lessees, concessionaires, business owners, and other agencies to ensure departmental activities are implemented and understood and to provide comprehensive customer service.
  - a. Talks with bordering landowners and business owners to keep them informed of the department's goals and objectives, and assuage their concerns; and relays information and recommendations to managers.
  - b. Works with landowners, business owners, and home owners to clear the way for department projects and access.
  - c. Attends sports shows to present department information.
  - d. Assists with hunter road checks and season openers.
  - e. Assists with organizing special events using department facilities by preparing for traffic safety, coordinating with other law enforcement agencies for assistance, and handling any other public safety issues that may arise.
4. Develops and manages park safety programs designed to ensure safety and enjoyment of those using department facilities.
  - a. Speaks at interpretive programs about safety aspects of using park lands.
  - b. Ensures that park visitors are aware of safety areas during severe weather.
  - c. Disperses information related to park safety and compliance with rules through local media including newspapers and television and radio stations.
  - d. Performs routine patrols to ensure that park users are behaving respectfully of others.
  - e. Performs safety inspections of department facilities, equipment, and natural areas.
5. Inspects shooting preserves to ensure compliance with state laws and rules that govern development and operation of private shooting preserves.
  - a. Performs initial inspections and field-level approval or denial of new applications.
  - b. Inspects operational preserves.
    - i. Conducts hunter and license checks.
    - ii. Inspects paper work and release information.
    - iii. Inspects bird-holding facilities.

- iv. Inspects cleaning, processing, and storage facilities.
  - v. Ensures proper tagging of harvested birds.
  - c. Provides guidance to operators to assist them in complying with the laws and regulations.
6. Performs a variety of administrative support functions to assist managers in monitoring operational activities.
- a. Purchases law enforcement equipment and supplies, completes requisitions and vouchers.
    - i. Writes specifications for specialized equipment.
    - ii. Maintains viability of law enforcement equipment.
    - iii. Organizes and prepares equipment for seasonal law enforcement staff.
  - b. Prepares monthly reports of enforcement activities; and distributes to division managers and other involved agencies.
  - c. Completes and reviews monthly vehicle reports, travel vouchers, and time sheets.
  - d. Reports on revenue collection and visitor statistics.
  - e. Directs the work of maintenance crews in maintaining grounds, facilities, and equipment, and assists with work.
  - f. Makes recommendations for preventive maintenance and signage projects.
  - g. Prepares seasonal schedules for region equipment such as boats and snowmobiles to ensure availability at peak times.
  - h. Provides work direction to park staff members when management is unavailable.
  - i. Serves as building security manager and key inventory custodian.
  - j. Reviews, recommends and drafts new administrative rules, policies and procedures for the department.
7. Performs other work as assigned.

**D. Reporting Relationships:**

Reports to a Regional Park Supervisor, or a District Park Supervisor. Does not supervise.

**E. Challenges:**

Challenged to identify and resolve conflicts before they accelerate. This is challenging because involved parties often have conflicting points of view, law enforcement officers are expected to provide customer service to all, and decisions must often be made quickly. Further challenged to ensure seasonal law enforcement officers have the training they need to perform law enforcement work. This is challenging because the seasonal staff are often the first direct contact with the public and it is important that they are prepared to provide customer service, the time available to train them is brief, and what they have to know is diverse; and it is up to the law enforcement officers to provide their training, know their capabilities, monitor their work, and back them up. An additional challenge is to develop a preventive law enforcement program based on evaluation of trends of the recreating public.

Problems include providing a law enforcement presence over a large geographical area, making sure case reports and other legal documentation are correct and complete enough to provide the basis for court cases which may take place well into the future, staying aware of changes in laws and determining the impact on procedures, knowing jurisdictional boundaries, maintaining a chain of evidence, and being available in off-duty hours.

**F. Decision-making Authority:**

Decisions include the most effective solutions to conflicts; patrol routines and schedules; whether to issue a warning or a citation; most effective response to an emergency situation; how to secure a crime or accident scene, tag and store evidence, and document investigation; work schedules for seasonal staff; whether seasonal officers have successfully completed training; recommendations for capital asset needs; recommendations for seasonal hires; recommendations for law enforcement program development and enhancement.

Decisions referred are final approval of new hires, budget requests, and law enforcement program changes; and approval of reassignment and relocation based on seasonal enforcement needs.

#### **G. Contact with Others:**

Daily contact with the public to enforce laws and respond to questions and complaints; with landowners and business owners to assist them in resolving issues with department procedures and the recreating public; and with seasonal employees to provide work direction and assistance; biweekly contact with other law enforcement personnel to coordinate law enforcement and public safety activities; and frequent contact with States Attorneys and the court systems to participate in the prosecutorial process.

#### **H. Working Conditions:**

Works outdoors in all weather conditions, on varied terrain, and on water and ice; resolves conflicts among those who are confrontational; apprehends and cites violators; works alone in remote areas; participates in search and rescue operations where conditions are unstable; and is exposed to trauma and stress while responding to accidents or other emergency situations.

#### **I. Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of:

- law enforcement techniques, documentation requirements, and procedures;
- federal and state laws applicable to cultural and archeological historic properties;
- department rules and regulations;
- criminal and conservation laws; boating and snowmobiling laws; forensic investigative procedures; and rules of evidence;
- various court procedures and jurisdictional differences;
- methodologies of arrest, search and seizure, and use of force;
- proper use and care of firearms;
- weapons and defensive tactics;
- principles of effective human relations and dealing with the public.

Ability to:

- assess and control situations where violations of the law have occurred and perpetrators have been apprehended;
- communicate sufficiently to decelerate and resolve conflicts in tense situations;
- interview witnesses and interrogate criminal suspects;
- meet and maintain physical fitness standards;
- use, and qualify with, a variety of weapons and defensive tactics;
- work under arduous conditions;
- remain calm in emergency situations;
- train others;

- keep records;
- communicate information clearly and concisely.

**J. Licenses and Certification:**

*(Used for announcement purposes only.)*

Successful completion of the South Dakota Law Enforcement Officers Standards Training Course and the Game, Fish and Parks Field Training Program; semi-annual qualification and training with department-issued firearms and semi-annual qualification in defensive tactics and other required law enforcement training. Valid driver license.

Incumbents may be required to secure federal credentials.