

MPOETC Requirements for Firearms Qualification

Title 37, Section 203 establishes the following regulatory requirements related to police firearms qualification.

- The Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission (Commission) is required to publish requirements related to police firearms qualification. §203.12(3)(i)
- The minimum passing score for a firearms course is 75%. §203.11(11)(ii)(A)
- All waiver-of-training applicants and basic cadets must meet the Commission's standards for firearms qualification. §203.11(11)(ii)(A); §203.12(3)(i)
- All certified officers must complete annual qualification on a police firearms course with any firearms authorized for use, including personal weapons. §203.52(b)(1)(i)
- .38/380 is the minimum acceptable caliber for police firearms qualification §203.33(16)(i)
- Firearms instructors can refuse to qualify an individual on a weapon they have determined is unsafe, inadequate or not appropriate for police training. §203.33(16)(i)
- Failure to meet the Commission's standards for firearms qualification is grounds for revocation of certification. §203.14(a)(3)

MPOETC previously provided standards for annual firearms qualification that were intended to be used by departments when developing their qualification courses. This allowed a great amount of freedom for departments but also resulted in a lack of standardization across the state.

Beginning in 2020, MPOETC required all certified municipal police officers to qualify on a standardized course of fire for duty weapon (handgun) qualification. The two-phase course was revised for 2022 and mimics the course required in the basic training program. The course specifies that officers use duty ammunition for at least the first phase of the course and provides accommodation for departments who are required to qualify on reduced-distance ranges.

A modified course is also provided and is intended to be used for back-up duty weapons or off-duty weapons if the department chooses to qualify officers on them. This course reduces the maximum shooting distance from 25 to 15 yards to accommodate short barreled handguns and is also intended to be used to qualify retired officers. Due to safety concerns related to various holster options, the back-weapon course does not require a holster and gives shooters the option to begin each stage holding the weapon.

Rifles and Shotguns

The requirements for shotguns or rifles have not changed. These qualifications must be completed on a generally accepted law enforcement qualification course for those weapons.

In situations where an officer is assigned a rifle or shotgun, he/she should qualify with that weapon. In situations where armory stored weapons will be used by multiple officers, all officers authorized to pull firearms must qualify on each weapon system or platform (AR, etc) but not on each individual weapon.

Firearms Instructors

All basic academy firearms training and qualifications must be accomplished by Municipal Police Instructors employed by certified police academies.

All annual firearms qualification for in-service police officers must be conducted by a Certified Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor. Firearms Instructors who have successfully completed firearms instructor training can submit an application and, once approved by MPOETC, are authorized to conduct annual qualifications in Pennsylvania. More information about applying to be a Certified Law Enforcement Firearms Instructor is available on the MPOETC website at

<https://mpoetc.psp.pa.gov/training/Pages/Firearms.aspx>

Documentation

Firearms instructors and Police Chiefs are responsible for producing and maintaining documentation of in-service firearms qualifications to include the number of rounds fired, individual scores, and firearms used.

Annual firearms qualifications must be documented in the MPOETC Training and Certification System (TACS). At a minimum, each officer's primary duty weapon qualification must be entered by the end of each calendar year to maintain certification. Qualifications for additional weapon systems may be entered.

Officers for whom no qualification is entered will show an "**expired**" certification (MPOETC number) and will be removed from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC) until a qualification is entered.

REMINDER: A weapon may not be carried on duty for which an officer is not qualified

MPOETC Handgun Qualification Course (Two Phase Course)

