



# Florida Highway Patrol Policy Manual

<b>SUBJECT</b> FIREARMS QUALIFICATION	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b> 10.03	<b>ISSUE DATE</b> 02/01/1996
<b>APPLICABLE STANDARDS</b> LE 4.3.1, LE 4.3.3, LE 4.3.5, LE 33.1.5, TA 4.05, TA 7.4.8, TA 10.04, TA 10.10	<b>TOTAL PAGES</b> 12	<b>REVISION DATE</b> 06/16/2021

## **10.03.01 PURPOSE**

To delineate procedures for completion of firearms qualification requirements.

## **10.03.02 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Florida Highway Patrol to provide regular training in firearms safety and shooting and to require its officers to demonstrate proficiency in firearms use.

## **10.03.03 DEFINITIONS**

- A. **RANGE MASTER** – A qualified Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (CJSTC) firearms instructor with a minimum of two years of firearms instructor experience who has overall responsibility for the safe conduct of the range operations. A range master shall be a non-firing member of the range detail and may not be a Range Safety Officer, unless there are less than six members training.
- B. **RANGE SAFETY OFFICER** – A qualified CJSTC firearms instructor designated by the Range Master based upon the amount of members to train and complexity/type of training.

## **10.03.04 OBJECTIVES**

- A. To establish a firearms training program for the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP).

- B. To promote firearms safety and proficiency.
- C. To promulgate performance standards pertaining to firearms qualification.
- D. To identify qualifications demanded of firearms instructors.

**10.03.05 PROCEDURES**

**A. QUALIFICATIONS FOR FIREARMS INSTRUCTORS**

- 1. The members chosen as troop firearms instructor and assistant troop firearms instructor shall have completed the Florida CJSTC Firearms Instructor’s course. Members who were certified as firearms instructors prior to the 1986 implementation of the CJSTC Firearms Instructor’s course may continue to serve as firearms instructors.
- 2. Members who wish to serve as adjunct firearms instructors at the FHP Training Academy must be certified by the Florida CJSTC. This requires that the member possess both the CJSTC General Instructor and Firearms Instructor certification.

**B. HANDGUN MARKSMANSHIP QUALIFICATION COURSE**

- 1. The Division’s policy for earning and retaining marksmanship badges is as follows:
  - a. The initial qualification and classification will be determined in basic recruit training school using the FDLE CJSTC approved 40 round firearms course. The classification will be based on the following:

**SEMI-AUTOMATIC 40 ROUND COURSE**

CLASSIFICATION	QUALIFICATION SCORE
Unclassified	Below 32
Marksman	32-33
Sharpshooter	34-35
Expert	36-37
Master	38-39
Distinguished	40

- b. During FHP annual firearms in-service training, a score made in any one shoot can raise the classification of the shooter. However, the higher classification will not be permanent until the shooter has fired the higher score twice in consecutive qualifications.
- c. The Troop Training Coordinator in each troop will maintain a master file of classification, both temporary and permanent, and will advise the Troop Commander of all changes in qualifications so that the member will be issued the proper qualification badge.
- d. Each troop will maintain a computerized record of the firearms annual qualification scores and dates for all members of the troop.
  - (1) Each troop shall establish by computer the names of all members of the troop. The scores and dates of the annual qualification shall be maintained in the computer record for service weapons, patrol rifles, and shotguns.
  - (2) No later than July 15 of each year, a computer printout covering the current year's troop firearms report is to be sent to the FHP Training Academy. The printout shall be a complete, alphabetical listing of all full-time members, reserve members, and sworn auxiliary members, reflecting the score and date of qualification. This printout will show a blank space for the score of anyone who did not attend a qualification session.
  - (3) The Training Academy shall file the printouts by troop and shall be responsible for ensuring that these printouts are received. The Training Academy shall also be responsible for maintaining a file on those members who failed to attend a qualification session and/or qualify.
  - (4) The Training Academy shall forward a report no later than the last working day of each July to the Director identifying the name, troop, and reason the person(s) failed to attend a qualification session and/or qualify. A

copy of this report will be forwarded to the appropriate Chief to ensure that proper follow-up is conducted.

