Arizona Department of Public Safety

8-HOUR ARMED SECURITY GUARD CONTINUING FIREARMS TRAINING PROGRAM LESSON PLAN

June 24, 2026

The DPS Security Guard Licensing Unit developed this lesson plan and is the only authorized continuing firearms training program for armed security guards. The emphasis of this course is firearms safety, legal issues related to the use of deadly physical force, the written test, and qualification. This course is not designed to teach security guard fundamentals; that training is provided during the initial and refresher 8-hour basic security guard class.

Instructors and organizations teaching the 8-hour armed security guard continuing firearms training course must be approved by the Security Guard Licensing Unit prior to conducting training.

It is mandatory that instructors spend at least 3 hours on the law and legal portion of this lesson plan. Instructors are required to thoroughly cover this topic. Do not read from the statutes but know them well enough to discuss them in class. You may use the "Legal Issues Relating to the Use of Deadly Force" text and A.R.S. statutes. Other references pertaining to firearms safety, use of deadly force, or armed security guards may also be used.

Any information taught that is not listed in this lesson plan will be taught after this course of instruction and will require additional hours of training time beyond the mandatory 8 hours. For instance, if you wish to teach a one-hour block of instruction on tactical shooting techniques, your class will be 9 hours in length. Additionally, administrative time, such as driving to the range, completing fingerprint cards, etc., will not count as training time. The only exception is the use of short videos or other audio/visual aids, provided they are related to the required topics. **All training must be conducted by an authorized instructor. Training may not be performed using videos alone.** Significant deviation from this or any other approved lesson plan is unacceptable and may result in the suspension of the instructor and organization. Gross deviations can result in criminal prosecution. Additionally, deviations can also result in your students having their applications rejected for inadequate training. A 10-minute break taken after every 50 minutes of instruction is acceptable and does not require special scheduling or permission.

It is permissible to teach both the 8-hour firearms continuing training class and the 16-hour class simultaneously.

IMPORTANT - This lesson plan consists of nine sections. Section 1 will be covered first. Section 2 will be taught before students handle firearms or qualify on the range. The remaining sections may be taught in a different order, based upon the needs of the instructor. Instructors teaching this material must have training and/or experience with all topics in this lesson plan. Do not attempt to teach material that you are not thoroughly familiar with Security guards carrying shotguns must be trained with these firearms. Completion of the appropriate NRA course (shotgun) by the individual security guard OR instruction conducted by an NRA firearms instructor certified in shotgun, is acceptable. AZPOST firearms instructors may also teach these courses, provided they have registered with the Licensing Unit. Shotgun training will be a minimum of 8 hours in duration. The DPS initial 16-hour or 8-hour renewal class (as appropriate) will be taught PRIOR to shotgun training.

Proprietary armed security guards must also comply with firearms training requirements (A.R.S. § 32-2606.3(a).

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I. **Introduction** (Suggested)

A. Welcome

B. Introductions (Instructors/Students)

C. Armed Security Guard course and materials (general information, i.e., basic firearms-safety course, taught to the lowest level of experience, includes legal issues, etc.)

D. Schedule

E. Facilities

F. Breaks

G. Cell phones, pagers, etc.

H. Other

1. **Safety Briefing** (to be repeated as necessary throughout the class): The safety briefing below is a guide to assist the instructor with pertinent instructions and should be used as needed. Some instructions may not be applicable to the training and may be left out. Other instructions may be added at the instructor's discretion.

a) No loaded firearms are permitted in any training area unless specifically required by the instructor.

b) Firearms shall be inspected by the instructor before qualification and remain unloaded until told otherwise.

c) Eye and ear protection will be worn while on the firing line.

d) Firearms used for training purposes other than qualification on a range shall be unloaded and inspected by the instructor teaching the class (If available, at least one student knowledgeable of firearms shall also inspect the firearm).

e) Students are expressly prohibited from being under the influence to any extent of alcoholic beverages or drugs which may affect judgment or coordination while attending this class.

f) No "horseplay" while in class or on the range.

g) Students will follow all commands given by the instructor.

h) When on the range, all firearms will be benched or holstered, unless told otherwise by the instructor.

i) The four safety rules shall be strictly always adhered to.

j) At the command of "cease-fire", all shooters will immediately stop firing, keep their weapons pointed downrange, and listen for further instructions from the instructor. Anyone may yell cease-fire if they observe an unsafe act.

k) Violations of these rules may result in your dismissal from the class.

l) Other (Appropriate clothing, drinks, snacks, first aid, etc.).

