



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL		
CHAPTER 232	WEAPONS STANDARDS & TYPES	
	Effective: 11/06/2023	Commissioner Approval: 
	Authorities:	
	Applicability: OFFICERS	
	Special Instructions: See OPM Chapters 107, 217, & FPM	

232.100 INTRODUCTION

This policy establishes the standards assigned to weapons authorized by the department. Standards include qualifications, training, and maintenance.

232.300 FIREARM PROFICIENCY

A. *Officers must be trained with authorized weapons.* No officer is authorized to carry a weapon for which they have not been properly trained. The instruction must be provided by DPS Instructors and be DPS approved.

1. All officers must complete the DPS Shotgun Course prior to being authorized to carry any shotgun in the course of their duties.
2. All officers must complete the DPS Patrol Rifle course prior to being authorized to carry any patrol rifle in the course of their duties.
3. SERT: Instructions and instructional materials related to weapons systems not already covered in this section may be unique to SERT specialized weapon systems. Any firearms instruction provided to SERT officers must be Alaska Police Standards Council certified and the training must be properly documented in compliance with applicable OPM chapters.

B. *Qualification required.* All officers must remain proficient and qualify with each weapon they are authorized to carry, as specified in the [Firearms Procedure Manual](#).

C. *Supervised qualifications.* Officers must qualify under supervision with each weapon at least once each year. Other required qualifications may be unsupervised. During supervised qualifications the firearm instructor may deny qualification, irrespective of score achieved, to any officer who fails to abide by safety regulations or who in the instructor's judgment cannot demonstrate adequate gun handling skills. Malfunction clearance drills will be performed during all supervised qualifications **for each weapon they are authorized to carry, as specified in the firearms procedure manual.**

Since SERT qualifications are more difficult and to a higher standard than standard DPS qualifications, supervised SERT Qualifications can serve as the officer's annual qualifications for all weapons. The SERT qualifications will be clearly delineated on the [Firearms Qualification Record](#) and in the ACADIS Training Data entry.

D. *Failure to qualify during supervised qualifications.*

1. During supervised qualifications, officers will be allowed no more than two attempts in one day to successfully complete a qualification for each weapon system. The Firearm Instructor has full discretion in determining how much time must pass between each attempt to qualify on any given day.
2. Failure to qualify within two attempts with a personal weapon, whether carried on duty or off duty, will result in the officer no longer being authorized to carry that weapon. The scores related to the failures to qualify will be recorded in the ACADIS Training Record System. Any previously received authorization for the carrying of the weapon will be considered revoked.
3. Failure to successfully qualify with any issued weapon will result in the following course of action:
 - a. First failure to qualify.
 - i. Following the first failure with a department-issued weapon; the officer's unsatisfactory scores will be recorded for entry into the ACADIS Training Record System. The Firearm Instructor will notify the Detachment/Bureau Commander in writing (either memo or E-mail) of the officer's failure. The Firearm Instructor will also outline a training course of action for the officer.
 - ii. The officer will be required to qualify during a supervised qualification within thirty days, excluding periods of annual leave, sickness, court testimony, or other extensions granted by the Detachment/Bureau Commander.
 - iii. Remedial training will be made available to the officer through coordination with the Detachment/Bureau Commander and a Firearm Instructor. The Firearm Instructor will provide the officer with instruction as to what methods and techniques are necessary to improve the officer's performance. It will be the officer's responsibility to coordinate with the Firearm Instructor to schedule additional attempts to qualify.
 - iv. Failure to qualify within a thirty-day period (listed below) may be used as grounds for withholding merit increases or other administrative action.
 - b. Second failure to qualify.
 - i. Following the second failure to qualify with a department-issued weapon; the officer's unsatisfactory scores will be recorded for entry into the ACADIS Training Record System. The Firearm Instructor will notify the Detachment/Bureau Commander in writing (either memo or E-mail) of the officer's second failure.

