

Towns County Sheriff's Office held mandatory training for its sworn deputies. All deputies are certified in the use of less lethal weapons systems, including Oleoresin Capsicum (commonly known as pepper spray) and the ASP baton. Towns County Sheriff's Office Standard Operating Procedures as well as certification through the Georgia Police Accreditation Coalition (GPAC) require periodic training in all areas of law enforcement.

These less-lethal tools allow a law enforcement officer to use methods to control offenders who resist or become combative, which are not likely to cause great harm to the offender. They are vital tools which protect both the offender and the law enforcement officer.

As part of ongoing in-service and required training, periodic refresher courses are conducted and available to deputies both in-house at the Sheriff's Office and at various locations throughout the state. Most classes can be taught by current staff who have received extensive training in the areas of Firearms, Use of Force, and General Instruction.

Recently, deputies received 8 hours of POST credit provided in-house at the Towns County Detention Center location. Lt. Rusty Walker of the Blairsville Police Department is an OC Spray and ASP Baton Instructor. He instructed both classroom and hands-on refresher training courses in the use of OC Spray and the ASP baton.

Sheriff Chris Clinton stated that the Towns County Sheriff's Office places great emphasis on maintaining high standards of professionalism and proficiency in all aspects of law enforcement, and the training provided by staff POST Instructors and both the Georgia Public Safety Training Center and the Georgia Sheriff's Association helps meet that goal. The state of Georgia requires a minimum of 20 hours in-service training each year for all certified law enforcement officers. The Towns County Sheriff's Office endeavors to provide an additional 20 hours in-house, for a total of over 40 hours per year.

