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# **OCT. 2021 NEWSLETTER**

## **DRILL OF THE MONTH**

Throughout 2021 we will be running a Drill of the Month in each edition of the newsletter. The goal is help motivate folks to get to the range and actually shoot their defensive weapons, and to have some fun in the process. Each month we'll post a drill or a short course of fire. You are encouraged to go to the range, shoot the drill, and then post your thoughts and a photo of your target on the Rangemaster Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rangemaster/> .

### **Bakersfield Police Department, Old Q Course**

This was an early attempt at a “street relevant” pistol qualification course for law enforcement. This department was very progressive in its training and developed this course while most were still shooting bullseye. It's actually a pretty good skill test for anyone who carries a concealed handgun.

**10 rounds total**

**B-8C on the chest of an RFTS-Q, IDPA target, or similar silhouette**

**Inside the 8 ring of the B8C= 10 points**

**Out of the 8 ring, but on the paper of the B8C= 8 points**

**Inside the silhouette, but off the B8C paper= 6 points**

**100 points possible**

**All from the holster:**

**2 rounds in 1.5 seconds at 10 feet (“conversational distance”)**

**2 rounds in 2.0 seconds at 20 feet (“The length of a big car.”)**

**2 reload 2 in 6.0 seconds (8.0 for revolvers) at 30 feet (“From the curb to the front door.”)**

**2 rounds in 3.5 seconds at 60 feet (“From the opposite curb to the front door.”)**

**Give it a try. It’s more demanding than it looks at first glance. Also, a ten shot qualification doesn’t leave a lot of room for error. Better pay attention. Recently, I used this drill as my cold skill check in a practice session. I managed a score of 96 out of 100. My low hit was the first shot from 20 yards, which I rushed.**



## POLYMER 80, a Glock 17 Clone with Improvements



Recently, I acquired a Polymer 80 full size 9mm pistol, which is a direct clone of the Glock 17. The P80 has the same 17 round magazine as the G17, making it an 18 shot 9mm.

First, the good- The grip frame is smaller than a stock Glock, closely resembling the frame of a Glock that has had a grip reduction by a custom shop like Boresight Solutions or Bowie. The trigger guard is undercut, and there is a relief cut around the extended magazine release. The inside of the frame was very well

finished, with a glass smooth magazine well. This let expended magazines drop free easily.

The molded-in stippling pattern on the grip frame was quite secure, without being abrasive. The gun came with excellent steel fixed sights, with a serrated square notch rear sight. I measured the trigger pull right out of the box with two different trigger pull gauges. Both read 4.5 pounds even. The gun shot well in the 50 rounds of MagTech 124 grain ball I ran through it, with no issues.

Now, the bad- I tried two different Glock 17 holsters, and the Polymer 80 would not go into either. It appears the dust cover/rail section is larger than on a Glock 17. That means the P80 will need a holster made specifically for it.

The gun comes in a locking case, with two 17 round magazines. Considering it already has a grip reduction and steel sights, it is a good deal, at about the same price retail as a stock Glock 17.



## SHOTGUN NOTES

I wrote this at the request of a law enforcement agency that was looking at updating their shotguns and policy. The same info applies to the civilian defender, as well.

**Observations on shotgun stock length and buckshot selection.**

**Shotgun Butt Stock Length**

**“Length of Pull” (LOP) refers to the straight line distance from the trigger to the center of the shotgun’s butt. This measurement is critical for proper performance, and ideally, the LOP is fitted to each individual officer. Obviously, this is only practical where shotguns are issued to individual officers, or officers are allowed to use department approved, personal weapons. In agencies where shotguns are issued at each shift, the LOP needs to be standardized so that all officers can work at least acceptably well with the shotgun.**

**There are two primary factors to be considered when discussing LOP in a self defense or Law Enforcement (LE) capacity.**