- ii. The Detachment/Bureau Commander, or a designee, will issue a Memorandum of Instruction to the officer outlining the failure to qualify and providing guidance as to a course of action to achieve a successful qualifying score.
 - iii. The officer will be required to achieve a qualifying score within thirty days of the second failure. No extensions of time will be provided minus extraordinary circumstances. All reasonable attempts will be made to provide one-on-one training with a Firearm Instructor. It will be the officer's responsibility to coordinate with the Firearm Instructor to schedule additional attempts to qualifications.
- c. Third failure to qualify.
 - i. Following a third attempt to qualify with a department-issued weapon; the officer will no longer be authorized to carry that weapon in the line of duty. The Firearm Instructor will notify the Detachment Commander immediately, in person or via phone, of the failure. The notification will be followed up later in writing (either memo or E-mail) explaining the Firearm Instructors observations regarding the officer's failure to qualify.
 - ii. The scores related to the failure to qualify will be recorded for entry into the ACADIS Training Record System.
 - iii. The Detachment Commander will consult with the Division Director to determine a course of action to follow concerning the officer's inability to qualify.
- d. Failure of an officer to qualify may be used as grounds for administrative action, including dismissal.

E. *Scheduling of qualifications.* Courses of fire that are scheduled for two or three times yearly require qualification at two or three different times of the year, respectively.

F. *Qualification while on-duty.* On-duty officers may be called upon at any time to qualify in any prescribed course of fire with any firearm they are authorized to carry or any standard firearm used by the department.

G. *Failure to report for or perform required qualifications.* An officer who, having been properly notified and having no duty conflict or excused absence, fails to report for a supervised qualification or fails to perform an unsupervised qualification may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal. The following outlines the policy for rescheduling missed qualification events and the consequence for such action.

- 1. When an officer of the department fails to report for scheduled supervised qualifications, such an action will be reported to the officer's Detachment/Bureau Commander.

2. If it is determined that the officer was not properly notified or had duty related conflicts or an excused absence (annual leave, sick leave, etc.), the Commander will coordinate with the Firearm Instructor to arrange a “makeup” session.
3. If it is determined that the officer was properly notified and did not experience a duty related conflict or excused absence, the Commander will provide a Memorandum of Instruction to the officer outlining what actions the officer must follow to achieve compliance with the department’s directives related to firearm qualifications. The officer will be directed to arrange a “makeup” session with the Firearms Instructor to be conducted at a time that is convenient to the Instructor. An officer who has a documented history of failing to follow prior directives will be subject to disciplinary action for failing to comply with qualification event.
4. If an officer fails to report for a second or subsequently scheduled supervised qualifications, and was not experiencing any duty-related conflicts or excused absence, the officer’s Detachment/Bureau Commander will initiate appropriate disciplinary action.

H. *Qualification recorded in Training Records System.* Firearms qualification scores of all officers will be entered into the Training Records System.

I. *Authorization to wear the firearms expert patch.* The “expert” uniform patches or pin may be worn in accordance with Chapter 102 by officers with a score specified in the firearms procedure manual for issued firearms during supervised qualifications. The patch or pin will be removed immediately after the officer fails to shoot an expert score during any subsequent supervised qualification.

232.310 CHEMICAL WEAPONRY, EXPLOSIVES AND DISTRACTION DEVICES

A. *Devices exempted from section.* The provisions of this section do not apply to the use of OC spray or projectiles, or to the use of "shell crackers", "seal bombs", or other distraction or explosive devices for animal control purposes.

B. *Approved training required.* Only officers having received department approved training may possess chemical weapons, explosives, or distraction devices. Refresher training is required at least once every five years.

C. *Consideration of risk prior to use.* Chemical weapons, explosives and distraction devices present hazards to department personnel, suspects, hostages, innocent bystanders, as well as property. Before their use officers should carefully consider the risks.