Phase One

25 Rounds

Stage	Yards	Rounds	Time	Task	Description
1	25	8	40 seconds	Precision Fire from Cover	From the 25-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws, takes cover, and fires 2 rounds standing right side of barricade, 2 rounds standing left side of barricade, 2 rounds kneeling left side of barricade, and 2 rounds kneeling right side of the barricade. Firing is done using a Roll-Out technique, firing two rounds per exposure and using a different location for each exposure. When all 8 rounds have been fired the shooter should perform a tactical (magazine save) reload. Total time for 8 rounds is 40 seconds.
2	15	6	8 seconds	Move to Cover	From the 15-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and fires 2 rounds at target, <u>moves</u> to the right 2-3 yards to kneel behind low cover or simulated cover and fires 1 round at target from behind cover. Total time for 3 rounds is 8 seconds. Repeat Drill moving to the left.
3	15-7	3	5 seconds	Walk & Draw	From the 15-yard line, on the command "Walk," shooter begins <u>walking</u> toward the target. On command to fire, shooter <u>stops</u> , draws, and fires 3 rounds in 5 seconds .
4	7	8	10 seconds	One handed firing	From the 7-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and fires 2 rounds <u>strong hand only</u> from eye level, de-cocks or engages safety, transfers weapon to support hand and fires 2 rounds with <u>support hand only</u> from eye level. Total time for 4 rounds is 10 seconds. Repeat Drill.

Instructions:

All firing in this phase should be done using a two-handed grip unless otherwise annotated.

All draws are from a snapped holster or if a concealed plainclothes holster. No "alibis," except for an inoperable weapon. Shooter must clear all stoppages. After firing at all stages, shooters will scan 360° for additional threats.

Shooters will fire the course with full magazines and reload as necessary with no additional time accommodations.

Factory-new ammunition (either duty or practice/range ammunition) may be used for this phase. Note: Practice/Range ammunition is permitted for qualification if it is of the same manufacture and the same grain weight as the officer's duty ammunition.

Total – 25 Rounds in this Phase

TQ 21 target scored 5-3 (Possible 125 points in this phase)

75% or 94 points must be attained to successfully pass this phase.

At this point in the course, instructors will change, mark or paste the target.

****15-Yard Range Exceptions****

The Handgun Qualification course requires a stage at the 25-yard line. Some in-door ranges are limited to 15 yards so when using a shooting range which is limited to 15-yard maximum distance, the qualification course shall be conducted using two different targets as described below.

The 25-yard stage will be conducted at the 15-yard line using a reduced sized TQ 22 target scored 5-3. This target will be scored immediately after the 25-yard rounds are fired and score for this target will be added to the score for the remaining stages of Phase 1.

A full-sized TQ-21 target will then be used for the remaining stages in Phase 1 and all the remaining stages will be conducted according to the distances stated in the qualification course.

MPOETC Handgun Qualification Course (Two Phase Course)
Phase Two
25 Rounds

Stage	Yards	Rounds	Time	Task	Description
1	1	2	4 seconds	Shove-Shoot	From the 1-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter <u>strikes</u> at target with support hand, <u>steps back</u> , draws and fires 2 rounds in 4 seconds .
2	3	2	3 seconds	Reaction Shoot	From the 3-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and fires 2 rounds in 3 seconds .
3	3-7	4	8 seconds	Firing Retreat	From the 3-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and fires 4 rounds in 8 seconds while <u>moving back</u> to the 7-yard line. Body Armor Drill: When all shooters have recovered to the "Scan" position and are at the 7-yard line, the firearms instructor will call out "Body Armor!" and the shooters will fire one additional shot to the head.
4	7	6	4 seconds	Pivot Fire	From the 7-yard line, with the shooter facing away from the threat (target) and with their weapon holstered, on the command to fire, shooter <u>pivots</u> 180 degrees to face the threat, draws and fires 2 rounds in 4 seconds . <u>Ensure shooters do not draw until facing the target.</u> Repeat Drill a total of three times.
		1	2 seconds		Body Armor Drill: After the third repetition, when all shooters have recovered to the "Scan" position, the firearms instructor will call out "Body Armor!" and the shooters will fire one additional shot to the head.
5	10	6	8 seconds	Lateral Firing	From the 10-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and <u>moves</u> to left while engaging target with 3 rounds in 8 seconds . Repeat Drill moving right.
6	10-5	3	8 seconds	Firing Advance	From the 10-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter draws and fires 3 rounds in 8 seconds while <u>advancing</u> toward target.

Instructions:

All firing in this phase should be done using a two-handed grip.

If necessary for safety reasons, firearms instructors should use additional relays in stages involving movement to increase the shooter/instructor ratio and provide adequate space between shooters.

After firing at all stages, shooters will scan 360° for additional threats.