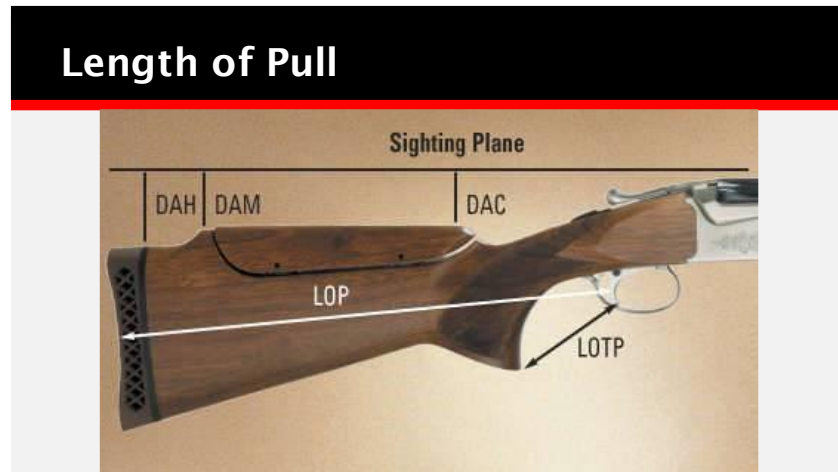
**American shotguns were designed for sporting use, on live birds such as ducks or doves, and on clay bird sports such as trap and skeet. Shooting technique for these sports involves a more bladed body posture or shooting stance, and light clothing is generally worn. The standard LOP became about 14 inches.**

**In modern law enforcement, many current officers are of smaller stature than in the past. Add to that, body armor adds thickness to the torso, in effect shortening the arms. The shooting stance with the fighting shotgun is more squared up to the target, with hips and shoulders facing the threat. This provides commonality of training with the handgun or empty hand techniques. It also keeps the body armor oriented toward the threat. We do not want the arm openings in the body armor pointed toward an adversary.**

**With these things in mind, a LOP in the 12-12.5 inch range works far better. Shooters wearing body armor will be able to mount the gun properly and have a more secure grip on the gun, to prevent disarming attempts. A too long LOP hyperextends the support side arm, making it harder to reliably function a manually operated pump action shotgun, leading to malfunctions. It also makes it much easier for an assailant to take the shotgun from its user.**

**The standard factory butt stock on most shotguns can be easily shortened, or aftermarket stocks can be installed with nothing but a screwdriver for tools. This simple, inexpensive modification will greatly improve the officers’ comfort, make them better able to use the shotgun effectively, and reduce the risk of disarming attacks. Improvement in shooting skill breeds confidence, which leads to properly deploying the shotgun in circumstances that indicate its use,**

such as hold-up alarm response and felony vehicle stops. There is no downside to the modification. Even the largest officers will be able to effectively use a shotgun with a 12-12.5 inch LOP, whereas a smaller male or most female officers will be at a severe disadvantage with a 14" LOP.



### Buckshot Selection

For over a hundred years, the traditional military and police buckshot size has been 00 Buckshot. This pellet size offers an adequate number of pellets, and sufficient mass to ensure adequate penetration to reach vital organs situated deeply within the body, from various angles. Reducing the diameter of a sphere reduces its weight/mass very quickly. Smaller buckshot sizes often lack adequate penetration for LE use, due to that reduced weight/mass. 00 Buckshot offers a combination of adequate patterning and adequate penetration.

For most of that same time period, the standard 12 gauge loading of 00 Buck has been 9 pellets. That number allows three layers of three pellets in a 2 ¾ inch standard 12 gauge shell.

A phenomenon that has long been noted with the standard 9 pellet load, is the "9<sup>th</sup> pellet flyer". When fired, 8 of the pellets go into the same general area, with a 9<sup>th</sup> pellet taking off on its own at a tangent to the main pattern. This is believed to be due to the way the 9 pellet load is stacked within the shell. There is a lot of pellet to pellet contact, increasing the chances for a deformed pellet as the shot charge is blasted down the shotgun's barrel, resulting in a flat spot somewhere on its surface. Once the pellets leave the shotgun's barrel, air pressure is exerted differently on the curved surfaces of the

round pellet and on that flat spot. That causes the pellet to fly off at an unpredictable angle.

I am personally familiar with two cases in which a 9 pellet 00 Buck load was fired at Person A, with most of the pellets striking person A. In both cases, however, a single pellet struck Person B, with fatal results. In one case, the person struck was a hostage, in the second, a law enforcement officer. Both died from the single pellet that struck them.

To counter this, most ammunition makers now offer an 8 pellet 00 Buckshot load. Eight pellets are stacked in the shotshell completely differently than are nine pellets, resulting in much less pellet to pellet contact. If an 8 pellet payload is combined with buffering (the granulated plastic filler between the pellets) and a modern wad like Federal's Flite Control, the 9<sup>th</sup> pellet flyer issue is eliminated. This results in better patterns, more accountability for pellets fired in public, reduced danger to citizens or other officers in proximity to a person being engaged with buckshot, increased officer confidence in his equipment, and overall better performance.