2. Objectives:

a) To re-certify armed security guards to carry firearms after successfully completing an 8-hour course of instruction.

b) To inform armed security guards of escalation and de-escalation of force issues, as well as using deadly physical force as justified by law.

c) To display knowledge and proficiency of deadly force issues by passing an approved written test with a minimum score of 100 percent at the conclusion of the class. This requires a score of at least 70 percent on the initial test. Initial test scores below 70 percent fail the class. Students will be retested on the questions they missed until 100% is achieved.

d) To display shooting proficiency by firing a minimum of fifty (50) live rounds for qualification and achieving a score of at least 70 percent.

II. SAFETY AND STORAGE

There is no such thing as an “accidental discharge” of a firearm, unless the weapon is defective. Weapons fire due to intent or carelessness.

A. The Fire Firearms Safety Rules (Stress the importance of knowing and following the safety rules).

1. All firearms are considered loaded (never assume anything - check it)
2. Always point firearms in a safe direction (downrange, the ground, etc.), until on target and ready to fire
3. Always keep your trigger finger straight along the frame until on target and ready to fire
4. Always know your target and what’s behind it (bystanders, traffic, etc.)
5. Maintain control of your firearms (if not in possession, lock them up)

B. Weapon Manipulation (Discuss & Review Sub-Section B briefly) Stress the importance of being able to 1) recognize the different types of handguns and their condition, and 2) be able to operate the various functions of that weapon through familiarization.

C. Firearm Retention and Equipment (Discuss & Review Sub-Section C briefly. Assist students with organizing their gunbelt, as needed)

D. Ammunition and storage (Discuss & Review Sub-Section D briefly)

1. Ammunition
   a) Ensure the proper caliber is obtained for the firearm and that it is from a reliable source
   b) Inspect the ammunition for defects (twisted primers, bullets properly seated, etc.)

c) Factory ammunition should be used.

2. Storage

a) Ammunition not in use should be stored in a clean, dry location in its original factory container or a container designed for storing ammunition.

b) Store ammunition in a location other than where the firearms is stored, unless locked in a safe or other secured container.

c) Extra ammunition for use on duty will be stored in extra magazines or speed loaders - carry at least two full reloads for the particular type of handgun you are carrying, if possible (periodically exchange this ammunition with new ammunition).

E. Training household members (Discuss & Review Sub-Section E briefly)

1. All family members should be familiar with guns stored in the home and taught basic firearms safety
2. Children should be taught not to handle a “found” firearm and to report it to a responsible adult (stop, don’t touch, leave the area, tell an adult)
3. If appropriate, visitors should be told of the presence of loaded firearms in the home.

F. Hazards of loaded firearms in the home (Discuss and Review Sub-Section F briefly)

1. Discuss: Family members and visitors who are not familiar with the inherent hazards of firearms are at risk should they encounter a loaded firearm in the home; Persons shot while cleaning firearms or with “unloaded” firearms.

III. LAW AND LEGAL (Mandatory 3 hours, minimum)

A. Overview: The law and legal portion of this course is a vital block of instruction for armed guard applicants. Instructors must cover all topics listed below. References include A.R.S. Title 13 and the AZ DPS website: http://www.azdps.gov/license. The majority of the text "Legal Issues Relating to the Use of Deadly Force" is also applicable; however, this text was designed for the CCW course, not armed guards. Edit out specific references to CCW issues. References to specific section numbers (within parentheses) are for use with the "Legal Issues Relating to the Use of Deadly Force" text, if used.

1. Arizona law requires armed guards to receive initial and refresher training in order to obtain and renew an armed security guard license
2. The legal portion of those training requirements is the most important because violations of the laws pertaining to the use of firearms can lead to imprisonment, fines, and civil lawsuits
3. An armed security guard license is valid for 4 years and then must be renewed
4. Armed security guards must complete 8 hours of continuing firearms instruction annually for the type of firearm carried while on duty

B. Laws pertaining to firearms and deadly physical force (Reminder: in some chapters, only certain statutes must be addressed, and they are given in italics.)

1. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 11, Homicide (Section III.A) 13-1102, 1103.
2. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 12, Assault and Related Offenses (Section III.B)13-1201, 1202, 1203, 1204.
3. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 15, Criminal Trespass and Burglary (Section III.C) Cover aspects that pertain to armed guards.
4. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 29, Offenses Against Public Order – Disorderly Conduct (Section III.D) 2904.A.6 & discuss how 2911 could affect persons with weapons on school grounds.
5. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 31 Weapons and Explosives (Section III.E) 13-3101, 3102, 3107, 3112. Information that does not pertain to carrying deadly weapons may be omitted.
6. Briefly discuss Civil Laws Impacting the Use of Firearms (Section IV) Overview of Intentional Acts and Negligence.
7. **Thoroughly discuss A.R.S. Title 13, Chapter 4, Justification (Section V) All relevant subsections to include 401, 402.B.2, 403.6, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 411, 412, 413 & 417. Subsections that do not pertain to armed guards carrying weapons may be omitted. This chapter is the most crucial section of the law and legal training requirement, and all instructors must be thoroughly knowledgeable of this section of the legal text (Section V).**
8. Briefly discuss A.R.S. Title 4, Chapter 2 (4-244.29) (Patrons may not bring firearms into commercial establishments that serve alcohol for consumption on the premises)
9. Briefly discuss other applicable laws (Section VII) 13-3601, 3602 (only how these sections pertain to possessing firearms) Section VII.A.4 & 18 USC 922 – Federal Gun Free School Zone overview (only provide general awareness of this federal law, direct students with in-depth questions to consult an attorney) Section VII.J.
10. Request students visit the AZ DPS Licensing website at: http://www.azdps.gov/license/default.asp.
11. A.R.S. Title 32, Article 4, (Security Guard Regulation) Sections 2632.D, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2637, 2638, and 2642.

C. Contact with law enforcement (Discuss & Review Sub-Section C briefly)

1. Armed guards will typically be in uniform and obvious to law enforcement officers. If law enforcement officers arrive at your post (or other area of responsibility), identify yourself and inform them of the situation, or in the event you did not request the police, ask them if they are responding to an incident. Cooperation and information sharing are critical.

2. Approaching law enforcement during volatile situations can further aggravate the situation. Do not interfere with or approach officers interacting with the public without first getting their attention and requesting permission.
3. Officers are authorized to require armed guards to produce their identification upon request.
4. Discuss: Responsibilities of reporting shooting incidents or accidental discharges

IV. WEAPON CARE AND MAINTENANCE (Discuss & Review Section IV briefly, primarily stress the need to keep the handgun clean)

A. Read the owner's manual (Many are available on the internet or by corresponding with the manufacturer)
B. Safety (unload, no ammunition present)
C. Field Stripping (as applicable, read owner's manual)
D. Magazines (cleaning, check for defects, no lubricants)
E. Cleaning and lubrication (proper equipment, solvents & lubricants, how often)
F. Function check before loading the firearm

V. MENTAL CONDITIONING and TACTICS

A. Visualization Techniques (Discuss & Review Sub-Section B briefly)

1. Use "what if" scenarios to prepare an appropriate reaction
2. The way you prepare and train will be the way you respond in a high-stress situation
3. You will not likely have time to create a plan once the attacker engages you

B. Defensive Measures (Discuss & Review Sub-Section B briefly)

1. Before the confrontation (Passive defensive measures)
   a) Ensure your equipment is in good working order (firearm, flashlight, handcuffs, etc.)
   b) Know the physical layout of your post or area of responsibility.
   c) Professional appearance (studies conducted by the FBI have shown that violent felons have been more reluctant to assault uniformed officers who displayed a professional and neat appearance)
   d) Projection (Posture, head erect, making eye contact, walking with a purpose, overall confidence)
   e) Awareness (Always be aware of what is going on around you)
   f) Ability to apply deadly force (Do not carry deadly weapons unless you are prepared to use them)

g) Verbal commands and de-escalation (Includes verbal communication such as self-identification and challenges – “Security”, “Who are you?”, “What’s the problem?”, “Stop!”, etc.)

h) Confidence – know your responsibilities and authority.