- e. During firearms qualification on the range, each course will use the hot range procedure and all weapons will be considered loaded at all times. All loading and unloading will be accomplished while keeping weapons pointed safely downrange.
- f. Shooters experiencing a malfunction with their ammunition or a weapon that does not respond to immediate action to clear or remedy the problem will keep the weapon pointed in a safe downrange direction and raise their hand to indicate the same to the range safety officer, who will then initiate appropriate action. All alibis or re-fires must be approved by the range master.
- g. Duty ammunition for the service weapons will be used unless the firearms training or qualifications session is being held at an indoor facility where frangible rounds are required to be utilized. In the event more than one qualification course is fired, practice ammunition shall be used for the second and subsequent attempts. New ammunition shall be issued at the end of the course for duty use.
- h. While participating in Division firearms qualification and/or training, all members shall utilize Division issued or equivalent eye and ear protection.
- i. For every annual firearms qualification, each FHP member shall be required to use the issued leather duty belt, firearm, holster, flashlight, and other equipment he or she may use while on normally assigned duties.
- j. All members participating in firearms and/or defensive tactics training shall wear body armor. To that end, it shall be the responsibility of every member to make certain the issued body armor is brought with them, if not already being worn.

## C. FIREARM QUALIFICATION AND TRAINING

1. Training Academy recruits and FHP Auxiliary recruits must successfully pass the firearms qualifications course established by the Florida CJSTC.
2. For full-time members, reserve members, and sworn auxiliary members, the FHP Training Academy will establish qualification courses for each type of firearm issued or authorized to be carried. The qualification course for the service handgun shall meet, at a minimum, the CJSTC mandated qualifications course for active law enforcement officers. Each course must be approved by the Director and must contain at a minimum the following:
  - a. A detailed outline of each stage of fire including:
    - (1) Distance from target(s).
    - (2) Number of rounds fired in each sequence.
    - (3) Number of sequences fired in each stage.
    - (4) Training objective for the stage of fire.
    - (5) Amount of time allowed for each sequence of fire.
    - (6) Which target(s) to be fired upon if multiple targets are present.
    - (7) Beginning and firing position.
  - b. Type of target(s) to be used.
  - c. How targets are to be scored.
  - d. Whether the scoring of the course will be by pass/fail or numerical score. If a numerical score is used, the minimum passing score will be stated.
  - e. The course of fire should be designed to accommodate the ammunition capacity of the firearm and extra magazines, if applicable.
3. Unless exigent circumstances arise, annual firearms qualifications shall be completed by December 15 of each calendar year.
  - a. A list of dates that firearms qualifications will be conducted shall be published for each period of qualifications. This list

shall include at least one make-up session for full-time, reserve, and sworn auxiliary members unable to attend the regularly scheduled dates. Qualification sessions for reserve and sworn auxiliary members may be held separate from full-time members. A qualification session is defined as firearms training that is scheduled for a specific location, date, and time. A qualification period is defined as the designated period of time when all qualification sessions, including the make-up session, are conducted. A qualification period should not exceed a five-week period.

- b. Every full-time member, reserve member, and sworn auxiliary member must attend and participate in a firearms qualification session each year to fulfill the requirements of CJSTC in 11B-27.00212, F.A.C.
- c. Following the end of the last qualification session, including published make-up sessions, the firearms instructor shall forward a list of full-time members, reserve members, and sworn auxiliary members who did not attend any qualification session to the Troop Commander.
- d. Any member who does not attend a firearms qualification session by December 15 of each calendar year shall be placed on alternate duty in accordance with DHSMV Policy 3.03. Members affected by these provisions shall not be permitted to return to full duty until they have qualified with the service handgun and qualified or demonstrated proficiency with any other weapon included in the regularly scheduled qualification session.
- e. Members on alternate duty shall not be authorized to operate a patrol vehicle or wear the FHP uniform.
- f. Reserve members and sworn auxiliary members who do not attend a firearms qualification session shall not be permitted to wear the uniform or participate in any activity that requires law enforcement authority until they have qualified with the service handgun and demonstrated proficiency with any other weapon included in the regularly scheduled qualification session.