D. *Commander notice required.* Although the officer in command of an incident has the authority to authorize the use of chemical weapons, explosives or distraction devices without prior approval, every effort shall be made to consult with Command personnel and to notify the Division Director prior to the use of these devices when practical. Where such prior notice and consultation was impractical, notice shall be provided to the Division Director as soon as possible after the use of these devices.

E. *Deployment of chemical weapons.*

1. Where available, and when practical, appropriate medical personnel and fire-fighting equipment shall be staged near the scene prior to use of chemical weapons.
2. A trained officer will determine the type and amount of chemical agent (CS) that can be used, and whether it will be fired, launched, or thrown.
3. Only trained officers shall fire, launch, or throw chemical weapons.
4. An officer launching or throwing chemical munitions shall keep an accurate count of the number of munitions used and shall recover these spent munitions after the incident.
5. All officers involved shall wear appropriate protective gear.
6. Outdoor use of CS or HC (smoke) agents in either non-burning or pyrotechnic grenades or projectiles is approved. Circumstances may dictate the use of these pyrotechnic devices in an indoor environment as well. This will only be done in consultation with trained personnel and appropriate command staff.
7. When used outdoors for crowd control, chemical weapons are not to be launched or thrown directly at persons but are to be deployed upwind on the ground or away from persons.
8. Following exposure to chemical agents, persons is to be aided with decontamination and provided emergency medical treatment as needed.
9. After the incident is over the officer in charge shall direct a trained officer to initiate decontamination of the scene as appropriate.

F. *Use of distraction devices (Flash/Bangs).*

1. Only devices initiated with a mechanical fuse shall be used.
2. All officers using distraction devices or positioned within proximity of their discharge shall use eye and ear protection.
3. No device exceeding 5 PSI per manufacturer's specifications shall be used in a confined area.

232.490 LESS-LETHAL IMPACT SYSTEMS AND MUNITIONS

A. *Devices covered by this section.* Less- lethal impact munitions are flexible or non-flexible projectiles, fired from a 12-gauge shotgun, 37 MM & 40 MM weapons, intended to incapacitate a suspect with minimal potential for causing death or serious physical injury. Less-Lethal munitions are intended to assist in the reduction of injuries to officers and suspects during violent confrontations as well as to assist in the resolution of situations where in other methods of response might place members of the public or responding officers at unreasonable risk.

B. *Training and authorization required before use.* Only those officers authorized and trained in the use of Less-Lethal impact systems and munitions will be allowed to carry, deploy, or use those munitions against persons. Training courses must be approved by the department, certified through the Alaska Police Standards Council, and properly documented in compliance with applicable OPM chapters.

C. *Qualification required.* It is recognized that munitions launched from delivery systems such as 12-gauge shotgun, 37 MM or 40MM weapons can cause death or serious physical injury when directed at certain areas of the body, therefore all officers must remain proficient and qualify with each launching system they are authorized to carry during a supervised qualification, as specified in the [Firearms Procedure Manual](#). Policies governing supervised qualification standards will be followed as listed in section 232.300 (C-H)

D. *Pre-Deployment of Less-Lethal munitions.*

1. Officers may employ Less-Lethal munitions based upon their own knowledge and observations in accordance with department policy and State law. Under these circumstances, the officer assumes responsibility for their decision to employ the munitions.
2. Officers may employ Less-Lethal munitions on orders from an on-scene supervisor even when the officer employing the munitions lacks independent knowledge that such force is justified. Under these circumstances, the responsibility for the decision to employ the munitions is borne by the on-scene supervisor who ordered the use of the munitions.
3. Prior to the use of Less-Lethal impact systems, the weapon (12-gauge shotgun, 37 MM, & 40MM) utilized to launch the munitions will be completely unloaded of all standard ammunition. A second officer will verify the empty status of the weapon prior to the loading of the selected Less-Lethal munitions into the weapon. There shall be no exceptions to this procedure of the weapon is capable of firing lethal ammunition such as a 12-gauge patrol shotgun.
4. If the Less-Lethal impact munition contains a chemical such as OC or CS, appropriate protective gear should be worn by officers intending to effect an arrest of the suspect following its use.
5. The tactical deployment of officers intending to use Less-Lethal munitions shall be in a two-officer team, with one officer armed with a conventional firearm to act as cover officer.
6. It is recognized Less-Lethal munitions can cause death or serious physical injury when directed at certain areas of the body. Therefore, Less-Lethal munitions will generally not be directed at the head, neck, groin, knees, chest, spine, lower back, or elbows of suspects. Dependent upon the circumstances present, an officer may use Less-Lethal munitions as direct fire to any area of a suspect's body when the officer has determined that the threat level has risen to the point where deadly force is justified.

