



# DESCHUTES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Policy Title: <b>Firearms Training</b>	Effective Date: April 4, 2022	Policy Number: <b>3.14</b>
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Attachments:	 L. Shane Nelson, Sheriff	

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a firearms training program controlled by a Firearms Team responsible for conducting training, maintaining weapons, equipment, ammunition and supplies, evaluating performance, and furnishing training records to the Training Coordinators.

## II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office to maintain the highest level of firearms proficiency possible by stressing realistic training, measurable levels of qualifications, coupled with a thorough working knowledge of the weapon systems and ammunition. The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office will maintain a safe training environment while addressing the complex needs of training in the use of firearms.

## III. DEFINITIONS

*Administrative Load* means while at firearms training, the chambering of live ammunition (loading) in any weapons system at the direction and or discretion of the firearms instructional staff on scene.

*Administrative Unload* means while at firearms training, is at the direction of the on-scene firearms instructional staff and while on the firearms line, the removal of all ammunition including the magazine or clearance of the magazine tube and followed by the cycling of the action to remove the chambered round.

*Instructor(s)* are the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office personnel assigned to the training function are responsible for and have received training which at a minimum includes:

1. Lesson Plan Development
2. Performance Objective Development
3. Instructional techniques
4. Adult learning factors

5. Advanced training and experience in the arena they instruct
6. Assisting the Training Coordinators in planning and budgeting
7. Assisting the Training Coordinators with providing primary and advanced firearms training.

*Training Coordinators* are the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office commissioned sergeants and certified firearms instructors who have been designated by the Sheriff and report to the Patrol Captain. The Coordinators' responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintenance of training records
2. Firearms budget
3. Proficiency and qualifications
4. Weapon use and tracking
5. Initiating and coordinating firearms training
6. Coordinating with any firearms training facility
7. Serving as advisors to Deschutes County Sheriff's Office staff in reference to firearms needs
8. Maintaining weapon inspection, maintenance and repair records
9. Weapon inventory and service records
10. Physical security and control of the armory

*Range Safety Officer* is a deputy that is responsible to ensure safety of all personnel throughout firearms training sessions.

*Employee* for the purposes of this policy, is a commissioned deputy sheriff (corrections, patrol, reserve),

## **IV. WEAPONS**

Any firearm carried by an employee of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office shall have been approved in accordance with this and the policies listed in section V below and by the Training Coordinators. The weapon shall be recorded with the Training Coordinators, including the make, model, caliber, serial number and the name of the deputy the weapon is issued to.

## **V. WEAPONS, AMMUNITION AND CONTROL**

Refer to policy [\*\*8.20 Firearms\*\*](#) for specific weapons and ammunition requirements of this office.

Refer to policy [\*\*5.02 Use of Force, Specific Instrumentality\*\*](#) for firearms as a use of force.

## **VI. COMMAND AND CONTROL**

The Firearms Team is supervised by the Training Coordinators and consists of firearms instructors who may also be certified armorers.

## **VII. SAFETY**

Employees will exercise the utmost caution while in possession of any firearm and will provide maximum security for all firearms in their custody. Any careless, flippant, or casual use or display of a firearm will constitute grounds for discipline.

## **A. Operations**

The Firearms Team will stress firearms safety for all aspects of law enforcement work, including, but not limited to:

1. Developing, instructing, and enforcing firearms safety rules.
2. Instruction in and enforcement of safe firearms handling within the Sheriff's Office, including approved loading and unloading of each duty firearm utilized by the employee.
3. Ongoing evaluation of equipment and training to identify safety concerns and correct any deficiencies.

## **B. Firearms Range Safety Rules**

The purpose of firearms safety rules is to establish guidelines for the employee in the safe handling of firearms. The employee is expected to exercise extreme caution in all aspects of firearms use and to demonstrate a reasonable and prudent attitude toward all aspects of firearms safety. With the exception of scenario or simunitions based training, the following rules apply:

1. Treat all firearms as though they are loaded.
2. Never point a firearm at anyone or anything unless you are justified in shooting.
3. Be sure of your target and beyond before you pull the trigger.
4. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard and along the frame until you are on target and ready to shoot.
5. Upon taking control of a weapon, check the condition of the weapon for loaded status and barrel obstruction.
6. Never give a firearm to or take a firearm from anyone unless the action is open.
7. Watch the muzzle! Keep weapons holstered or pointed in a safe direction at all times. Never permit the muzzle of a firearm to touch the ground.

## **C. Training**

For employees to attain the highest degree of proficiency in their use of duty firearms, the Sheriff's Office will require that employees be well trained in the handling of weapons as well as laws governing their use.

1. No commissioned employee shall be authorized to carry a weapon in any capacity until the employee has completed the appropriate training program.
2. Every employee authorized to carry a firearm shall receive an appropriate amount of annual in-service training. The Training Coordinators will coordinate this training with the firearms instructors, including:
  - a. Range firing
  - b. Sheriff's Office firearms procedures
  - c. Review of Use of Force Policy
  - d. Firearms care and maintenance
  - e. Officer survival
  - f. Legal updates
3. Copies of the Firearms and Use of Force Policies will be issued to all personnel prior to authorization to carry a weapon.
4. The Firearms Team will assure that training addresses current needs and concerns dealing with firearms training. All training will be maintained by the Training Unit.
5. Training will be developed by the Firearms Team as needed to address specific training issues such as inspections procedures, equipment issues, use and deployment procedures, and care and maintenance instructions.

