

**Arkansas  
Law Enforcement Training  
Academy**

**Basic Training**

**Firearms Manual**

**Fundamentals  
Of  
Marksmanship**

## Mental Imprinting

A learned technique which has become committed to the subconscious because of repetitive practice.

Simply put, you do something over and over until you can do it without having to think about it. Some habits are a result of mental imprinting, like signing your name, or turning on the left blinker signal while driving.

The stronger an existing habit is, the more repetitions it will take to make a new technique dominant. It is harder to learn a new technique if you have to first unlearn an old one.

Examples:      Trained or practiced with only a revolver.

                    Trained or practiced with poor shooting techniques.

## Components of the Auto Pistol

Frame

Barrel

Muzzle

Front Sight

Slide

Ejection Port

Rear Sight

Back Strap

Front Strap

Slide Lock Lever

Trigger

Trigger Guard

Magazine Release

Magazine

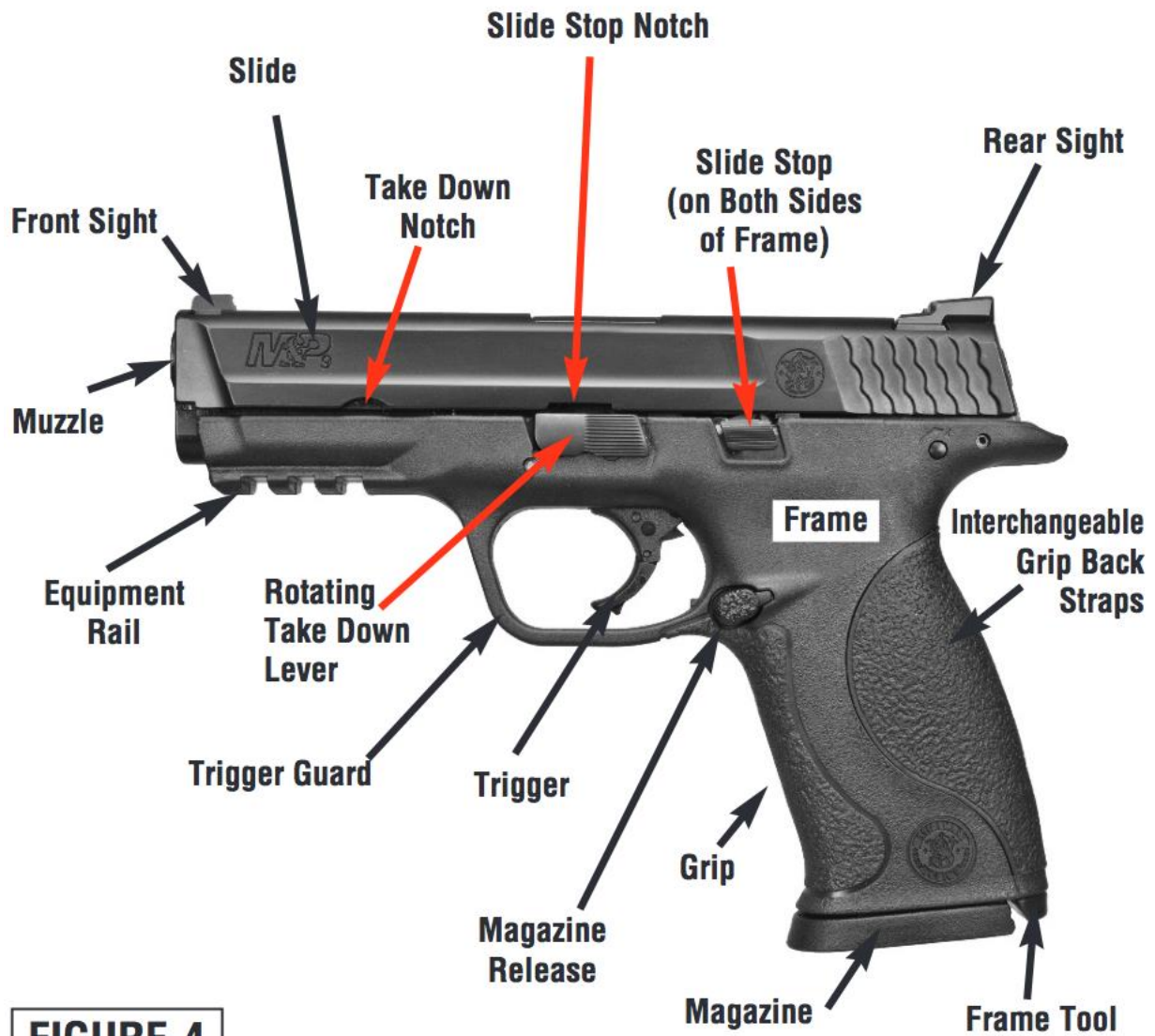
Magazine Well

De-Cocking Lever

Glock

