

AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT

DIRECTIVE MANUAL

7.03 FIREARMS TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Approved By:	Todd Chamberlain, Chief of Police
Effective:	Sep-1-1998
Revised:	Sep-24-2025
Associated Policy:	DM 05.04, 7.01, Recruit Manual and Orientation Handbook
References:	C.R.S. § 24-31-303(1)(r), C.R.S. § 24-31-305(2)(a),
Review Authority:	Professional Standards and Training Deputy Chief and APD Legal Advisor(s)

7.3.01 PURPOSE

This policy establishes the standardized practice of firearms training, including perishable skills and the methods of demonstrating proficiency, as required by Colorado Revised Statutes and Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) regulations. APD will ensure that all members maintain a specified standard of firearms skill and accuracy, with the help of periodic documented training.

7.3.02 SCOPE

This directive applies to all members of the APD

7.3.03 DEFINITIONS

Approved: Authorized by APD policy, certified by the department armorer, and compliant with qualification standards.

Armed Civilian: An employee of the police department who serves in a non-sworn capacity and is authorized and qualified to carry a firearm in the course of performing designated job-related duties, as permitted by departmental policy and applicable laws.

Secondary Weapon: A department-approved firearm, pistol, or rifle, other than the primary duty weapon carried by the member while on duty.

Specialty Weapon System: A department-authorized firearm or weapon system, distinct from the standard-issue duty weapon, issued to and utilized by personnel assigned to specialized units or roles, such as SWAT or tactical teams, for specific operational purposes.

7.3.04 POLICY

Prior to receiving authorization to carry a firearm, members will be trained in the Aurora Police Academy in the application of Aurora Police Department Directives and Colorado Revised Statutes pertaining to the use of physical force, potentially deadly force, and deadly force. The APD Range staff will oversee the hands-on components of firearms training, focusing on weapon handling and marksmanship proficiency.

Members will be issued a red dot sight attached to their duty pistol and will be required to demonstrate proficiency with their firearm(s) by satisfactorily completing one daylight and one dim-light qualification each calendar year.

The Training Section sets qualification standards and schedules. If a member fails to qualify within the designated period, their supervisor will conduct an inquiry and document the absence. Unexcused failures to qualify will result in disciplinary action, including a written reprimand at a minimum.

If a member accumulates two or more consecutive unexcused absences from qualification periods within a calendar year, they must coordinate through their supervisor with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor to complete a qualification course before resuming full duty status.

An excused absence is any previously scheduled, nonemergency leave, schedule conflict, or an emergency that prevents a member from reporting for qualification. Excused absences include, but are not limited to:

1. Emergency Leave
2. Emergencies that preclude a member from reporting.
3. Court Conflicts
4. Light-duty status based on prescribed restrictions.
5. Illness
6. Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
7. Annual Leave
8. Modified duty as specified in individual orders.

Members on modified or light-duty status may participate in firearm qualifications unless expressly restricted by their duty status orders. A member requiring an excused absence from a qualification must notify their immediate supervisor prior to the scheduled qualification, unless the absence is due to an emergency.

7.3.05 NON-POST CERTIFIED MEMBERS

Armed civilian members of the department are subject to the regulations established by the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board.

7.3.06 DUTY HANDGUN QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Sworn members in a uniformed capacity will qualify with their department-issued duty weapon using the duty holster. Units with authorization from the chief to carry a different weapon will qualify with both weapons. (i.e., SWAT) Members' entry into a special unit with such authorization requires a qualification with the specialized weapon system.

