

GENERAL ORDER

April 2016

Immediately

II-20

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **WEAPONS QUALIFICATIONS**

Index as:	Aerosol Subject Restraint (ASR) Annual Retraining – Weapons ASP ASR CEW Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW)	Firearms Qualifications, Training Firing Range Less-Lethal Weapons Proficiency OC Spray Qualifications Weapons Qualifications
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Accreditation Standards: 4.1.4, 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 33.1.5, CFA 4.02, 4.06, 10.04, 10.10

Cross Reference: GO I-04, Discipline Authority
GO II-06, Take-home Vehicle Program
GO II-42, Use of Force
GO II-43, Lethal and Less-Lethal Weapons
GO II-44, Conducted Electrical Weapon
GO II-45, Firearms Range
TD SOP X-16, Armorer
City of St. Petersburg, Rules and Regulations, Section 7: Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Provisions
§943.1717, FSS
CJSTC Rule 11B-27.00212
11B-00212, F.A.C

Replaces: GO II-20, Weapons Qualifications (June 10, 2021)

All employees shall be issued a copy of, and receive training on, General Order II-42, Use of Force. Prior to being permitted to carry any authorized weapon or assigned any duties which require the possession of a weapon, all agency personnel authorized to carry a weapon shall be instructed about state law and the policies of this agency regarding the use of force, the use of authorized weapons, and demonstrate proficiency.

This Order consists of the following:

- I. Purpose
- II. Policy
- III. Qualification Process
- IV. Qualification Standards
- V. Firearms Qualification
- VI. Failure to Qualify with A Department Firearm
- VII. Discipline Guidelines
- VIII. Firearms Practice
- IX. Firearms Training
- X. Less-Lethal Weapons Proficiency

I. PURPOSE

A. This Order establishes firearms practice, and firearms training policy. Additionally, this Order establishes weapons qualification procedures for sworn personnel and certified Reserve Officers who may be issued and/or authorized to possess firearms, ammunition and/or less-lethal weapons.

B. The possession and/or handling of firearms by employees of this Department are a regular part of the duties of a Police Officer and a small number of civilian employees; i.e., the armorer, forensic technicians and property clerks. Firearms are inherently dangerous devices which require extra caution to ensure they are handled safely, and access to them is strictly controlled.

II. POLICY

A. Firearms

1. Sworn Officers and certified Reserve Officers shall not carry any firearm or ammunition, either on or off duty, unless it has been issued or authorized by the Department. However, unauthorized firearms may be carried by Officers while engaged in hunting or sporting events, but those firearms shall not be concealed nor carried off duty in lieu of approved off-duty firearms.

2. Sworn Officers and certified Reserve Officers shall participate in annual Use of Force training, in accordance with CJSTC Rule and receive instruction on the Department's *Use of Force* policy, administered by a certified firearms instructor, and demonstrate proficiency with all issued and authorized firearms approved for use in the course of their duties. (See <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-42 Use of Force.pdf>.)

a. An Officer who fails to demonstrate knowledge of *Use of Force* policies and law, or proficiency with a Department-issued sidearm or shotgun shall immediately be subject to progressive discipline, per Department and City of St. Petersburg guidelines.

b. An Officer who fails to qualify with an issued sidearm are immediately removed from their line assignment and are required to take applicable leave, either vacation or personal, until such time as they can demonstrate proficiency with their authorized sidearm(s).

1) If an Officer does not wish to utilize their leave, they will be assigned to TRU, until such time they qualify with their primary weapon.

2) The Supervisor will coordinate this transfer.

c. Officers who fail to qualify with an authorized shotgun, shall not carry or utilize a shotgun until such time as they can demonstrate proficiency with the weapon.

d. Officers failing to qualify with an authorized AR-15 rifle are prohibited from carrying the weapon until qualification requirements are met.

3. It is the responsibility of all Officers and certified Reserve Officers to maintain proficiency with their issued sidearm(s), and where applicable, the authorized shotgun, and the authorized AR-15 rifle.

4. No civilian employee is authorized to carry a firearm on duty for defensive purposes. It is recognized that certain civilian employees; i.e., the armorer, forensic technicians and property clerks, may have brief possession of firearms while performing their duties.

B. Less-Lethal Weapons

1. No employee shall carry or possess any less-lethal weapon on duty, unless:

a. It has been issued or authorized by the Department,

b. They have demonstrated proficiency with the weapon, and

c. They have been issued and received instruction on the Department's *Use of Force* policy by a certified weapons instructor. (See <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-42 Use of Force.pdf>).