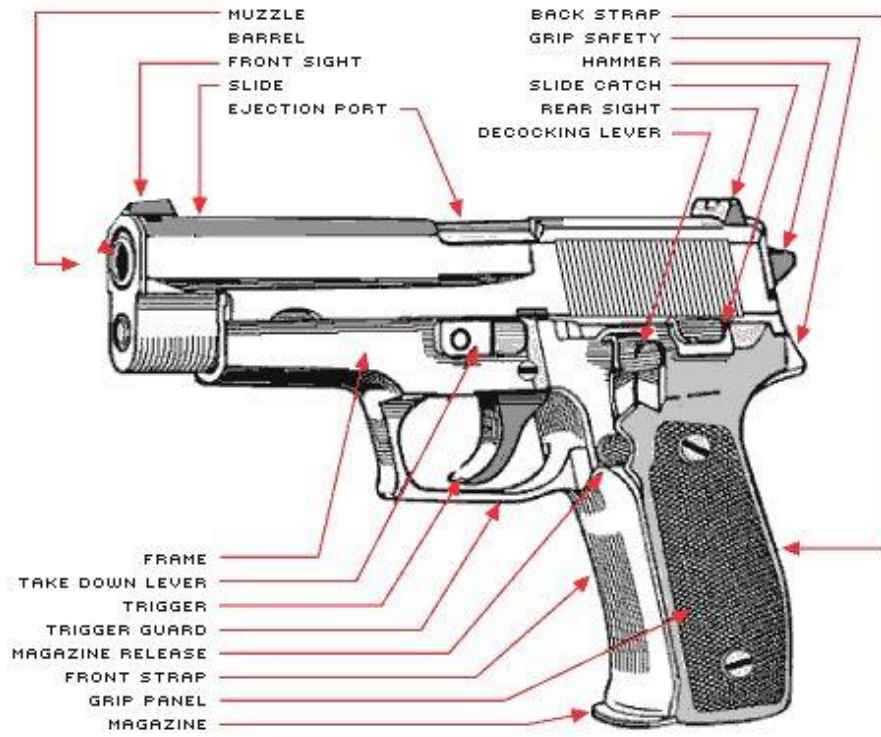


Smith & Wesson



**FIGURE 4**

# Sig Sauer



## The Magazine

A Magazine always has a self-contained spring which keeps the stored cartridges under tension so that they will be in the correct position for feeding.



## Magazine Components

Body (Tube)

Base Plate

Spring

Insert

Follower



## Magazine Functions

Holds the ammo supply.

Locks the slide back after the last cartridge has been fired.

Provides spring tension for self-ejection when the magazine release is pressed.

## Magazine Inspection

If the magazine doesn't work, the gun won't work

The magazine should be cleaned and inspected whenever the pistol is cleaned and inspected

Things to specifically inspect for:

Cracks

Dents

Deformed feed lips

## Operation Cycle of the Auto Pistol

The operation cycle is the entire sequence of events which starts when the pistol is fired and ends when the next cartridge is in the pistol's chamber and ready to be fired. Although the operation cycle is one continuous event it can be broken down into four phases: FEED, FIRE, EXTRACT, and EJECT.