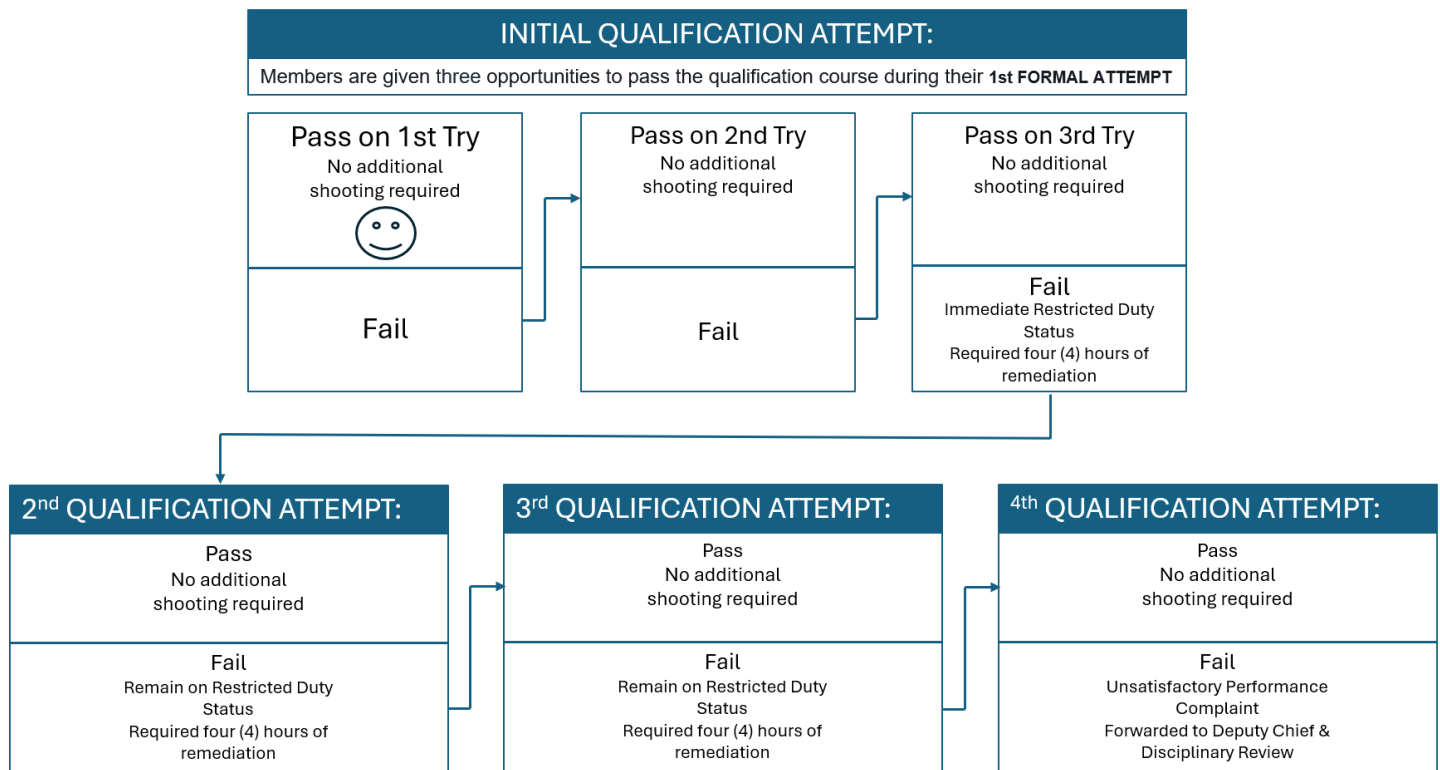
Members working in a non-uniform assignment who carry their full-size department-issued duty weapon in a department-issued belt-mounted non-patrol holster may complete the APD firearms qualification course with either of the two holsters for their department-issued handgun.

Members assigned to plainclothes or undercover assignments will utilize a concealed carry holster and complete a secondary-weapon firearm qualification course with their smaller-sized concealed-carry gun.

Members will be permitted a total of six (6) opportunities to pass the APD qualification course, structured across four (4) formal attempts.

Remediations following failed formal attempts will be conducted as follows:

A member's initial formal attempt to qualify will comprise up to three consecutive efforts to pass the APD firearm course. If the member fails the initial firearm course, two immediate requalification efforts will be permitted.