At the firearms instructor's discretion a "challenge drill" can be incorporated to include the "Universal Cover Mode" and "Verbal Challenges" to reduce the training scar that every draw should result in firing rounds.

Factory-new ammunition (either duty or practice/range ammunition) may be used for this phase. Note: Practice/Range ammunition is permitted for qualification if it is of the same manufacture and the same grain weight as the officer's duty ammunition.

Total – 25 Rounds

TQ 21 target scored 5-3 (Possible 125 points)

75% or 94 points must be attained to successfully pass this phase.

MPOETC Back-Up Weapon **50 Rounds**

Stage	Yards	Rounds	Time	Task	Description
1	1	4	2 seconds	Weapon Retention (2X)	From the 1-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter fires 2 rounds center mass in 2 seconds from a weapon retention position, scan, and recover. Reload if necessary and, on the command to fire, perform a second time .
2	3	6	2 seconds	Reaction Shoot	From the 3-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter <u>takes one step to the right or left</u> (as directed by instructor) and fires 3 rounds center mass in 2 seconds , scan, and recover. Reload if necessary and, on the command to fire, perform a second time moving in the other direction .
3	5	5	5 seconds	Failure Drill	From the 5-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter fires 2 rounds center mass, then 1 round to the head, then 2 rounds to either marked hip area. Total time for 5 rounds is 8 seconds.
4	7	10	10 seconds	One handed firing (2X)	From the 7-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter fires 5 rounds center mass using <u>strong hand only</u> , scan, and recover. Reload if necessary and, on the command to fire, shooter fires 5 rounds center mass using <u>support hand only</u> , scan and recover. Total time for 5 rounds is 10 seconds.
5	10	5	12 seconds	Far Failure Drill	From the 10-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter fires 2 rounds center mass, then 1 round to the head, then 2 rounds to either marked hip area. Total time for 5 rounds is 12 seconds.
6	15	10	10 seconds	Move to cover (2X)	From the 15-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter fires 2 rounds at target, <u>takes a step to the right or left moving behind cover</u> and fires 3 rounds from behind cover. Reload if necessary and, on the command to fire, perform a second time after stepping in the other direction. Total time for 5 rounds is 10 seconds.
7	15	10	20 seconds	Fire from Cover	From the 15-yard line, on the command to fire, shooter takes cover behind a barricade and fires 5 rounds standing right side of barricade, reloads if necessary, moves to the left side of the barricade and fires 5 rounds standing left side of the barricade. Total time for 10 rounds is 20 seconds.

Instructions:

All firing in this course should be done using a two-handed grip unless otherwise annotated.

Due to the variety of holsters and carrying positions, for safety reasons all stages will begin **EITHER** with the weapon in a holster located at the shooter's waist **OR** with the weapon in the strong hand, the muzzle in Sul or Low Ready (at the instructor's discretion), with the trigger finger OFF the trigger, outside of the trigger guard, and registered on the frame of the weapon. After firing at all stages, shooters will maintain proper muzzle control and trigger finger management while scanning 360° for additional threats, and holster if applicable.

Factory-new ammunition (either duty or practice/range ammunition) may be used for this phase. Note: Practice/Range ammunition is permitted for qualification if it is of the same manufacture and the same grain weight the individual intends to use as carry ammunition. Shooters will fire the course with full magazines/cylinders and reload as necessary with no additional time accommodations.

If necessary, to alleviate safety concerns for a specific shooter, firearms instructors may modify some portion of this course, but must document any modifications and immediately notify MPOETC of any modifications.

Prior to beginning the qualification, instructors should use a black marker to clearly mark a 6" circle on the target for each hip area as indicated in red on the next page. These circles will be used to score the four rounds fired in stage 4 and 6. Instructors should explain to the shooter the rationale for using shots to the hip as an alternative when shots to the body or head are not effective.

Total – 50 Rounds on a TQ 21 target scored 5-3 (Score shots inside the lined area of the target, to include the head, and hip area circles at 5, all others on silhouette at 3, all shots outside the silhouette are scored 0 points.) (Possible 250 points)

75% or 188 points must be attained to successfully pass this course.