Feed - The process of moving the cartridge from the magazine into the chamber.

Fire - The firing pin impacts with the primer causing the cartridge to "fire"

Extract - The cartridge case is pulled from the chamber.

Eject - The cartridge case is thrown out of the pistol

## Firearms Safety Features

All factory installed safety features must be left operational.

## Unsecured Firearms Safety

For a pistol to be both secure and accessible, it must be on your person.

If it is not on your person, you don't have control of it.

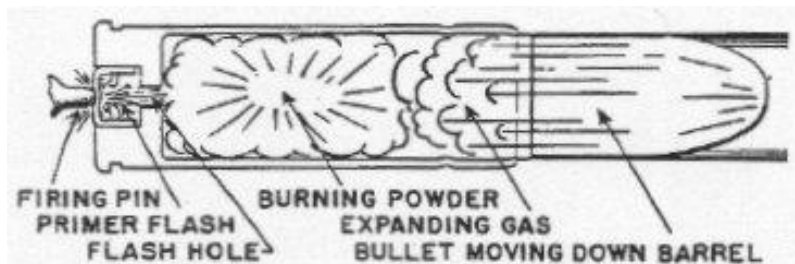
Follow your department policies on securing of issued firearms while off duty.



## Small Arms Ammunition

All modern small arms ammunition consists of individual cartridges which are completely self-contained units of four components.

Cartridge Case  
Primer  
Powder  
Bullet



## Common Types of Ammunition Used By Law Enforcement

### Ball

Reliably feeds in virtually any auto pistol in good condition.

Training ammunition.

### Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP)

Same as above but a cavity at the tip extends into the interior of the bullet.

Bullet expansion is most likely to occur with JHP.

Some JHP will have a Polymer tip over the hollow point.

Duty ammunition.

### Dummy

A "Training Dummy" has no explosive primer or powder.

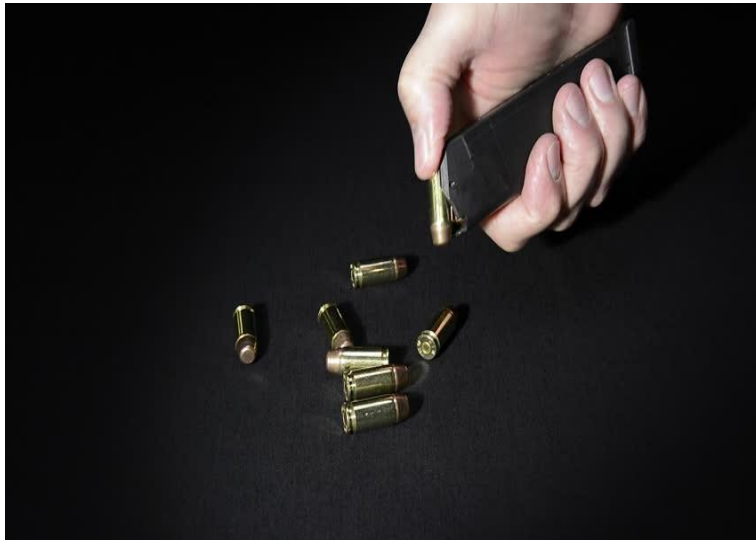
Used for training and firearms maintenance / testing.

## LOADING/UNLOADING THE PISTOL MAGAZINE

To load the magazine, hold the empty magazine with the support hand in front of the body at approximately chest level. The front of the magazine points across the front of the body towards the strong side, and the support hand thumb is placed on back of the magazine body, and pointing up. A portion of the tip of the thumb should extend upwards past the lip of the magazine.