2. The Confrontation (the fight is on – active defensive measures)
   a) Appropriate level of force
      (1) What is the overall situation?
      (2) What is/are the aggressor(s) doing? (Demeanor and actions – watch the hands)
      (3) What weapons, if any, does the aggressor possess? (Pipe, knife, gun?)
      (4) Non-lethal weapons (If an option – mace, batons, flashlights, stun guns, etc.)
      (5) Should you retreat and call for help?
      (6) Is threatening deadly physical force justified and the best option?
3. Assailants attempting to take the firearm at close quarters.
   a) Holstered (belt/hip)
      (1) Obtain firing grip, use support hand over the top (keep handgun in holster)
      (2) Rapidly turn firing side hip away from assailant, repeat until they release.
      (3) Retreat and regroup
      (4) Verbal commands (“Stop, let go”, etc)
   b) Not holstered, and the assailant has a grip on the barrel/slide
      (1) Keep the trigger finger straight along the frame or wrap around grip
      (2) Use the support hand as needed to also grip the handgun
      (3) Violently pull the handgun back towards your body, down, or rapidly move the muzzle in a clockwise or counter-clockwise movement, or a combination of all three methods
      (4) Consider using a support hand to strike the assailant’s face/nose/throat
      (5) Keep fighting until the assailant lets go
      (6) Retreat and regroup
      (7) Verbal commands (Stop, let go”, etc.)
4. Is deadly physical force justified and the best option?
5. Do you have the opportunity to draw your handgun?
   a) How close is the aggressor? (in your face vs. 5-20 feet away)

b) Can they reach your handgun?

c) After drawing, should I keep my handgun close or extend my arms into a shooting position?

6. Never give up!
7. Firing (Expectations, hitting the attacker, blood, injury, death)

C. If Deadly Physical Force has been used

1. Misconceptions (Real life vs. movies)
2. Did you make a plan? (What are you going to do now?)
3. Injuries (To attacker and/or self, first aid)
4. 911 - Call immediately, follow their instructions
5. Arrival of the police (Empty hands, secure the handgun, don't disturb the scene)
6. Investigation (Crime scene, confiscation of the handgun as evidence, attorney, police interviews)
7. Physical reactions
   a) Adrenaline rush, excitability, sleeplessness (May last for days)
   b) Depression, fatigue (May last for days)
8. Psychological reactions
   a) Elation
   b) Revulsion
   c) Remorse
   d) Self-Doubt
   e) Acceptance
9. Post-Traumatic Stress

D. Grappling with suspects while holding a handgun

1. If an armed guard is only justified in using physical force after drawing a handgun, a handgun must be holstered before grabbing or wrestling with the suspect. This includes handcuffing.
2. "Sympathetic grip" can be experienced by a person in a high-stress situation. Sympathetic grip can occur when one hand grips an object, and the other hand mimics the same movement, even though it is not directly involved with the gripping action. In other words, if a person grabs another person with their support hand while they are holding a handgun in their firing hand, they can unconsciously fire the weapon if their finger is on the trigger.

This event could obviously lead to tragic and unintentional results (Keep your trigger finger straight along the frame).

3. If an armed guard is justified in making an arrest or detaining a suspect at gunpoint, the armed guard must stay out of arm's reach from the suspect.

E. Cover vs. concealment (Cover is a hard barrier that will stop a bullet, such as a brick wall or a tree; concealment is hiding without protection from bullets, such as a bush or a blanket)

VI. WEAPON MANIPULATION AND MARKSMANSHIP (Discuss & Review Section VI as needed)

A. Isosceles and Modified Weaver positions (demonstrate)

B. Drawing and holstering techniques (demonstrate)

C. Grip (Two hands vs. one hand)

1. Flashlights
2. Use of firing hand or support hand only while shooting

D. Sight Alignment

1. Sight picture
2. Dominant eye
3. Sight alignment (front and rear sights, eye focused on front sight)
4. Point shooting

E. Trigger

1. Trigger finger straight along the frame until on target and ready to fire
2. Steady pressure vs. anticipation
3. Breathing

