



OCTOBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

DRILL OF THE MONTH

Throughout 2025 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/> .

25 Round Version, Dot Torture

Most of us are familiar with Dot Torture, an excellent practice/assessment drill originally devised by David Blinder, then popularized by the late Todd Green. Here is an abbreviated 25 round version, that takes less time and ammo. We will shoot it at 5 yards. The correct target can be downloaded and printed here:

<https://pistol-training.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/TDA-Dot-Torture-target.pdf>

DOT Torture, 25 round version

- #1 1 round from the ready 3X**
- #2 2 rounds from the ready 1X**
- #3 & #4 1 round on each, from ready
 2X**

- #5 5 rounds, from the holster 1X**
- #6 and #7 2 rds on each, from the
holster 1X**
- #8 2 rds Dominant Hand Only, from
ready 1X**

- #9 2 rds Non-dominant Hand Only,
from ready 1X**

- #10 Start with only 1 rd in gun, empty
magazine inserted, at ready. Fire 1 rd ,
emergency reload, and fire 2 rds**

Beretta 1301 Cleaning & Lubrication

Tim Chandler wrote this. He is a shotgun aficionado, a Rangemaster Staff Instructor, and a Beretta and Remington factory certified armorer. Follow his advice closely.

I will readily admit that for a long time I had a distinct prejudice against the use of semi-automatic shotguns for defensive purposes. The origins of that prejudice go back to my first hunting trip where my father's friend Wendell spent about as much time futzing with his 20 gauge Franchi semi-automatic shotgun in a hopeless effort to make it work as he did actually hunting. In the intervening years I'd seen enough problems from semi-auto shotguns of most makes and models to make me stick with the concept of a pump gun as the right answer for defensive use.

When the Beretta 1301 Tactical was introduced to the market several years ago, I saw enough positive feedback that I thought I'd give the gun a chance. I bought a discounted one through a friend who had a hookup at a big box retailer and decided to put the gun through its paces by running it in the inaugural Rangemaster Shotgun Instructor program. The gun performed splendidly and over thousands of shells in various conditions (including running reliably even when the action was full of red ants)

I became a believer. There was finally a really good, really affordable (at the time) semi-automatic shotgun suitable for defensive use out there.



"Neither snow nor sleet nor heat nor gloom of night stays these shotguns from the swift firing of their appointed rounds"

In the intervening years I have seen literally *hundreds* of 1301s come through my shotgun classes and their performance has been exemplary. For years I could count on one hand how many 1301's I saw with a problem and those were usually easily corrected at the factory with relatively minor adjustments. In the last 18 months or so we have seen a significant increase in reliability issues on the 1301 primarily among enthusiasts who put larger than

average round counts through their shotguns...and almost all have been user-induced error.

In the context of semi-auto shotguns, the 1301 is the closest one to being Glock-like in it's ability to function despite abject neglect. (Note that Glocks will also stop functioning properly when completely neglected) That being said, it is still a semi-auto shotgun and one should not assume they can fire 10,000 rounds through it without cleaning and not experience problems. It will *most definitely* manifest problems.

This is especially true if you are shooting the kind of bulk ammo most people are shooting through these guns in classes and training. The quality of ammunition and components have gone downhill significantly post-COVID and especially once the adventures in Ukraine began. This means that I'm seeing shotgun ammunition that burns dirtier than ever. It's leaving more unburned powder and generating more carbon deposits inside the gun than we were seeing pre-COVID and pre-Ukraine. Luckily, I had the chance to see and disassemble a bunch of 1301's pre and post, and they're coming up nastier now with the same round counts.

In the two Rangemaster Advanced Shotgun Instructor classes presented so far, we had multiple shooters who

had fired thousands of rounds through the guns without cleaning and seemingly minimal, if any, lubrication. One individual reported more than 4,000 shells through his 1301 without cleaning.

Upon taking the 4,000+ round gun apart, huge chunks of carbon came spilling out of the gas block and the trigger group looked like it had just been dug out of the bottom of a potted plant. Adding insult to injury, the shotgun had no visible trace of lubrication evident on it anywhere.

If you do an experiment and run, say, a Mossberg 930 and a Beretta 1301 through thousands of rounds with little lubrication on the guns I can guarantee you that the 1301 will run a lot longer than the 930. Or an 11-87. Probably the only gun that's going to come close to matching it is the Benelli M4. It is an exceptional performer among semi-auto shotguns and that it took so long to manifest problems with that kind of round count is a testament to how good the gun is...but that doesn't mean it will run forever with no cleaning and no lubrication. It is a machine and sooner or later will stop working properly if it is not maintained.