Hold a cartridge with the thumb and index finger of the strong hand so that the base of the cartridge is pointing outwards past the tip of the thumb. Using the support hand thumb as a guide, press the base of the cartridge down on the follower at the front of the feed lips until the cartridge can easily be pushed under and past the feed lips. Push until the base of the cartridge touches the rear of the inside of the magazine body. Allow the magazine spring to push the cartridge upwards until the cartridge touches the underside of the Feed Lips. Release the cartridge. Repeat until the magazine is loaded with the maximum number of cartridges recommended by the magazine manufacturer.

To unload the magazine, hold the magazine in either hand with the thumb placed along the open top of the magazine. The thumb should be pointed forward so that the ball of the thumb is on top of the cartridge and pointing in the same direction as the cartridge. Press down and forward until the cartridge is completely out of the magazine. Let the released cartridge fall into the palm of the other hand, or onto a suitable surface. Repeat until all cartridges have been removed from the magazine.



## Administrative Loading

The administrative loading of the pistol is used when reloading after inspection or maintenance. Follow this procedure for all loading except when involved in a shooting or during a training exercise which requires action reloading procedures.

Start with the slide fully forward. Do not lock the slide to the rear prior to loading the pistol administratively.

1. Hold the pistol properly in the strong hand with the trigger finger off of the trigger and completely out of the trigger guard, manual safety engaged.
2. With the support hand, insert a loaded magazine into the magazine well until it locks into place.
3. With the support hand, cycle the slide to load a round in the chamber. Make sure you engage all manual safeties and de-cock if it applies.
4. Properly holster the pistol.
5. Tug on the base of the loaded magazine to ensure that it is locked into the magazine well.

**CAUTION!** The pistol should not be loaded by placing a cartridge into the chamber and then letting the slide go forward. This will eventually cause the extractor hook to weaken and break. If the firing pin were stuck forward the cartridge in the chamber would fire out of battery causing damage to the pistol and probably injury to you.

## Administrative Unload

This unloading procedure is followed when unloading the pistol prior to cleaning, inspection, or changing ammunition for range qualification. Start with the pistol holstered, it should already be loaded. Safety engaged / de-cocked.

1. With the pistol still in the holster, remove the magazine and set it aside.
2. Draw the pistol from the holster, keeping your trigger finger outside the trigger guard.
3. Point the pistol in a safe direction and with the support hand cycle the slide at least three times. The first cycle will eject a live round onto an appropriate surface. Do not attempt to catch the ejected round.
4. Lock the slide to the rear and visibly check for any ammunition

**WARNING!** If a second round ejects, stop, re-holster, and remove the magazine. Repeat steps 2-4.

The administrative unload is now complete.

## Slide Manipulation

When Manipulating (racking) the slide for any reason (loading, unloading, immediate action, etc.) use one of two methods.

### Over Method (Glock)

Using the fingertips and heel of the support hand, the slide is gripped with the heel of the hand on the side of the pistol, and the four fingers over the top of the slide gripping the opposite side with the finger tips. The hand should be behind the ejection port when manipulating the slide. The thumb is toward the operator's chest, and the muzzle is downrange.

### Pinch Method

Using the thumb and index finger of the support hand, "pinch" the rear of the slide. The thumb must point towards the muzzle of the auto-pistol. The placement of the hand is to be behind the ejection port

## Manual Slide Lock

### Right handed

Grasp the pistol grip with the right hand with the right thumb placed so that it is pushing upwards on the slide stop lever.

With the left hand, move the slide to the rear until the slide stops. With the right thumb, push upwards against the slide stop lever, which engages the locking notch on the slide.

Release the left hand first, and the slide will remain locked to the rear.

### Left handed

Grasp the pistol properly with the left hand and with the index finger extended straight forward pressing upwards on the slide stop lever.

With the right hand, move the slide to the rear until the slide stops. The left index finger is pushing upwards against the slide stop lever, which engages the locking notch on the slide.

Release the right hand first, and the slide will remain locked to the rear.