Failures and Remediation:

1. During the first formal qualification attempt, members will have three opportunities to pass the required qualification course. If a member passes the course on the first try, they do not need to utilize the other two tries. Failure to pass the course after all three tries constitutes an unsuccessful first qualification attempt, resulting in immediate restricted duty status. The member will be required to complete four (4) remediation hours before a second formal attempt.
2. If the member lacks sufficient time to complete the required remediation hours following a failed initial attempt and re-take the assessment prior to the start of their scheduled duty shift, they will be deemed ineligible to perform enforcement duties. The member's respective Commander or Duty Executive will be notified immediately, and the member will be verbally notified of being placed on restricted duty status. The Duty Executive will follow up with the Deputy Chief.
3. The member's direct supervisor shall initiate documentation under the Coaching for Improvement process and coordinate next steps with the member's chain of command.

Returning to Duty and Required Further Documentation:

The member may not return to full duty status until they have successfully completed the required firearm qualification.

Members will get one try during each of the following three subsequent attempts:

Second attempt: After the 2nd failure, a minimum of four (4) hours of remediation is required before the third formal attempt.

Third attempt: After the 3rd failure, four (4) additional remediation hours will be required to be completed by the member before the fourth formal attempt.

Fourth attempt: After the 4th failure, a complaint for unsatisfactory performance will be submitted, forwarded to the appropriate Deputy Chief for disciplinary review and decision-making, while the sworn member will remain in a non-enforcement, modified duty capacity.

7.3.07 SECONDARY WEAPON REQUIREMENT

Sworn members of APD are not required by policy to carry a secondary weapon. Members may still choose to carry an approved secondary weapon in accordance with existing policy and qualification standards, but such carry is now considered optional and voluntary.

Members are encouraged to consider personal and partner safety, tactical context, and assignment-specific risks when deciding whether to carry a secondary weapon.

The Chief's Office may authorize sworn members assigned to a plain-clothes or undercover unit to carry solely their secondary weapons while on duty, as they are more easily concealed. The department armorer will inspect these handguns for functionality, reliability, and safety prior to deployment. For details regarding approved secondary weapons, refer to DM 5.04 - Authorized Firearms, Weapons, *and Ammunition*.

There is no disciplinary or administrative consequence for choosing not to carry a secondary weapon.

7.3.08 SECONDARY WEAPON QUALIFICATION

Members wishing to carry a secondary weapon on duty will only be able to do so after successfully completing the required qualification course. Upon the successful completion of this course, members will also be able to carry the secondary weapon in an other-than-regular duty detail such as court attendance or training.

7.3.09 SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE TRAINING

Sworn members electing to carry a department-issued or individually owned semi-automatic rifle must attend and complete a department-approved rifle course prior to authorization for carrying or deploying the weapon in the line of duty.

In lieu of attending the department-approved rifle course, lateral officers are permitted to present evidence of completing a comparable training course, which must include a valid certificate of completion, to be evaluated by APD's training commander or designee. Following approval by the Training Commander and/or a successful completion of the APD rifle qualification course, the member may be granted authorization to carry a patrol rifle as long as their weapon was inspected by the department armorer.

Members authorized to carry and use a rifle will be required to qualify with the weapon and its primary sighting systems each calendar year, in both daylight and dim light environments. APD Range staff will be responsible for scheduling training, and the Training Section will maintain qualification records.

If a member fails to pass a rifle qualification course, they will not be authorized to carry a rifle until the qualification requirement has been fulfilled. If a member has failed to qualify with their duty weapon, they will not be authorized to carry a rifle until the member successfully qualifies with their duty weapon.

Members who fail to attend in-service rifle training in a calendar year will not be authorized to carry a rifle until they successfully complete in-service rifle training and fulfill qualification requirements. Members who have an excused absence from in-service rifle training and have fulfilled qualification requirements can carry their rifle but shall not miss a second rifle in-service training.

Members with unexcused absences from rifle in-service training, which occurred over one (1) calendar year, or excused absences from rifle in-service training, which occurred over two (2) calendar years, are not

authorized to carry a rifle. Members must demonstrate proficiency during a rifle in-service training or a 40-hour rifle course and fulfill qualification requirements.