2. All employees who have been issued and authorized less-lethal weapons shall participate in Use of Force training and demonstrate proficiency every two years with all such weapons, with the exception of the Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW).

- 3. Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW)
 - a. A Department-issued CEW is an optional less-lethal weapon and is authorized for use by sworn personnel who have been trained and demonstrated proficiency in its use.
 - b. Annually, the Training Division will schedule all full-time Officers and certified Reserve Officers for CEW training, including a review of the Use of Force policies and proficiency testing.
- 4. Failure to demonstrate proficiency and knowledge of *Use of Force* policies and law shall result in surrender of that weapon and remedial training.

III. QUALIFICATION PROCESS

A. The Training Division's responsibility in the firearms qualification process shall include the following:

- 1. Coordinating firing range availability to include, if necessary, coordinating with the academy and/or outdoor range facilities.
- 2. Scheduling time slots for the Department.
- 3. Scheduling instructors for classroom basics.
- 4. Scheduling Range Master(s) and instructors for the range.
- 5. Maintaining equipment and supplies collection to include scoring and recording.
- 6. Preparing and distributing failure notifications.

B. At the beginning of each qualification session, a qualified firearms instructor or Armorer, will:

- 1. Ensure that only approved firearms are being used,
- 2. Inspect and approve each approved firearm prior to carry,
- 3. If a firearm is found to be unsafe, the Armorer will:
 - a. Make necessary repairs or adjustments when possible,
 - b. If repairs or adjustments cannot be made, the provide the Officer with a replacement firearm,
 - c. Remove the unsafe firearm from service until repaired and deemed safe by the Armorer.

C. Firearms qualifications will be administered by the Department Range Master(s) and the Training Sergeant.

IV. QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

A. All sworn Officers and certified Reserve Officers will qualify once each calendar year under the direction of a certified firearms instructor, in daylight, using the qualification course mandated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) with their issued sidearm(s), an authorized shotgun, the AR-15 rifle if carried, and approved weapons, as scheduled by the Training Division.

B. Additionally, all sworn Officers and Reserve Officers shall be scheduled by the Training Division to attend one mandatory training/practice session each calendar year.

C. To qualify, an Officer must attain a passing score on the FDLE course of fire while using the approved target for the sidearm(s), the shotgun and, if applicable, the rifle.

D. Pass/Fail scoring shall be based on the approved course of fire for the sidearm(s), the shotgun and the rifle.

E. Officers will be afforded a maximum of two (2) attempts to attain a passing score for each course of fire, on any one calendar day, with the sidearm, the shotgun or the rifle.

F. Officers failing to qualify with their primary issued sidearm, and where applicable, the shotgun or the AR-15 rifle shall immediately be scheduled for remedial training and another attempt to qualify by the Training Division.

G. Qualification standards and course of fire for authorized special weapons shall be developed by the respective unit Supervisors and approved by the Training Division.

V. FIREARMS QUALIFICATION

A. Sidearm Qualification

1. The Officer's primary issued sidearm and Department issued ammunition will be used for qualification.
2. During qualifications, the weapon shall be drawn from the Department-issued holster routinely used in their assignment.
3. Other Department-issued sidearms may be drawn from a holster which has been approved by the Department or held at the "ready gun" position.
4. An Officer must first qualify with their issued sidearm before they will be permitted to shoot other authorized firearms or personal weapons for qualification.
5. An Officer authorized to carry firearms, other than their primary issued sidearm, shall qualify with them during the same training cycle as their primary issued sidearm, unless they are directed otherwise by the Training Division.
6. If the Officer fails to qualify with a sidearm, they are prohibited from carrying the weapon off duty, until such time as they have successfully completed remedial training and have qualified with the weapon.

B. Shotgun Qualification

1. Shotgun qualification shall be with the standard issue or authorized personally-owned, 12-gauge pump shotgun, with ammunition provided by the Department.
2. Shotgun qualification will be conducted at the same time as sidearm qualification.
3. Officers authorized to carry a shotgun, shall qualify with that weapon after qualification with their primary issued sidearm or at any other time scheduled by the Training Division.
4. The Department will provide duty, practice, and qualification ammunition for the shotgun.