## Appropriate Use of Force

Specific laws vary from state to state, but in general, American law authorizes a citizen to defend himself against an unlawful use of force by using a proportional degree of force. Simply put, you may legally respond with the same level of force that your attacker is using, or attempting to use against you.

Your response could consist of several degrees of force, from presence, to verbal commands, to pepper spray, to hard hands, all the way up to deadly force.

Any force used by you in defense has to be minimal: the least amount of force that can get the job done; and reasonable, a



typical person, under the same circumstances, would do the same thing.

Let's look at two of the keywords in the description above. First, we said your actions had to be "minimal". That simply means the least amount of force that will actually stop the unlawful assault against you. Notice I did not say the least amount of force you could possibly employ, it's the least amount of force that will actually get the job done. An easy way to remember this is that you have no right to punish someone. You have no right to punish him for scaring you or even for hurting you. What you do have is the right to make him stop his aggressive behavior against you. Once that aggressive behavior has been successfully stopped you have no right to pile on anymore punishment.

The other word was "reasonable". In any use of force, your actions must be objectively reasonable. That means that a normal, sane, decent, ordinary person, given the same apparent facts and circumstances you had at the moment, would have done essentially the same thing you did. Neither of these concepts are mysterious or hard to understand. Subjective reasonableness is also required, i.e., the force user honestly and in good faith believes the use of defensive force is necessary because of an imminent threat.

If the assailant's actions move downward on the stairway, you must also de-escalate your response. For example: a man shoots at you and misses. You draw your gun and prepare to fire. Seeing this, he throws down his gun, puts his hands up, and shouts that he surrenders. You are no longer justified in firing.

Before we go any further we probably ought to define some terms. What exactly do we mean by the term “deadly force”?

See <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=18081>

Deadly force is any type or degree of force that can be reasonably expected to produce death or serious bodily injury. Thus, deadly force can consist of many acts other than firing a gun at a person. Stabbing or cutting a person with a knife or other edged weapon; deliberately hitting a person with a car; striking a person in the head with a club, whether a nightstick or a fireplace poker or tire iron; could all be examples of the use of deadly force. In my state, the legal definition of serious bodily injury includes broken major bones, protracted unconsciousness, a large bleeding wound, or loss of use of a limb or organ. In many states the definition also includes the forcible rape of either sex.

I do not think one has to be a doctor or lawyer to understand the concept of death. Serious bodily injury includes the sort of injuries we noted above. In really simple terms it would be life threatening injuries. Please note we are talking about serious injury here, **not** black eyes or split lips.

When then, are we justified in using deadly force in self-defense? Traditionally, there are four elements that must be satisfied before you can use deadly force against another human being. These are not complicated and they are not hard to judge in the real world. There is nothing subtle about someone trying to kill you. If it is a legitimate self-defense action it will be obvious to you and everyone else.

The first of the four elements is **ability**. Your attacker must have the physical capability, or the means, or be able to cause your death, or serious bodily injury. Ordinarily, he must have a weapon capable of causing such damage, and you must be within the useful range of that weapon. A man waving a tire iron at you from 50 feet away, shouting obscenities, has no real ability at this point to cause you harm. A man with a tire iron at 10 feet is a different story. If your assailant has a weapon, and you are within the useful range of that weapon, he is said to have **ability**.

Weapons can generally be divided into two main categories: guns and everything else. The entire purpose of the gun is to project violence across a distance. Before guns became common violence was typically hand-delivered. With the gun violence can be sent by airmail. So, if your assailant has a firearm and a clear line of sight to you, you are in danger whether he is 5 feet away, 15 feet away, 50 feet away or further because he has the **ability** to harm you from where he stands. This is why the “duty to retreat” is nonsense when applied to someone armed with a firearm.

Most other weapons fall into the category of contact weapons. This would include knives, razors, swords, tire irons, fireplace pokers, baseball bats, sections of 2 x 4, machetes, axes and hatchets, and claw hammers. It might surprise you to find out that more people are murdered in the US each year with hammers than with assault rifles. In fact, the third most commonly used weapon in US homicides is the screwdriver. Every thug carries one in his back pocket. It's what he breaks into your house with, what he breaks into your car with, what he starts your car with, and if you interrupt him in the course of one of these crimes he'll

stick it between your ribs and wiggle it around and you'll be dead. An implement does not have to be designed or intended as a deadly weapon if that is what the user is attempting. All of the weapons listed here would have to touch you to cause harm. Does that mean your assailant must be within arm's reach before an impact tool or contact weapon could be considered a legitimate threat? No!