- g. The qualification requirement set forth in “D” below shall be followed in the above listed qualification sessions.
- 4. The service handgun qualification shall include low light firearms familiarization training during night hours or under darkened, low light conditions using the approved course of fire. Low light training must occur in conditions that require the use of Division issued flashlights. The low light score will not be used as an annual qualification score and will not require remediation.
- 5. Full-time, reserve, and sworn auxiliary members shall receive firearms training on each of the firearms they are authorized to carry. The training shall include live-fire stress, tactical, and/or shoot/don't shoot courses.

#### D. PATROL RIFLE

- 1. Battle Sight Zero (BZO) Procedures for Patrol Rifle:
  - a. Members authorized to carry a patrol rifle must demonstrate the ability to achieve a Battle Sight Zero (BZO) on the 25 yard FHP BZO target with their personally owned or Division issued patrol rifle. Members will be required to complete a BZO Data Sheet during this process.
  - b. Members must demonstrate the ability to achieve a BZO during the Patrol Rifle Course or when the patrol rifle instructor deems it necessary to ensure the member's patrol rifle is zeroed in properly.
  - c. A member will be given six attempts (typically members will fire three rounds in each group for six such attempts) to BZO their rifle. If the member is not able to achieve a BZO and the cause for this inability is attributed to the member, the member will be given the opportunity to remediate or voluntarily withdraw from the class. Remedial training, per CJSTC standards for firearms remediation, will be documented and consist of proper procedures for shooting fundamentals to include:
    - (1) Sight alignment/sight picture,

- (2) Shooting positions,
  - (3) Operation of the weapon, and;
  - (4) Other areas of deficiency as identified.
- d. After remediation, the member will be given six more attempts as per the patrol rifle instructor to BZO the rifle. If they fail to BZO the rifle during this time, they should be dismissed from class and may be allowed to participate in the next Patrol Rifle Course.

## 2. Patrol Rifle Qualification

- a. Members who are issued a Division patrol rifle or authorized to carry their personally owned rifle will be required to qualify annually.
- b. The day qualification course will be shot on B21 Targets during the daylight hours on the course prescribed by the FHP Training Academy.
- c. Annually, all members issued a Division patrol rifle or authorized to carry their personally owned rifle will be required to fire the low light rifle familiarization “non-qualification” training during night hours or under darkened, low light conditions and will be shot on B21 Targets using the approved course of fire. The low light score will not be used as an annual qualification and will not be required to remediate.
- d. Scoring for day qualification and remediation for failing to achieve a passing score will be in accordance with Florida Highway Patrol Training Academy Patrol Rifle Manual procedures.

## E. FAILURE TO QUALIFY

### 1. Service Handgun

- a. Any member who fails to achieve a qualifying score during a firearms qualification session shall attend a remedial training session.



- b. The remedial training will commence the following work day or whenever the firearms range becomes available. However, remedial training will be conducted no later than 30 days after the member fails to achieve a qualifying score with his or her service handgun.
- c. The remedial training will be conducted by either a certified troop firearms instructor or a certified Training Academy firearms instructor.
- d. Remedial training is designed to provide specific training instruction to members in question and will NOT be conducted in conjunction with a regular firearms qualification session. However, nothing prevents a certified firearms instructor from conducting a remedial training session at the same time and location as a regular firearms qualification session, as long as the remedial training session is being conducted separate from the regular firearms qualification session.
- e. Remedial training will not exceed 40 hours.
- f. If the member fails to achieve a qualifying score during the remedial training session, the member will be relieved of his or her firearms, transported to his or her home, and the Troop Commander will be notified.
- g. The member will be placed on alternate duty in accordance with DHSMV Policy 3.03 and ultimately removed, permanently, from law enforcement classification for inability to perform job duties. The remedial training curriculum will be established by the FHP Training Academy and approved by the Director.
- h. All firearms instructors will be familiar with the remedial training curriculum and must strictly adhere to said protocol.