C. AR-15 Rifle Qualification

1. Only Officers who have successfully completed the Field Training Program may qualify with, and carry, an AR-15 rifle while on duty.
2. An Officer authorized to carry, or those seeking initial qualification for the AR-15 rifle, shall contact the Training Division to schedule attendance at an approved certification course and a time for qualification.
3. An Officer authorized to carry an AR-15 rifle, shall qualify with that weapon after qualification with their primary issued sidearm or at any other time scheduled by the Training Division.
4. The Department will provide duty and qualification ammunition for the AR-15 rifle. Officers must provide their own ammunition for subsequent qualification, after first attempt, and practice.

5. An Officer authorized to voluntarily carry an AR-15 rifle may discontinue their participation in the program at any time by providing notice of their decision. The Officer shall submit a memorandum, via their Chain of Command to the Training Division Commander, notifying them of their decision. Lacking a discontinuation memo, re-qualification is required.

D. Personally Owned Firearms Qualification

1. An Officer may carry a Department-approved, personally owned sidearm, both on and off duty. Approved firearms are listed in <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-43 Lethal and Less-Lethal Weapons Attachment A.pdf>.

2. An Officer wishing to carry a personal, firearm shall qualify with that weapon after qualification with their primary issued sidearm and any other Department-owned, authorized weapon(s).

3. If an employee fails to qualify with a particular personally owned firearm, they are prohibited from carrying that firearm off duty until qualification requirements are met.

4. If an employee fails to qualify with a personally-owned shotgun or AR-15 rifle, they are prohibited from carrying that firearm on duty until qualification requirements are met.

5. The Department will provide ammunition for personal off-duty weapons while they are being carried. For qualification purposes, the Officer must provide their own ammunition, or they may use issued ammunition due for replacement.

VI. FAILURE TO QUALIFY WITH A DEPARTMENT FIREARM

A. The Training Officer at the range will contact the Officer's Supervisor who will respond to the range. If the Supervisor is unavailable, a Supervisor from the Officer's Division/Section/Unit will be notified and will respond. If a Supervisor from the Officer's Division/Section/Unit is unavailable, a Supervisor from the Uniform Services Bureau will be notified and will respond.

B. The Supervisor will return with the Officer to headquarters where the Supervisor will make safe the Officer's weapon which is related to the failure to qualify. The weapon will be secured in the Equipment Room under control of Equipment Room personnel or at the range under control of range personnel.

C. An Officer who fails to qualify with an issued sidearm is immediately removed from their line assignment and is required to take applicable leave, either vacation or personal, until such time as they can demonstrate proficiency with their authorized sidearm(s).

a. If an Officer does not wish to utilize their leave, they will be assigned to TRU, until such time they qualify with their primary weapon.

b. The Officer's Supervisor will coordinate this transfer.

D. Supervisory approval is required for the Officer to retrieve the firearm for remedial training or re-qualification.

E. The Supervisor shall:

1. Immediately notify the Officer's Chain of Command of the failure to qualify, by email or phone.

2. Advise the Watch Commander of the Officer's failure to qualify.

3. Arrange transportation, if necessary. (See <J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-06 Take Home Vehicle Program.pdf>.)

F. The Training Division shall send a formal notice of the failure to qualify, together with the Officer's previous successful qualification date, to the Officer's Supervisor and to the Office of Professional Standards.

1. The Officer's Supervisor will review the failure notice and ensure progressive discipline is instituted as detailed in Department General Orders and City of St. Petersburg, Rules and Regulations, Section 7.

2. Supervisors will monitor the list of non-qualifying Officers provided by the Training Division, and ensure remedial training is provided to the named employee.

G. Medical Waiver

1. An Officer who is unable to show proficiency for medical reasons shall immediately submit documentation to the Human Resource Specialist.

2. The Officer shall be excused from qualification for the cited firearm; i.e., sidearm, shotgun or both, and the AR-15 rifle, while the medical excuse is in effect.

a. During the period of the medical excuse, the Officer shall not be authorized to carry the cited firearm.

b. If the medical excuse is for a sidearm, the Officer is prohibited from carrying any sidearm, on or off duty until the Officer has been cleared by their physician and completed proficiency training with their Department-issued primary weapon.

c. If the medical excuse is for a shotgun and/or the AR-15 rifle, if carried, duty status shall be governed as detailed in this Order.