With that in mind let's discuss a sensible cleaning and maintenance regimen that will keep your 1301 running reliably:

More Than the Bore

Most people seem to think that cleaning the shotgun centers on punching the bore. That is understandable because that's kind of how it is with pump guns.

With the 1301 punching the bore may be necessary from time to time (I tend to do it once a year or so, or whenever the gun starts to throw weird patterns) but of much greater importance is ensuring that the piston is relatively clean, the gas block is relatively clean, and that the magazine tube is relatively clean. The gun will run with a dirty bore as long as you like...but if the functional components of the action aren't moving properly the gun will stop cycling reliably.

Magazine Tube

The exterior of the magazine tube is the track that the bolt carrier group and piston run on. If you go through cycles of shooting the gun and putting it away, the carbon deposits from firing will accumulate and solidify on the magazine tube. The accumulation worsens with each cycle. Do this enough and you can bet that eventually the carbon deposits will impede the movement of the piston and carrier group, hindering reliability. Go long enough and

eventually disassembly will require a rubber mallet. Tapping the front sight tower with the mallet can break up enough of the carbon deposits to allow the barrel to be removed. Obviously, it is unwise to delay cleaning and maintenance until the point where you are required to literally beat the gun apart.



You can see the moving components of the action and how they fit around the magazine tube on the 1301

It would be a good idea to regularly take the barrel off and at least wipe down the magazine tube to ensure the piston can move freely. It doesn't have to be spotless, but it shouldn't be ignored either. Note that no lubrication is necessary on the magazine tube as there is a special coating from the factory on it to provide the necessary lubricity.

Piston

The piston should be scrubbed down from time to time so it can move properly, with a focus on making sure the knurled ring around the gas piston is able to rotate freely. A piston that looks like this *will* stop working reliably:



Note the lead and carbon caked on the knurled ring around the piston. This will impede function.

The inside and outside of the piston needs to be cleaned with some decent solvent and a brass brush or equivalent to keep it in a state where it can function reliably. It doesn't have to be spotless or shiny to run properly, but it can't have big globs of lead and carbon welded to it and still run. The piston should not be lubricated as it is exposed to temperatures that will simply cook most lubricants into more carbon.

Gas Block/Ring

The gas block itself seems to be poorly understood. There are several holes in the gas block:

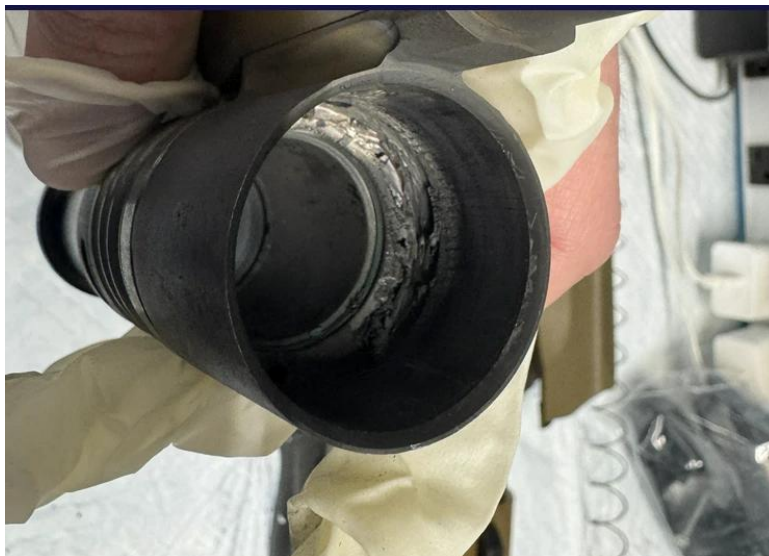


A properly clean gas block

There are two main gas ports visible like nostrils where the gas comes from the barrel into the gas block. Those need to be unobstructed. If you see carbon or lead buildup there, use a mechanic's pick or similar tool to clean them.

In addition, you can see there are a bunch of little ports arranged around the perimeter. Those little holes around the outside edge, just in front of the pocket for the o-ring, should also be clean and open. Often you need a pick of some sort to accomplish this. Lead and carbon like to deposit right around there, so you may need to use the pick to break off big hunks of both that will otherwise impede the proper flow of gas. Just make sure that when you poke those holes clear you don't end up damaging the o-ring (visible just beyond the gas ring ports) or dislodging it without putting it back in the proper position before reassembly. You can see a shredded o-ring in the prior picture of the piston and be assured that without the o-ring you'll need the mallet to beat the barrel off the gun for cleaning.

If your gas ring looks like this:



Just say “no” to cheap soft lead slugs, kids.