## When to Use De-cocking Procedures

In any arrest situation.

Before holstering the pistol.

Before initiating non-shooting tactical movement.

## How to Use De-cocking Procedures

The general rule is to always use the manual safety / de-cocking lever to de-cock the auto-pistol. Never press or pull the trigger in the de-cocking process. Keep your finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard if at all possible.

## Proper Holstering

A major cause of unintentional/negligent discharges with the auto pistol is having the trigger finger in the trigger guard when placing the pistol in a holster with a covered trigger guard.

De-cocking lever engaged. Safety on. \*Note\* Some auto pistols may not have manual safeties or de-cocking levers (Glock).

The trigger finger is extended straight forward and slightly up, outside of the trigger guard.(along the side of the frame)

The muzzle of the pistol is inserted into the holster and pushed down.

The thumb is used to push the rear of the slide to keep it in battery as the pistol is holstered.

Make sure the pistol is completely inserted into the holster before letting it go.

Engage all holster retention features.

## Ready Position

This is the position the shooter assumes when the pistol is drawn, but its immediate use is not anticipated. Trigger finger should always be indexed (clearly outside of trigger guard, extended straight forward along the frame).

### 1. High Ready

Maintain a proper firing grip with trigger finger indexed (clearly outside of the trigger guard, fully extended straight along the frame) and withdraw the weapon by bending the elbows straight down, lowering the weapon, at the same time, keeping the sights aligned. Lower the weapon until your visual field is clear of the weapon system and the weapon is in the lower quadrant of your visual field with sights aligned.

After raising the weapon to a position along the visual line between the shooter's eyes and the threat, the sights should be close to perfectly aligned allowing for the quick discharge of the weapon system.

### 2. Low Ready

Maintain a proper firing grip with trigger finger indexed (clearly outside of the trigger guard, fully extended straight along the frame) and withdraw the weapon by slightly bending the elbows as you lower the muzzle approximately 45 degrees downward.

# 7 Steps of Marksmanship

Stance

Grip

Sight Alignment

Sight Picture

Breath Control

Trigger Control

Follow Through

## Stance

# Isosceles

(Universal Fighting Stance)

Proper Body Position:

1. Feet, knees, hips, shoulders square to the threat or direction of travel
2. Knees slightly bent
3. Bend slightly forward at the waist (aggressive posture / control recoil)
4. Shoulders rolled forward
5. Arms straight with elbows and wrists locked
6. Head erect (bring the weapon to the eyes, not your head and eyes to the weapon).
7. Body weight resting on balls of feet, not the toes or heels



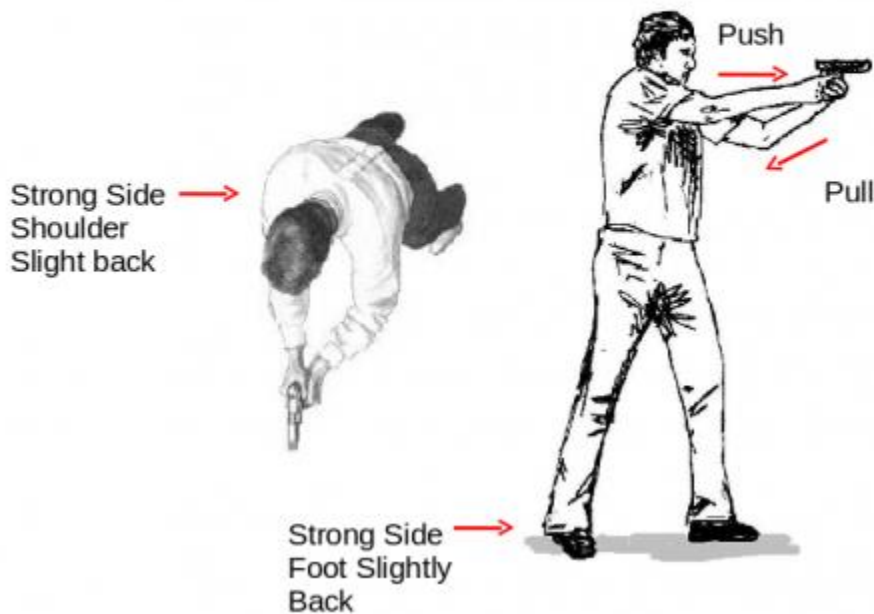


# Weaver

Proper Body Position:

1. Stand in the interview position
2. The feet are approximately shoulder width apart, with strong side foot slightly back
3. Bend slightly forward at the waist (aggressive posture / control recoil)
4. The strong arm is slightly bent
5. The support arm is sharply bent with elbow pointing straight down
6. Using approximately 40 pounds of pressure, push forward with the strong arm, and pull back with the support arm. This equal and opposite pressure creates the "isometric lock" on the pistol which aids in controlling recoil
7. Head erect (bring the weapon to the eyes, not your head and eyes to the weapon).

## The Weaver Position



# Modified Weaver

Proper Body Position:

1. Stand in the interview position
2. Knees slightly bent with feet approximately shoulder width apart
3. Bend slightly forward at the waist (aggressive posture / control recoil)
4. Strong arm is extended straight out, and the elbow is locked
5. Support arm pulls back on the gun hand with approximately 40 pounds of pressure. This locks the gun arm into the shoulder like a rifle stock
6. Head erect (bring the weapon to the eyes, not your head and eyes to the weapon).



## Grip

### Firing Grip

Use a firm grip with the hand as high on the back strap of the pistol as possible. The pistol and arm should be positioned so that a straight line runs from the muzzle of the pistol back up the arm. The fingers make a natural grip around the front strap with the trigger finger indexed (clearly outside of the trigger guard, fully extended straight along the frame). This grip should be tight, but not so tight that it causes fatigue or shaking.

The trigger finger should be inserted into the trigger guard in a natural, unstrained position so that pulling it to the rear exerts a force straight back - not pushing to the left or pulling to the right. This is true for both double action and single action shooting although the exact position of the finger on the trigger will not be exactly the same for both modes of shooting.

### Supporting Hand Position

The support hand fingers wrap around the strong hand, with index finger placed tightly beneath the trigger guard. The supporting hand should be grasping as firmly as the firing hand.

### Thumb Positions

The thumbs will lay against the support side of the frame, side by side, pointing at the target.

Mechanical safeties and de-cocking levers can cause the shooter to change the firing grip. Some shooters find that with the thumb curved downwards provides a more secure hold. The pad of the offhand thumb placed on the thumbnail of the strong hand. However, this placement may vary with the individual physique and/or type of auto-pistol being fired.



1.



2.



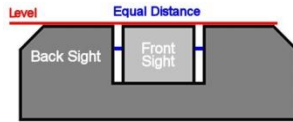
3.



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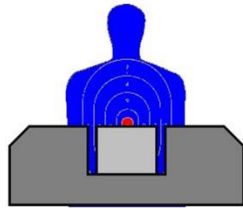
## Sight Alignment

The relationship of the front sight to the rear sight. Perfect sight alignment places the tops of both the front and rear sights level across the top and places the front sight exactly in the center of the rear sight as viewed from the rear.

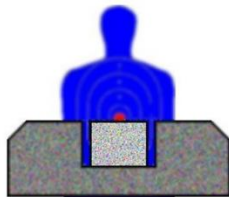


## Sight Picture

The relationship of the target, the sighting system, and the eye. Ideally, there will be perfect alignment and the top of the front sight will appear to be exactly at the intended point of impact.



Focus on the Front sight and concentrate on a smooth even trigger pull. The rear sight and target will be slightly out of focus, with the front sight clearly in focus.



## Breath Control

If you know that you are going to shoot immediately, such as on the range during training, prepare by deeply inhaling and exhaling several times. Then, take a deep breath (inhale) and slowly let about 1/4 to 1/3 of it out (exhale).