3. Once cleared by their physician to use the cited firearm, the Officer or the Officer's immediate Supervisor shall contact the Training Division and arrange a date and time for qualification. The Officer must qualify before being authorized to carry the cited firearm.

4. Officers unable to qualify with a sidearm for medical reasons shall be governed by the Department's policy regarding limited duty.

VII. DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

A. A qualification session is defined as two (2) chances to obtain a qualifying score with the issued sidearm, the shotgun, and/or the rifle if carried, on any one day.

B. A failing score after both attempts, with any on duty firearm, is considered to be a failure to qualify.

C. An Officer, who fails to qualify with any issued, on duty firearm, will:

1. Disqualify the Officer from carrying the weapon on duty until a passing score is obtained, and

2. Be subject to progressive discipline.

D. A failing score after both attempts to qualify with any personally owned firearm will disqualify the Officer from carrying the weapon on duty until a passing score is obtained.

E. An Officer failing to qualify during the first qualification session:

1. Shall be scheduled for remedial training by the Training Division on the Officer's next duty day, and

2. Shall re-qualify a second time within the following six (6) months.

3. An Officer failing to qualify with the primary issued sidearm during subsequent qualification sessions:

a. Shall not perform the duties of a sworn Officer (see Rule 11B-27.00212 (14)(a), F.A.C.), and

b. The Officer's State Certification shall become inactive if the Officer fails to qualify by June 30 of each reporting year.

VIII. FIREARMS PRACTICE

- A. All Officers are encouraged to practice and become proficient with their firearms.
- B. Officers may obtain one box of practice ammunition and/or five (5) shotgun rounds per month for immediate use at the firing range.
- C. Additional ammunition may be made available for practice by the Training Division.
- D. The Training Division will post notice of firing range availability for practice.
- E. Practice for Officers authorized to carry special weapons will be arranged through their Supervisor and the Training Division.
- F. Officers must provide their own ammunition for practice with off-duty firearms.

IX. FIREARMS TRAINING

- A. Firearms training shall be conducted by a Department certified Firearms Instructor(s).
- B. The High Liability Officer(s) shall be responsible for the following:
 - 1. Monitoring and reviewing new training topics, methods, and firing techniques.
 - 2. Making recommendations for training modules to the Training Sergeant.
- C. Firearms training for Officers, including those authorized to carry special and/or off-duty firearms, shall be arranged through the appropriate Chain of Command including the Training Division Commander.
- D. Police Cadets
 - 1. Cadets are provided with copies of the Department's General Orders on Use of Force and Use of Weapons. They are trained and must show competency when tested.
 - 2. Cadets are assigned firearms, although they remain in the custody and control of the Training Sergeant.
 - a. The firearms will be transported to the range by the firearms instructor for training purposes.
 - b. Once training is completed, the firearms will be secured by the Training Sergeant.

X. LESS-LETHAL WEAPONS PROFICIENCY

- A. Training by a certified weapons instructor in the use of physical force and in the proper use of each authorized less-lethal weapon is required before the weapon may be carried.
 - 1. Officers must carry at least one less-lethal weapon when in uniform.
 - 2. Authorized less-lethal weapons are:
 - a. ASP, an impact weapon manufactured by Armament Systems and Procedures, Inc.
 - b. ASR, an aerosol subject restraint which is a pressurized chemical spray; i.e., OC spray.
 - c. Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW).
 - 3. Additional less-lethal weapons are authorized by the Chief of Police for use by the SWAT team, Special Events Response Team and Department grenadiers during specific threatening or high-risk situations. Training in the use of these weapons is organized and scheduled by the respective team commanders and coordinated with the Training Division.
- B. Every two (2) calendar years, the Training Division will schedule all Officers and certified Reserve Officers for less-lethal weapons training, including instruction on the *Use of Force* policies and proficiency training.

C. The Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW) will be governed by [J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-44 Conducted Electrical Weapon \(CEW\).pdf](J:\Research\GeneralOrders\II Administrative General Orders\II-44 Conducted Electrical Weapon (CEW).pdf) and is conducted annually.

D. An Officer must demonstrate proficiency with the use of agency-authorized less-lethal weapons before the weapon may be carried.

E. Successful participation in the training, as detailed in this Order, is required in order to remain authorized to carry a less-lethal weapon.

F. Annually, during the required training session, less-lethal weapons shall be inspected for proper operation by a certified weapons and/or firearms instructor, as well as to ensure that expiration dates are not exceeded.

Anthony Holloway
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