7.3.10 TRAINING SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Training Section will be responsible for the following:

1. Establish weapons qualification programs and courses.
2. Prepare and distribute schedules, listing dates and times of qualification sessions.
3. Maintain records to determine that weapons qualification courses are conducted in accordance with the schedule.
4. Maintain attendance rosters to ensure all sworn members report for handgun and rifle training/qualification courses.
5. Maintain records to reflect each officer's proficiency level and any action taken by the Armorer and/or Range Unit staff concerning certification, repair of weapons, and/or remedial training.
6. Individual qualification records and scores will be maintained in the electronic records management system.
7. Following qualifications, forward an attendance report to all supervisors.
8. Administer the weapon qualification program, record the qualification scores, annually audit qualification records, and oversee the maintenance and safety of the Range Unit Training Facility.
9. Provide necessary remedial training for members failing to qualify.

The Training Section Lieutenant will establish liaison with and protocols for the training of other departments within the city, including:

1. Aurora Fire Rescue Arson Investigators
2. Aurora City Marshals
3. Aurora Detention Center

7.3.11 RANGE UNIT SERGEANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Range Unit Sergeant is responsible for ensuring the following:

1. Each member's duty and secondary firearms are inspected each calendar year.
2. Maintain a record of each member's weapon(s), including the member's name, serial number of each weapon, inspection date, and repair history.
3. When a member fails to demonstrate proficiency as defined in section 7.3.3 of this directive, or never attempts a qualification, the Range Unit Sergeant or designee will notify the Duty Executive. The member will not be allowed to return to an armed enforcement assignment. Upon the close of the range qualification session, complete a report detailing members who were unsuccessful in their qualification attempt(s) or people who have never attempted during the period.
4. Make recommendations to command staff regarding modification of department directives or policies related to firearms and firearms training.

7.3.12 DUTY EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receiving information from the Range Unit Sergeant that a member failed to qualify successfully, the member will immediately be placed on restricted duty in an unarmed, non-enforcement assignment. The member's respective Commander or Duty Executive will be notified immediately, and the member will be

verbally notified of being placed on restricted duty status. The Duty Executive will follow up with the Deputy Chief.

7.3.13 COMMAND OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

Command officers will be responsible for the following:

1. Ensure that personnel under their command report for weapons qualifications.
2. Upon receipt of the report from the Training Section detailing those members failing to attend a qualification session, ensure an initial inquiry is completed to determine the reason for their absence.
3. Require the member's immediate supervisor to document all absences in the member's Performance Appraisal File. Ensure that the member's immediate supervisor completes an initial inquiry to determine if the absence was excused or unexcused.
4. Ensure a preliminary investigation is completed for all unexcused absences. When the investigating supervisor finds an absence to be unexcused, the reviewing command officer will, at a minimum, request the issuance of a written reprimand.
5. Require members under their command who failed to attend a qualification session to coordinate through their immediate supervisor with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor a time to make up the qualification no later than the end of the current calendar year. Members on light duty or modified duty status are not exempt from qualifications unless specifically precluded in their duty status orders.
6. Ensure members missing two or more consecutive qualification sessions are immediately placed on light or modified duty, as appropriate. Members having two or more consecutive, unexcused qualification sessions are not eligible for secondary work privileges. The Chief's Office will decide upon exceptions to this section.
7. Require members under their command who failed to attend two or more consecutive qualification sessions to coordinate through their immediate supervisor with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor a time to complete a makeup qualification course prior to returning to full duty status.
8. If a member fails to demonstrate the minimum level of proficiency during mandatory firearms qualification as defined in section 7.3.3 of this directive, A complaint for unsatisfactory performance will be submitted, forwarded to the appropriate Deputy Chief for disciplinary review and decision making, while the sworn member will be assigned to a non-enforcement capacity.

7.3.14 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

First-line supervisors may conduct random inspections of authorized weapons of each subordinate and initiate appropriate action as indicated.

They are also responsible for the following:

Attendance Requirements:

1. Monitor subordinate's range performance and attendance.
2. Document all absences from range qualification sessions in the member's Performance Appraisal File.

