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**Policy Number:** 301.105  
**Title:** Weapons Qualification  
**Effective Date:** 3/2/22

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**PURPOSE:** To ensure safe and consistent training standards for all department facility staff authorized to use lethal and less-lethal weapons.

**APPLICABILITY:** All Minnesota correctional facilities authorized to use lethal and less-lethal weapons

**DEFINITION:**

Firearms qualification lesson plan – standardized department-wide weapons qualification plan to be used by all department firearms instructors when delivering instruction for initial and recertification in weapon use.

**PROCEDURES:**

- A. All staff authorized to use lethal and less-lethal weapons must receive appropriate weapons training and must demonstrate proficiency prior to being assigned to a post that involves the possible use of a weapon.
1. Training must include any/all online training requirements and must cover the use, safety, care, and constraints involved in the use of weapons.
  2. All authorized personnel must qualify/requalify on at least a semi-annual basis.
  3. The training program includes an initial sixteen hours of weapons training, including a qualification course for all corrections officers assigned at facilities that deploy the less-lethal shotgun.
  4. The training program includes an additional eight hours of weapons training for all staff who work at facilities that deploy the AR-15 rifle and the 40mm launcher at tower posts.
- B. Qualification required
1. Re-qualification must be conducted semi-annually for staff assigned to the following posts at each facility:
    - a) Any correctional officer assigned to a security post where weapons use is authorized;
    - b) Perimeter patrol;
    - c) Special Operations Response Teams (SORTs) and the Special Operations Group (SOG);
    - d) All facility master control posts, which have weapons stored within them and/or a physical layout where an armory is accessible from the master control post;
    - e) All tower posts; and
    - f) Captains and/or lieutenants who are assigned leadership roles of SORTs or the SOG;

2. Facilities may write an operating guideline or procedure that designates other facility staff who also must qualify semi-annually, per the facility needs. This must be approved by the deputy commissioner of facility safety and security.
- C. Corrections officers must demonstrate aptitude, proficiency, safety awareness, and compliance with all policies and directives pertaining to the use of weapons, less-lethal force, and deadly force. All training must be documented in, and training records are retained in, the agency-approved electronic training management system.
- D. The firearm qualification lesson plan, at a minimum, includes:
1. Policy and directives pertaining to the use of weapons and response to resistance;
  2. De-escalation and situational awareness;
  3. Safety when handling and using weapons;
  4. Procedures for proper handling of weapons, including loading and unloading;
  5. Deployment tactics and techniques;
  6. Judgement shooting;
  7. Student Performance Checklist to verify proficiency in the training components; and
  8. Written exam to verify knowledge and proficiency in the training components.
- E. Instructor/student ratios
1. There must be a minimum of two qualified instructors regardless of class size and location. The optimal ratio is one instructor to six students. Additional instructors and/or safety officers may be assigned as necessary.
  2. The instructor-to-student ratio must be one-to-one while the student is on the firing line.
- F. The instructors must follow the prescribed course of fire for qualification, including the use of standardized ammunition and targets.
1. Less-lethal shotgun: Birdshot or 00 Buckshot/Ten rounds. Target: Color-coded full body.
  2. AR-15 rifle: .223 ammunition/Twenty rounds. Target: Standard numbered silhouette.
  3. 40mm Spede Heat™:75/150-yard round/One round. Target: To be determined at the range.
- G. In order to ensure consistency throughout the facilities division, the following guidelines must apply.
1. Firearm training activity length

	Minimum classroom training	Range time
Initial qualification (less-lethal shotgun)	8 hours	8 hours
Initial qualification (AR-15) and (40mm)	8 hours (same classroom as above)	8 hours

Requalification (less-lethal shotgun)	2 hours	2 hours
Requalification (AR-15) and (40mm)	2 hours	2 hours

2. Weapons qualification/requalification  
The weapons qualification/requalification training program consists of:
  - a) Formal classroom training;
  - b) Range training; and
  - c) Firing for qualification.
  
3. Scoring  
The required minimum score for qualification/requalification is:
  - a) Handgun (SOG and marksman/observer (MO) only): 80 percent;
  - b) Less-lethal shotgun: 80 percent;
  - c) AR-15 rifle: 80 percent; and
  - d) 40mm launcher: 80 percent.
  
4. Classroom training must include:
  - a) Weapons and safety;
  - b) Department policy;
  - c) Documentation and incident reports;
  - d) Response to resistance; and
  - e) Ballistic wound management and and trauma kits.
  
5. Any staff person who fails to qualify/requalify during their scheduled range time may request up to two additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.
  - a) These new range times must be scheduled within 30 days of the employee's last range time.
  - b) If the employee fails to qualify after the two additional times, the range instructor must notify the appointing authority immediately so that the employee is not assigned to a security post in which weapons are required for the facility security operation.
  
6. The appointing authority must review job placement/shift assignment with the employee and supervisor, if the employee did not meet the department/facility weapon qualifications.

**INTERNAL CONTROLS:**

- A. All training records are retained electronically in the agency-approved electronic training management system.

**ACA STANDARDS:** 4-4090, 4-4091, 4-4092, 1-ABC-1D-15, 1-ABC-1D-16

**REFERENCES:**

- [Policy 301.100, "Weapons Control"](#)
- [Policy 107.010, "Weapons – Office of Special Investigations"](#)
- [Policy 301.081, "Response to Resistance, Restraint Systems, and Escape"](#)
- [Policy 103.420, "Pre-Service and Orientation Training"](#)
- [Policy 103.410, "In-Service Training"](#)
- [Policy 301.106, "Range Operations"](#)

[Policy 301.155, "Emergency Response Team \(ERT\)/Special Operations Response Team \(SORT\)/Communications Unit Leader \(COML\)"](#)

**SUPERSESSSION:** Policy 301.105, "Facility Firearms Qualification," 12/4/18.  
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None

**APPROVALS:**

Deputy Commissioner, Reintegration and Restorative Services

Deputy Commissioner, Facility Safety and Security

Assistant Commissioner, Organizational and Regulatory Services

Assistant Commissioner, Chief of Staff

Assistant Commissioner, Health, Recovery, and Programming