## Trigger Control

The trigger squeeze must be gentle, deliberate and controlled.

1. The trigger finger should be positioned so that you are able to pull the trigger straight back to the rear without disrupting alignment.
  - a. This action takes practice. The muscles in our hands are sympathetic. When you “squeeze” the trigger finger, the rest of the fingers on the hand want to sympathetically “squeeze” at the same time.
  - b. With practice and concentration you can disarticulate the trigger finger from the rest of the gripping hand.
2. The trigger finger should not contact the frame of the gun at any time.
3. The trigger finger should be comfortably extended so that the point of contact with the trigger is the middle of the pad of the first fingertip.
  - a. Ideally, the pad of the finger should be 90-degrees to the trigger, which enables you to pull the trigger straight to the rear.
4. The trigger must be released with the same speed and rhythm as it is pulled.
  - a. Keep finger in contact with the trigger as it returns. Allowing the trigger finger to return forward without contact with the trigger, further than necessary, often results in “slapping” or “jerking” the trigger during subsequent shots.
5. Alignment of the sights and squeezing the trigger must be done at the same time.
  - a. Normally, triggers have a slight amount of free movement until the trigger stops against the hammer/sear engagement point. Pulling through that free movement and holding against the weight of the hammer/sear engagement is called “prepping” the trigger. While aligning sights on the target begin this free movement holding against the hammer/sear engagement. When proper sight picture is achieved, complete the trigger squeeze.
6. The term “squeeze” implies that increasing the level of pressure against the trigger is done as a smooth acceleration

## Ball & Dummy Practice

**Conducted by Firearms Instructors (Range ONLY).** The ammunition used is a random selection of live or dummy ammunition. This training allows the shooter to witness the disturbance in sight alignment if proper trigger discipline is not used as they fire a dummy round.

## Dry Firing Practice

**Conducted by Firearms Instructors.** This training allows the shooter to employ all the factors of controlling the firing of an accurate shot without using any live ammunition at all. Focus on the front sight, it should not move when the main spring of the firing mechanism completes the firing cycle.

## Follow Through

“Follow through” is the attempt by the shooter to keep everything exactly as it was set up until the round is on its way to the target. “Follow through” is simply allowing one action to be completed before beginning the next action. It is important that the student learns to “follow through” from the beginning. It must be done deliberately, at first, until it has become “Mentally Imprinted”. When the shot is fired, continue pressing the trigger all the way to the rear and keep your eye on the front sight as it recoils up and comes back down onto the target. Then, re-acquire the proper sight picture and then (and only then) allow the trigger to return forward only far enough for the trigger to re-set to a position where any movement to the rear will fire the pistol.

## Combat Reloading

The procedure for a Combat Reload is the same regardless of whether or not the pistol has been shot to Slide Lock condition.

1. Remove the support hand from the auto-pistol and remove a spare loaded magazine from the magazine pouch. Be careful to grasp it properly with the toe of the base plate in the palm of the hand, and the pad of the index finger against the tip of the top cartridge in the magazine.
2. Rotate the auto-pistol in the strong hand to the extent necessary to place your thumb on the magazine release. Press the magazine release button and hold it completely in until the magazine has fallen free of the auto-pistol. With some auto-pistols, such as the Glock, it may be necessary to give the auto-pistol a sharp outwards “flick” with the gun hand in order to ensure that the magazine reliably falls free of the magazine well.
3. Rotate the magazine well slightly to the support hand side, and relax your strong arm elbow. Bring the loaded magazine up to the magazine well, insert and push it firmly all the way into the magazine well with the heel of the support hand until the magazine locks into place. If the slide does not go forward, chambering a round, when the fresh magazine is inserted, simply rack the slide.
4. Re-establish a proper two-handed firing grip and stance, and assess the situation. Focus on the front sight, and concentrate on the trigger finger. Fire if appropriate.