**(NOTE: Upon a member's failure to achieve a qualifying score during his or her firearms qualification session, the member will NOT resume official law enforcement duties until he or she has successfully qualified with the service handgun. For the purpose of this policy, remedial training is not to be considered official law enforcement duties.)**

- i. Reserve and sworn auxiliary members who fail to achieve a qualifying score during a firearms qualification session shall also attend a remedial training session, as outlined above.
- j. If the reserve or sworn auxiliary member fails to achieve a qualifying score during the remedial training session, he or she will be permanently removed from law enforcement classification for inability to perform job duties. All aspects of the procedures outlined in this paragraph will be documented.

2. Other Issued Firearms and Less Lethal Weapons

Full-time, reserve, and sworn auxiliary members issued a secondary, covert, or supplemental firearm or a less lethal weapon must demonstrate proficiency with that firearm/weapon annually.

- a. Any full-time, reserve, or sworn auxiliary member who fails to demonstrate proficiency shall be immediately relieved of the firearm/weapon.
- b. If the firearm is required for a special assignment, such as SRT, the member will be immediately removed from the special assignment.
- c. The Troop Commander will decide whether to provide remedial training and allow the member another opportunity to qualify. In no case will the member be reissued or permitted to carry the firearm/weapon until they have demonstrated proficiency with the firearm/weapon.

E. FIREARMS SAFETY RULES

Firearms safety rules shall be strictly adhered to during firearms qualifications/training. Each member shall remember that safety comes first during training. The following rules, as well as those that may be adopted by each troop, shall be followed.

1. Treat all firearms as though they are loaded.
2. Never point a firearm at anyone unless you are justified in using the firearm.

3. Carelessness and/or horseplay will not be tolerated during firearms training.
4. Notify the instructor before class if you are taking any medication that may affect your ability to operate a weapon safely.
5. Members shall comply with HSMV Policy 3.07 Maintaining a Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace.
6. Smoking or the use of smokeless tobacco products and food is prohibited while on the firearms range.
7. Never give a firearm to or receive a firearm from anyone unless the cylinder or action is open.
8. Immediately upon picking up a firearm, open the cylinder or chamber and check to see if it is loaded.
9. Safety glasses and hearing protection must be worn on or near the firing line.
10. FHP members, including all firearms instructors, must wear issued body armor on the firing range at all times. No exceptions!
11. No talking on the firing line.
12. Before shooting, be sure of your target, backstop, and beyond.
13. Pay strict attention to the range safety officer. He/she will instruct you as to exactly what you are to do.
14. Never anticipate a command.
15. Never draw the firearm from or return it to the holster with your finger on the trigger.
16. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, where an unintentional discharge will not cause harm. This includes when releasing the slide to clean the weapon.
17. If a weapon fails to fire and after attempts to clear the weapon are unsuccessful, keep it pointed in a safe direction and notify the range safety officer by raising your non-shooting hand.
18. Never leave a loaded weapon unattended.

19. Never go in front of the line of fire until the firing line has been cleared and the command is given to go forward.
20. Never leave the line until the line officer has inspected your firearm and a command has been given.
21. Never pick up dropped ammunition or reloading devices unless the command is given.
22. Never dry fire on the range, except under the supervision of a firearms instructor.
23. At the conclusion of any firearms training, each participant shall ensure that his/her firearm(s) are loaded and ready for deployment before returning to duty or driving a patrol car.
24. All cell phones, pagers, smartphones, or any other wireless/voice data communication device carried on the gun belt must be turned off during firearms training. Trainers are exempt from this prohibition in the event communication with emergency personnel is required.
25. Always keep firearms out of the reach of children and unattended adults.
26. Exercise extreme care in storing a firearm as defined in Ch. 790, F.S.
27. Only certified Division or troop armorers shall make repairs, adjustments, and modifications to Division issued firearms.
28. Unless approved by a firearms instructor, all weapons shall be cleaned at the conclusion of each firearms training.