F. Loading and unloading

1. Single/Double Action Revolvers
   a) Loading
   b) Unloading
2. Semiautomatics
   a) Loading
   b) Unloading

G. Firing

1. Squib rounds and misfires (Squib – underpowered; misfire – delayed or dud)
2. Recoil

3. Malfunction drills
    a) Semi-auto (tap, rack, and assess or, on a double feed or stove pipe, strip the magazine, rack the slide twice, insert a fresh magazine, rack the slide again, and assess)
    b) Revolver (continue to squeeze trigger or draw back hammer, later clean under the star extractor and/or between the cylinder and forcing cone)

VII. THREAT RECOGNITION and JUDGMENTAL SHOOTING

Use firearms training simulators, situational questions, slides, videos, use of volunteers, skirts, reenactments, paper targets, etc. (Include use of verbal commands)

A. Shoot/No shoot situations/scenarios.

B. Escalation and de-escalation of force situations/scenarios (verbal, empty hand, impact and chemical weapons, deadly physical force – there is no requirement to escalate or de-escalate in any particular order of force levels. Levels may be skipped, as appropriate, depending on the situation)

C. Student must be able to determine the threat and the appropriate action.

D. Reminder: a firearm is a tool of last resort

VIII. WRITTEN TEST

A. Authorized 15-question test, with a score of at least 70 percent. Students scoring below 70 percent must be retrained. Final score following retests must be 100%.

B. All incorrect answers will be reviewed and retested immediately following administration of the written test. The retest may be written or verbal, group or individual.

IX. FIREARM QUALIFICATION

A. Minimum standard: 50 rounds with a firearm and live ammunition, using an authorized course of fire (see Appendix A). Ammunition shall consist of a case, primer, powder and a lead or lead-jacketed bullet (frangible ammo may be used if the range requires it). Use of simulated, marking, and/or rubber projectiles is prohibited. Students should be drawing and firing from a holster they intend to use to carry their handgun, but this is not mandatory.

B. NRA TQ-15, TQ-19 or equivalent, i.e., secondary scoring ring equal to 14 x 16, or less. Shots outside of the 2nd scoring ring will not count.

C. 70 percent hits within the secondary scoring ring are required for a passing score.

- **Trainers:** Training shall be **at least 8 hours** in duration and **does not** include a lunch break. Ten-minute breaks each hour are permissible and will not count against the 9-hours. Establish and maintain (5 years) a sign-in roster for each class.
- The agency shall ensure the application and training verification has been signed by the instructor or designee.

- Armed Guards **may not** work a security post until they are in possession of a valid security guard card, armed guard card, and are wearing a DPS-approved uniform (as applicable).

Appendix A: Armed Security Guard Authorized Course of Fire – Handgun

This 50-round handgun qualification course requires a minimum passing score of at least 175 (70% of 250 maximum possible points), using an NRA TQ-15, TQ-19, or equivalent, i.e., secondary scoring ring equal to 14 x 16 or less. Shots to the head within the secondary scoring ring count as hits. Shots impacting outside of the 2nd scoring will not count. Each hit will count as 5 points. Student firing semiautomatic pistols may reload as needed, except for the final string at the 7-yard line, which is mandatory. All rounds will be fired using two hands. Ensure students know what the starting position is by demonstration.

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Distance (Yards) At the _____,	**Start Position** from the _____,	**Rounds** fire ____ rounds,	**Time (Seconds)** in _____seconds,	**Other** then _____.
15	Holster	2	10	Go to ready
15	Ready	2	9	Go to ready
15	Ready	2	9	Reload, holster
10	Holster	3	7	Go to ready
10	Ready	3	6	Reload, holster
10	Holster	2	6	Go to ready
10	Ready	1	4	Holster
10	Holster	2	6	Go to ready
10	Ready	1	4	Reload, holster
7	Holster	3	8	Go to ready
7	Holster	3	7	Reload, holster
7	Holster	3	8	Go to ready
7	Ready	3, mandatory reload, then 2	20	Holster
5	Holster	2	4	Go to ready
5	Ready	2	3	Go to ready
5	Ready	2	3	Reload, holster
3	Holster	2	4	Go to ready
3	Ready	2	3	Go to ready
3	Ready	2	3	Reload, holster
3	Holster	2	4	Go to ready
3	Ready	2	3	Go to ready
3	Ready	2	3	Clear weapons, holster