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8. After the use of Less-Lethal munitions against a person, that person shall be medically cleared as soon as practical.

232.500 OTHER WEAPONS

A. *OC Spray.*

1. The use of OC spray is authorized for those who have successfully completed department approved training in its use.
2. When in uniform officers shall carry the OC spray canister in the issue basket weave carrier matching the uniform belt.
3. Officers receiving unused full size OC spray canisters shall remove the transport safety seal and fire a single short burst to assure proper function before placing the canister into service.
4. Officers carrying OC spray are responsible for performing monthly maintenance on the canister. Monthly maintenance consists of shaking the canister vigorously and examining the canister for damage or evidence of leakage.
5. Whenever reasonable after OC spray has been used to gain control over a person, the officer shall allow the person to flush their eyes with fresh water and to wash the affected skin with soap and water. If symptoms persist for more than 45 minutes after application of OC spray medical attention must be sought for the person.

B. *Batons.*

1. Prior to carrying any baton, officers must successfully complete department approved training specific to the type of baton.
2. Officers are authorized to carry an approved collapsible straight baton at any time. When in uniform officers will carry the baton in a department issued carrier.
3. Officers shall not carry or handle any batons in a provocative manner or unnecessarily draw attention to their presence.
4. Intentional full power strikes (such as swinging, round house blows, or overhead chopping blows) to the head always constitute the use of deadly force. Other intentional blows to the head may constitute deadly force depending on the circumstances.

C. *Flashlights.* Flashlights may not be carried as weapons and are not to be used to strike any person except as a last resort in self-defense of the officer or another.

D. *Electronic control weapons (ECW).*

1. Officers who have successfully completed department approved training may be issued and use an authorized electronic control weapon.
2. Only department issued electronic control weapons may be carried or used by Officers.
3. Barring extreme circumstances, individuals will not be shot with an authorized electronic control weapon if they might fall from a high place, fall into hazardous substances or water, or be otherwise endangered during their brief period of incapacity.
4. Authorized electronic control weapons will not be aimed at a subject's face.

E. *Air powered OC projectile delivery systems.*

1. Officers who have successfully completed department approved training may be issued and use an air powered OC projectile delivery system.
2. Only department issued OC projectile delivery systems may be carried or used by Officers.
3. Projectiles from air powered OC projectile delivery systems will not be targeted at a subject's throat, head, face or eyes.
4. Unless there are no other target areas presented, projectiles will not be targeted at the base of the neck or spine.
5. Following use of an air powered OC projectile delivery system against a person, the person should be handled as required in 232.500 A 5.

F. *Miscellaneous weapons.* Officers are prohibited from carrying or using any weapons not specifically authorized by the OPM, including:

1. saps, billy clubs, kubotai, nunchuks, and weighted gloves known as "sap gloves"; and
2. electronic weapons other than those specifically authorized by the department (see OPM 107.900).

232.500 NON-ARMED COMBAT TECHNIQUES

A. *Training Required.* Each officer shall complete department approved instruction in physical methods of arrest during regularly scheduled in-service training.

B. *Exemptions Authorized.* The Division Director may exempt individual officers not in direct enforcement positions from this requirement.