## **VIII. CURRICULUM**

The purpose of the "Firearms Training Curriculum" is to identify critical areas of firearms training. This curriculum will be evaluated annually and serve as a curriculum for firearms training and qualifications for the upcoming year.

### **A. Empirical Qualifications**

Each employee authorized to carry a firearm shall meet minimum qualifying standards on an annual basis for each weapon that they are authorized to carry using DPSST or similar targets.

### **B. Subdued Lighting Course**

Each employee authorized to carry a firearm shall fire a subdued lighting course annually, during which they will meet minimum qualifying standards with the duty weapon that they are authorized to carry in a subdued lighting environment.

### **C. Discretionary Course**

Each employee authorized to carry a firearm shall fire a discretionary course annually, during which they will demonstrate proficiency with the duty weapon that they are authorized to carry in a course which requires the employee to make shoot/don't shoot type decisions.

### **D. Exertion and Stress Course**

Each employee authorized to carry a firearm shall fire an exertion and stress course annually, during which they will demonstrate proficiency with the duty weapon that they are authorized to carry in a course which subjects the employee to physical exertion and stress by means of movement and exercise coupled with varied external stimuli.

### **E. Moving Target Course**

Each employee authorized to carry a firearm shall fire a moving target course annually, during which they will demonstrate proficiency with the duty weapon that they are authorized to carry in a course which requires the employee to fire at moving targets.

When appropriate, courses may be combined or contain elements to meet the demonstrated proficiency requirements of more than one course of fire.

Other than the mandatory yearly qualification, the Training Coordinators will determine additional training with AR-15s, back-up, and off-duty firearms.

## **IX. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Every employee shall achieve minimum proficiency qualifications in order to carry a firearm. Minimum proficiency is a condition of employment for employees who must carry a firearm in the performance of their duties.

### **A. Qualifications and Proficiency**

Minimum qualifications and demonstrations of proficiency to carry a firearm either on or off duty will be established by the Training Coordinators. Employees shall not be authorized to use or carry any firearm in an official capacity unless minimum qualifications have been met, proficiency demonstrated and results documented:

1. Qualifications and proficiency records will be recorded by the firearms instructors and provided to the Training Coordinators.
2. A record of all training, notices, excuses and make-ups will be maintained by the Training Coordinators. Appropriate documentation will be maintained by the Training Unit.

3. The "Firearms Training Curriculum" will specify the type and frequency of firearms courses and qualifications required annually for those employees authorized to carry a firearm.

#### **B. Make-up Qualifications**

Employees may, on occasion, be unable to attend firearms training. In such instances:

1. The employee shall notify their immediate supervisor of the conflict and seek approval from the division commander. The division commander, if the reason for the absence is accepted, shall notify the Training Coordinators of the employee's excused absence.
2. The Training Coordinators shall set a make-up qualification date within one month of the initial qualification date. Employees absent from the initial qualification will be required to attend this training.
3. An employee unable to attend the make-up training shall notify their immediate supervisor, of the conflict and seek approval from the division commander,. The division commander, if the reason for the absence is accepted, shall notify the Training Coordinators..

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- a. The employee shall now assume responsibility to contact the Training Coordinators and schedule a make-up training day.
- b. This make-up training day shall be completed within two months of the initial training day.
- c. Failure to complete the training will constitute a "Failure to Qualify" unless excepted under "E" of this section.

#### **C. Failure to Qualify**

The Training Coordinators will notify the captain of the employee's division of any employee failing to achieve the minimum qualifying score or demonstrate required proficiency. Any employee unable to achieve the minimum qualifying score or demonstrate required proficiency will be immediately removed from any duty status requiring the carrying of a firearm and assigned to other duties pending remedial training. Failure to achieve the minimum qualifying score for any off-duty or back-up firearm will result in the revocation of authority to carry the firearm until the employee can demonstrate proficiency.

#### **D. Remedial Training**

The additional training will be completed within 30 days. Training shall consist of a curriculum developed on a per case basis to address the observed deficiencies of the employee, and to bring the employee's skill level to meet and/or exceed the minimum office standards.

The training shall consist of, but not be limited to:

1. basic firearms handling and concepts;
2. empirical qualification;
3. stress and combat related courses; and
4. advanced firearms handling skills.

The failure to achieve or repeated failure to achieve a minimum qualifying score or demonstration of proficiency may be deemed cause for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

#### **E. Exceptions**

When employees who are authorized to carry a firearm are temporarily disabled, require rehabilitative training and are unable to participate in scheduled firearms qualifications, shall submit a memorandum to the Sheriff, via chain of command, explaining the nature of the disability and requesting a waiver to the qualification requirement until they are again physically capable of qualifying. The Training Unit will be notified of any exemptions.

## **X. FIREARMS RANGE RULES**

The Firearms Team shall develop "Range Use Rules" governing the safe use of range facilities. The rules will be reviewed periodically and updated or modified as needed to ensure that live fire training is conducted as safely as possible. The range safety rules are designed to promote safe and efficient use of the range. All range safety rules and firearms safety rules will be strictly followed during all range operations.

There will be a designated Range Safety Officer for any training involving firearms. The responsibility of the Range Safety Officer is to ensure safety of all personnel throughout the entire training session. The Range Safety Officer will oversee procedures and, when necessary, take control of or discontinue any unsafe activity. The Range Safety Officer shall have ultimate authority while acting in this capacity, regardless of rank.