...well, your shotgun isn't going to run. Thankfully you can be rough with cleaning this area, even using a brush on the end of a drill to get after it. Just make sure you're in a well-ventilated area wearing good PPE when doing so. You don't want what comes out of there in your eyes or your lungs. Even with a brush on a drill, some manual "pokage" of the ports with a mechanic's pic may be necessary.

Firing Pin Channel

The firing pin channel will cake up with carbon and needs to be cleaned from time to time. You can use a pipe cleaner, some sort of aerosol cleaner, pretty much whatever will work to ensure that the channel the firing pin rides in is clear enough for the firing pin to move as it needs to. This will require disassembling the bolt carrier assembly. I do this when I do a proper full cleaning of the gun.



We have seen caked carbon and other debris/detritus get into that channel and prevent the firing pin from moving far enough to light primers. If you see repeated failures to fire with little or no evidence of a firing pin strike consider cleaning the firing pin channel as a first step.

How often should you do all of this?

Beretta advises cleaning the gun...meaning the functional components I just discussed...every 300 rounds or so.

This makes sense as cleaning frequently helps prevent having a great big cleaning job that takes a long time and will tend to prevent reaching the point where function of the gun is impeded.

I've never cleaned my guns that frequently.

Neither would I wait until I've fired 5,000 shells to clean it.

My guns have always run splendidly by using a cleaning schedule that involves a frequent partial and less frequent full cleaning of the gun.

Partial cleaning means I take the barrel off, scrub the magazine tube with a brash brush and some solvent (do not use a Dremel), do the same scrubbing on the gas piston, and do a light scrub with the brush and some solvent inside the gas block/ring. I will wipe down the bolt/carrier group, **apply lubrication**, then reassemble. I do this every few range sessions or before a class where I

know the gun might end up in the hands of a client who needs a functional shotgun. While I have the gun apart, I check fasteners, etc. This happens about 4-8 times a year given my firing and teaching schedule. I will typically add lubrication before every known use of the gun...and this alone will save you boatloads of heartache. Machines run better with lubrication, folks. [This video](#) from Beretta HQ will give you a good guide on proper lubrication of the shotgun.

A full cleaning means I take the gun completely apart, including removing the trigger assembly, and scrub everything down with a solvent and a brass brush. I will clean the firing pin channel. Usually this is the time when I punch the bore using a chuck-able cleaning rod, too. This happens about once a year, usually around Christmas because nothing is as holly and jolly as being in your back yard with goggles and a mask on taking a drill to shotgun barrels. At the very least it cuts down on the holiday chit-chat from neighbors.

Common sense applies, here. If you are shooting crappy ammo...and if you are shooting bulk birdshot and buckshot for practice/training then you are...you will want to have more frequent cleaning events. If you aren't firing thousands of shells, you will need less frequent cleaning events. If you are shooting a lot of slugs, you are going to

want to break the gun down for cleaning and inspection more frequently as slugs tend to deposit far more lead in the gun than shot loads.

My guns spend more time in the hands of clients than they do in mine, as it's rare to see a class where my guns aren't being used to keep someone with a broken or unsuitable shotgun going. It's crucial that they run reliably because I'm usually the only backup plan there is. The regimen described has kept my guns running reliably and will likely do the same for you.

The Best OC Belt Holster

I believe in carrying OC (Oleoresin Capsicum, Pepper Spray) as an intermediate force option. The world is full of entitled, slightly crazy and belligerent people, and sometimes you need an option between a harsh word and a gun. Like most of my colleagues, I have converted to carrying the POM OC unit.

I am not happy using the integral clip on the POM unit. It is simply not secure enough on the belt or clipped to a pocket, and I really don't want anyone to see the OC unless I deploy it. I finally found a solution.

Jim Shanahan is a Rangemaster certified Professional Pistolcraft Instructor, he runs his own school and serves as an AI for me often. Jim also builds excellent Kydex holsters and now, a well designed, well made belt pouch for the POM OC unit. See it at <https://advancedperformanceshooting.com/product/pom-pepper-spray-original-w-clip-molded-kydex-holster-pouch/>

Highly recommended.



Performance Under Stress

GALEFI is the Georgia Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors. They put out real quality information from time to time. Here is an example—an excellent article on the misunderstandings about the loss of fine motor skill under stress.

<https://apiprodigy.com/2025/09/04/the-fallacy-of-losing-fine-motor-skills-in-high-stress-tactical-situations/>

New Shoes for an Old Colt

I am very fond of Gen 2 D-frame Colts, like the Agent or Cobra (not the new Cobra). I found a new supplier of excellent wooden grips for these short frame models.

The wood is very highly figured and fit and finish are excellent. They fill the hand without adding excessive bulk to the gun. See

<https://www.tacticalmakgrips.com/collections/colt-dedektif/products/colt-dedective-wood-handle-grips>

\$59.00 and shipped pretty promptly.