The problem is people can and do move very quickly. Many years ago my friend Dennis Tueller conducted a series of tests in which randomly selected grown men were asked to stand 21 feet from him in an open area. On Dennis's signal the man would run forward and touch Dennis. Dennis would start a stopwatch when the man would start moving and stop the watch when the subject touched Dennis. Over the course of many iterations of this experiment, Dennis found that the average grown man starting standing perfectly still could cover that 21-foot distance and touch him in a second and half. Thus, if you're standing on an open parking lot, someone brandishing a knife or tire iron from as much as 20 feet away could still be considered to be an immediate deadly threat because he could close that gap and cut or strike you in as little as a second and a half. Over the years many people have completely misconstrued Dennis's findings. This does not mean you can automatically shoot someone holding a contact weapon 20 feet away. Factors you have to consider include your assailant's apparent age and physical ability and what intervening obstacles you could place between yourself and him, which might buy you time. There is no hard and fast line at 21 feet or anywhere else. Let's say there is an adult male holding a knife, 8 feet away from you, and threatening to cut you. However, he is 85 years old and in a wheelchair. That changes

the equation. Or, you have an athletic looking 6'5", 25-year-old male holding a big knife 30 feet from you on an open parking lot with no obstacles between you and him. How long would it take him to get to you? Again, the equation is changed by the exact circumstances involved.

There is another aspect of **ability** that we should mention, which is a concept known as "disparity of force". Despite uninformed opinions you may have heard, you may in fact have to use a deadly weapon in self-defense against another person who is not armed. This circumstance arises when your attacker has an overwhelming advantage that forces you to move to a higher level of force in order to defend yourself. This rule will require two things on your part: unusual circumstances, and your ability to articulate your decision-making process. To keep this from being mysterious I will give you two examples.

First, let's say a 105 pound woman has been backed into a corner by a 275 pound thug who looks like he just got out of prison pumping iron four hours a day. He has made it clear, through his words, actions, or combination of those that he intends to rob, rape, and murder her. He does not have a gun, knife or club, but does he have the ability to kill her or cripple her with his bare hands? Of course, he does. When she articulates her decision-making process these are some of the key points she will need to point out to justify her decision to use her pistol against this "unarmed man". (Florida Standard Jury Instruction on this: In considering the issue of [self-defense] [defense of another], you may take into account the relative physical abilities and capacities of (defendant) and (victim).

First, he is male and she is female. Males have a significant upper body strength advantage, and a huge reach advantage over females. Second, he had her backed into a corner. She cannot escape to her rear and she would not be able to get past him. She is trapped. Third, he is almost 3 times her size, and has an enormous strength advantage. If he got his hands on her he would be able to strangle or beat her to death easily, and the only way she could be reasonably expected to stop that would be to employ her firearm. A reasonable person would conclude that she had no other choice.

Another example: an elderly gentleman is walking down the sidewalk when three 19-year-old thugs knock him down and begin kicking and stomping on him. Would he be justified in using his pistol to make them stop, although they are not armed with guns or knives? Of course, he would. Here are the reasons. There are three of them and only one of him. They are younger, tougher, stronger and meaner. They have him down on the ground in a position of extreme disadvantage-- he cannot get out from under them and he cannot strike back effectively from there. If they continue kicking and stomping on him he will almost certainly be killed or permanently crippled. His only reasonable alternative is to produce a pistol and shoot them in self-defense.

As you can see, it is not difficult to envision circumstances in which you would have to use or threaten deadly force against an "unarmed man".

The next element is **intent**. Your assailant must, through his words, actions, or combination of those show that what he intends to do is cause your death or serious bodily injury. I actually had a student once in a permit type class say to me, "I'm not a mind

reader, so how am I supposed to know what someone else's intent is?". Please! It is not hard to deduce someone's **intent** in this context.

Let's say a man is walking down the sidewalk outside the athletic field, toward you, with a baseball bat on his shoulder, whistling "Take Me Out to the Ball Game". What do you suppose his intent is? On the other hand, if an angry, screaming, cursing man draws a bat back behind his head in both hands a few feet away from you and says, "Kiss your ass goodbye!", what do you suppose is his intent? If someone deliberately points a gun at you, that strongly implies **intent** to do you harm. If someone is holding a weapon and says, "I'm going to kill you!", that establishes **intent**. A reasonable person would have to believe that what this person is about to do is to attempt to kill or cripple you.

