

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services
Advisory Committee Meeting
February 5, 2015

Agenda Item Number 6: Potential changes pertaining to training methods for BSIS Firearm Permit Holders

The Bureau is concerned about BSIS certified Firearm Training Facilities using only firearm simulators to train and qualify individuals for a BSIS firearms permit. Firearm simulators have become a widely used training tool for citizens and law enforcement agencies across the country. These simulators vary in design and functionality and there are currently no specific standards governing the use of firearm simulators for BSIS certified Firearm Training Facilities. The Bureau recognizes that firearm simulators can be a valuable tool for training; however, simulators cannot replace the experience and skill of firing live ammunition with an actual firearm.

Additionally, the Bureau is also concerned that some BSIS certified training facilities are offering the BSIS firearms training, with the exception of the firing range portion, through online courses. The Bureau recognizes that on-line training can be both beneficial and convenient for both students and training facilities, however, there are sections of the BSIS Firearms Training Manual that should not substitute actual hands-on training with online classes for the carrying and use of a firearm.

The intent of the potential changes to training methods for BSIS Firearm Permit Holders is to ensure that the firearms training provided to individuals seeking a BSIS Firearms Permit meet the intended requirements enacted by the Legislature and established in regulation, and the intentions of the stakeholders who developed the BSIS Firearms Training Manual. Potential changes would clearly define firearm training terms and specify the proper methods of training needed in order to satisfactorily meet the requirements outlined in the BSIS Firearms Training Manual. The Bureau's highest priority is the protection of the public, and these potential changes would attempt to strengthen the Bureau's firearms training requirements in a manner that would provide the greatest protection for the people of California.

The potential changes would:

1. Define "Firearm Simulator," "Firearm Range" or "Firing Range" and "Traditional and Non-traditional Classroom Instruction" as follows:
 - "Firearm Simulator" as equipment that provides a realistic imitation of the operation of an actual firearm, allows the individual to complete all of the requirements specified in the Firearm Training Outline (CCR 635), has the ability to match the caliber of weapon used for qualification and can simulate proper loading and unloading practices.
 - "Firearm Range" or "Firing Range" as an indoor or outdoor facility that permits the discharge of live ammunition from a firearm for the purposes of practice and qualification shooting.
 - "Traditional Classroom Instruction" as instruction where the instructor is physically present with students in a classroom providing demonstrations and hands-on instruction to ensure the student's proficiency of the course content.
 - "Non-Traditional Classroom Instruction" as instruction taught online or through the use of videos or media without in-person instructors.
2. Prescribe the use of live ammunition for the initial qualifying Course of Fire and a minimum of two of the renewal courses of fire.

3. Establish valid forms of proof of peace officer status to be accepted by BSIS in order to properly implement the peace officer exemption.
 - Acceptable forms of proof of peace officer status would include a letter from the applicant's current law enforcement agency Range Master or Commanding Officer attesting to the applicant's completion of a firearm training course, a copy of the applicant's Basic/Specialized Basic POST course completion certificate or a copy of the applicant's POST profile.
 - Acceptable forms of proof of requalification for renewal of a BSIS Firearms Permit would include a copy of a training completion document signed by the agency's Range Master, a copy of the applicant's POST profile detailing the requalification(s) or a letter on the law enforcement agency letterhead, signed by the Commanding Officer, attesting to the applicant's requalification(s) with the agency.
4. Require traditional classroom instruction be used for the following sections of the Firearms Training Outline:
 - a. Section I. Registration
 - b. Section III. Firearm Nomenclature, Maintenance
 - c. Section IV. Weapon Handling and Shooting Fundamentals
 - d. Section V. Examination
 - e. Section VI. Range Preparation
 - f. Section VII. Range Training
 - g. Section VIII. Range Qualification
5. Allow traditional or non-traditional classroom instruction for Section II. Moral and Legal Aspects.