DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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

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)”

SUPERSESSION: 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