Huge Losses for Our Community

The past few weeks have been sad indeed for the self defense training community. We have lost three of our senior members, who collectively had a library's worth of knowledge and experience.

John Benner was the founder and chief instructor at the Tactical Defense Institute (TDI) in Ohio. John was a retired cop with experience in patrol, investigations, SWAT and training, and was a mentor to people like Greg Ellifritz,

Dave Spaulding, John Motil and others. TDI has a well deserved national reputation for solid training.



Super Dave Harrington retired from Army Special Forces, where he was both an operator and a trainer. Dave was an amazing shooter with handgun or carbine and brought a special level of intensity to his classes.



John Holschen also retired from Army special operations, then worked as a contract trainer and operator all over the world. He began his civil training career working with Insights Training Center in the Seattle area, then branched out on his own. John was a regular presenter at the National Tactical Invitational, where I met him 20 years ago, and the Tactical Conference. Holschen was an innovator, and in recent years he had been pioneering the

use of electronics in tactical decision making and programming. He was one of the most intelligent, insightful, and articulate members of our tribe.



These three men will be sorely missed. If you have been thinking about training with one of the remaining Old Masters, you'd better get on it. None of us are guaranteed tomorrow.

Why Don't You Carry?



When a real-world emergency for which you are completely unprepared occurs, the result can be devastating. This end result will be the same, whether the **reason** you were unprepared was that you were:

Ignorant

Lazy

Naïve, or

Complacent.

Consider an event from July. A couple, aged 43 and 41, went for a hike in a remote state park with their 7 year old and 9 year old daughters. The trail has no cell phone service. A predator who wanted the children stabbed their father to death on the trail. Their mother got them started on the trail back to the ranger station, then returned to the scene to try to help her husband. She was then stabbed to death, as well. Of course, neither she nor her husband were armed. The kids made it to the ranger station and started a response, but, of course, it was too late to help their parents.

A suspect has been arrested. He and the victims did not know each other, it was just a crime of opportunity in a remote place. The kids, plus another sibling who was not present, are now orphans simply because their parents were described by one of the four words I listed above. As you can see, it would make no difference which of the four words apply.

In contrast, the same week a nut-job stabbed 11 people at a Wal-Mart. A concealed carrier drew his gun, ordered the offender to drop his knife (which he promptly did), and the armed citizen held the offender at gunpoint until police arrived.

How differently the event in the park could have been if the parents had simply had enough sense to be armed.

PARKING LOTS?

In the 1960's, someone coined the term “street crime”. The reality is, none happens in the street—you'd get run over. Violent crime happens on parking lots. Those lots may be at the grocery store, the Stop n Rob, the bank, a Wal Mart, the mall, etc.

My good friend Greg Ellifritz wrote an excellent article on minimizing your risks in these high threat areas.

https://www.activeresponsetraining.net/five-parking-lot-precautions?fbclid=IwY2xjawMmvFNleHRuA2FlbQlzMQABHg6EFUeerA9aj-rgTJaoNJtjihbnkos7OYb_G-TcxrxoH-aLf-2oeuPF_KZH_aem_WFmSH2IPvavB5oOJ9P2aNw

UPCOMING TRAINING EVENTS

Oct 9-11, 2025 (Givens)
Instructor Development KR Training, Lincoln, TX
<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/668d7009e4e7e7f3ba10bab3>

Oct 12-13, 2025 (Givens)
Advanced Instructor KR Training Lincoln, TX
<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/668d7c27e4e7e7f3ba143242>

Oct 17-19, 2025 (Givens)
Instructor Development Slidell, LA Bill Long, host
<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/668f3d14e4e7e7f3ba8f0198>

Oct 25-26, 2025 Combative Pistol (Aqil, Instructor)

Cohutta Pines, Cisco, Georgia

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/677d7acb99d74784f741159c>

Nov 7-9, 2025

(Givens)

Instructor Development

Lakeland, FL

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/668d70dfe4e7e7f3ba10eb5e>

Nov 15-16, 2025

(Givens)

Adv Instructor Development Course

Metairie, LA

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/668f3bd8e4e7e7f3ba8e8c00>

Nov 17, 2025 One Day (Givens)

Defensive Revolver Course Metairie, Louisiana

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/67d35ff81af0bc8d37ee353f>

Nov 21-23, 2025

(Givens)

Instructor Course, Denton, Texas Denton Police Range

<https://rangemaster.corsizio.com/event/673bc60daa4a19177048825e>

Dec 6-7, 2025

(All Rangemaster Staff)

Annual Instructor Conference/Reunion **sold out**



Rachel Maloney with a 100% score in the Firearms Instructor Development Course qualification a few years ago.