The third element is **imminent jeopardy**. You must reasonably believe that your life is in grave, immediate danger. This must be a reasonable belief, based on the facts and circumstances as you know them at that time. Please note that what you know or perceive at that moment is all that counts. If, after the incident, investigation shows that your assailant had prior convictions for manslaughter or murder, that is not part of your justification process unless that was known to you before you fired.

Again, your conclusion that you are in **imminent jeopardy** must be reasonable, that is, it would be shared by any other normal, sane, decent person given the same facts and circumstances. For instance, if someone points a banana at you and says, "This is a Martian ray gun, I am going to disintegrate you", that would not be a credible threat, (isn't actual or one which could be reasonably believed to be actual) so you would not be justified in using

deadly force. On the other hand, let's say an armed robber points a gun at you, puts you in fear for your life, and you shoot him. Later, it turns out that his pistol had a broken firing pin, or an empty chamber, or was completely unloaded. That does not change the fact that when you shot, your reasonable perception was that your life was in immediate danger. Again, a reasonable person would conclude that when an armed robber points a gun at you, your life is in immediate danger. The law does not require you to know things you cannot know. There was no way for you to know if the firing pin was broken, the chamber was empty, or the gun was unloaded, therefore when you acted your actions were reasonable. (It is often said "appearances" and reasonable belief drawn therefrom are what matter).

So, if you reasonably believe your attacker has the **ability** to cause your death or serious bodily injury, his words or actions manifest that is his **intent**, and you reasonably believe that your life (or great bodily harm) is in **imminent jeopardy** then you may be justified in using deadly force in self-defense. I said, "may be" because of the last element, **preclusion**. **Preclusion** simply means that you reasonably believed deadly force was the only way you had no other option. In some states, there is a statutory "duty to retreat". This is often, however, misunderstood. It does not mean you have to back away or run away from an assailant who is capable of killing or crippling you. It means you must not have some other viable alternative that would protect you. When it arises and what it means depends on state case law. It may not include that you must first resort to lesser force or other alternative, it may mean you must simply try to escape the looming danger. Also, you must be able to retreat in safety. And usually the avenue of retreat must be obvious or at least



reasonably knowable. Here is an example. You are sitting in your car, which is stopped. It is running and in gear. A man on foot is waving a tire iron and threatening to beat your head in. What would be your reasonable action at this point? Do you draw your gun and defend yourself or do you simply drive away? Drive away! Driving away removes you from the danger zone without risk of death or injury, so this would be required under this set of circumstances. No rocket science involved here.

A lot of people try to make this far more complicated than it actually is. If someone is attempting to kill, rape or cripple you it is usually pretty obvious. “Is he capable of causing such damage to me?” “Is this what he is trying to do?” “Do I have any other option?”

On imminence: <http://modernserviceweapons.com/?p=18244>

Many people make the mistake of asking, “If he does (fill in the blank) can I shoot him?” The question should never be, “Can I shoot him?” The question should always be, “Do I have to shoot him?” The law often recognizes that some threats are so clear (home invasion, armed robbery, rape, kidnapping that deadly force should be lawful and is even though the MUST isn’t for sure there or ripe. Here are some suggestions that will go a very long way toward keeping you out of legal trouble anywhere in the United States:

1. I will not seek a fight, and if at all possible I will avoid one, but if one is forced upon me I will do what it takes to win.
2. My sidearm is neither a status symbol nor an emotional crutch. I will not reach for it unless out of dire necessity, but if

I must use deadly force to preserve my life or that of an innocent person, I will use it skillfully and without hesitation.  
3. My sidearm is there strictly to defend innocent human life.

## **UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS**

**Oct 8-10 Shotgun Instructor, White Hall, AR**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/defensive-shotgun-instructor-development-course-tickets-112318704268> **sold out**

**Oct 15-17 Pistol Instructor Development, Kansas City, MO**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rangemaster-handgun-instructor-development-course-tickets-122880074611>

**Nov 5-7 Pistol Instructor Development, Dallas, TX**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rangemaster-pistol-instructor-development-course-tickets-122880213025> **sold out**

**Nov 13-14 Advanced Firearms Instructor, Casa Grande, AZ**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/advanced-firearms-instructor-development-course-tickets-133622694075>

**Tactical Conference 2022, March 2022, sold out**