3. Conduct an initial inquiry to determine if an absence from a range qualification session was excused or unexcused.
4. Complete a preliminary investigation of all unexcused absences. Forward the investigation to the appropriate command officer for disposition. At a minimum, a written reprimand will be requested for all members with an unexcused absence from a qualification session.
5. Coordinate with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor and their subordinates who failed to attend a range qualification session and shoot a makeup qualification course, whether the absence was excused or unexcused.
6. When a member misses two or more consecutive qualification sessions, complete the preliminary investigation and notify the appropriate Command Officer.
7. Coordinate with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor and subordinates who miss two or more consecutive range qualification sessions for the member to shoot a makeup qualification course prior to returning to full duty.
8. Ensure members returning from any duty assignment and/or status that caused the member to miss a rifle qualification to coordinate with the Range Unit Sergeant or a Firearms Instructor to shoot a rifle qualification course prior to returning to full duty.

Qualification Requirements:

9. The failure of member(s) to demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency after the fourth attempt, as defined in this directive, will be treated as a complaint of unsatisfactory performance and handled accordingly by the chain of command.

7.3.15 SWORN MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Sworn members are responsible for the following:

1. Maintaining and demonstrating proficiency, handling, and marksmanship skills for their handgun(s) and the rifle if authorized to be carried.
2. If applicable, successfully complete rifle in-service training during the calendar year.
3. Failure to qualify or maintain operator certification with a department-issued weapon system will require the item to be returned for reassignment to another certified member within 30 days of the expiration of the qualification.
4. Reporting scheduling conflicts with qualification sessions to their immediate supervisor and coordinating with the Range Unit Sergeant or a firearms instructor through their immediate supervisor for a makeup session, preferably in advance of the conflict.
5. Reporting all absences and failures to their immediate supervisor expeditiously.

7.3.16 NON-SWORN MEMBERS

Any non-sworn member authorized to carry a firearm by the chief of police will comply with applicable training standards, inspection, weapons certification, proficiency level, and qualification frequency as sworn members. Non-sworn members are also required to attend training as directed by the training academy commander.

7.3.17 COURSE PROCEDURES

APD qualification courses are developed by the Range Staff, reviewed by the Training Section Lieutenant, and approved by the PSTB Commander.

The Training Section Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring that all qualifying courses establishing minimum proficiency standards are prepared and approved before each qualification period.

Advanced skills courses may be offered through the Training Section at various times throughout the year. The course to be fired during the qualification will be posted at the Range Unit Training Facility during the scheduled qualification session.

Scheduled practice times will be posted on an electronic calendar accessible by members authorized to carry weapons before each qualification period. Based on the range unit schedule and staffing availability, additional practice time is available throughout the year.

7.3.18 REMEDIAL FIREARMS TRAINING

If a member fails their qualification attempt, the member's commanding officer will continue the member's unarmed modified duty detail and ensure that all remediation and subsequent qualification attempts are completed within 30 days. The member will coordinate with the Firearms Range for remedial training sessions. Once at the Range, a firearms instructor will evaluate the member for deficiencies and make an improvement plan that will be implemented. If the member qualifies on the first day of re-assignment to the Range, a minimum of 4 hours of training will be completed prior to requesting the member to be placed back on full duty. The member will have the opportunity to qualify during this period in accordance with Range Unit staff schedules. The member will not be allowed to participate in secondary employment until the qualification requirements have been fulfilled.

If, at the end of those 30 days, the member fails to demonstrate the minimum level for firearms proficiency, a preliminary investigation will be completed and forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police for disposition and/or further disciplinary action. A formal complaint for unsatisfactory performance will be entered into the PMS and forwarded to the member's chain of command.

As stated in this policy earlier, failure to qualify or maintain operator certification with a department-issued weapon system will require the item to be returned for reassignment to another certified member within 30 days of the expiration of the qualification.

7.3.19 RANGE RULES

All members must adhere to the posted Range Unit rules while at the Range Unit Training Facility, regardless of their reason for being there.