## Tactical Reloading (Tactical Magazine Exchange)

A Tactical Reload should be performed anytime that the auto-pistol has been fired, but not shot to Slide Lock; and, the officer is not in immediate danger. It is not a good idea to throw ammunition away unnecessarily as it might be needed later. The procedure is:

1. Remove the support hand from the auto-pistol, and remove a loaded magazine from the magazine pouch. Be careful to grasp it properly with the toe of the base plate in the palm of the hand, and the pad of the index finger against the tip of the top cartridge in the magazine.
2. Shift the magazine so that it is now being held securely between the index and middle fingers with the base plate in the palm of the support hand.
2. Remove the trigger finger from the trigger guard. Place the support hand beneath the magazine well so that the base of the magazine in the auto-pistol is touching between the thumb and index finger of the support hand. Now press the magazine release button. Allow the magazine to eject into the support hand thumb and index finger, grasp it firmly, and withdraw it from the magazine well.
4. Insert the fully loaded magazine into the magazine well and, with the base of the support hand, push it into a fully seated position with a smooth, positive motion.
5. Do not discard the removed magazine. You may need any ammunition it still contains later. If the removed magazine is placed in the magazine pouch, be sure to insert it with the toe of the base plate towards the rear (backwards) so that you can identify it by feel, and not accidentally attempt to use it instead of a fully loaded magazine if you have to reload the auto-pistol again.
6. Re-establish a proper two-handed firing grip and stance, and assess the situation.

## Malfunctions

Stoppage: An unintended halt in the operation cycle of the auto pistol which can be corrected by the use of immediate action techniques.

Jam: An unintended halt in the operation cycle of the auto pistol which requires the application of remedial action. Includes damage to the auto pistol itself

## Types of Malfunctions

### Failure to Feed

The process of moving the cartridge from the magazine to the chamber is interrupted.

### Failure to Fire

Pressure on the trigger does not cause the auto pistol to fire.

### Failure to Extract

The cartridge case in the chamber is not pulled completely out of the chamber by the extractor.

### Failure to Eject

The cartridge case is pulled completely out of the chamber by the extractor, but it is not thrown completely clear of the auto pistol.

## Malfunctions - Types of Causes

### Operator Error:

The operator does something they shouldn't, doesn't do something they should, or does something wrong.

### Improper Ammo:

A cartridge with one or more components or dimensions incompatible with proper functioning.

### Improper Maintenance

Any improper maintenance procedure or material which causes or encourages an interruption in the operation cycle. INCLUDES NEGLECT.

## Bad Magazine

Any improper dimension or material within the magazine which causes an interruption in the operation cycle. Dents, cracks, deformed feed lips, improper manufacture, etc.

## Auto Pistol Related

Any condition in the auto pistol itself which interrupts the operation cycle. Usually requires the services of an armorer to correct.

## Corrective Action

Corrective action is an action taken to correct any unintended interruption of the operative cycle of the auto pistol. There are two levels of corrective action: Immediate Action and Remedial Action

## Immediate Action

Immediate Action: The unhesitating application of a probable remedy without investigating the cause. Immediate Action has two phases.

You always try phase one first, and if it doesn't solve the problem you begin phase two.

## Immediate Action Phase one

First, with any type of firearm, if you are pressing the trigger and the firearm will not fire, fully release the trigger and then press it again. If this does not result in a shot, then proceed with phase one.

TAP - the base of the magazine in the pistol with the heel of the supporting hand.

RACK - the slide all the way to the rear and then let it go forward freely.

ASSESS YOUR TARGET - Re-establish a proper firing grip, focus on the front sight, and concentrate on pressing the trigger straight back. Fire only if the threat still exists.

Phase one will almost always correct the more common stoppages of the auto pistol. Properly performed, phase one procedures can be executed quickly.

## Immediate Action Phase Two

Phase two procedures take considerably longer, even with extensive practice.

Rip - The magazine from the weapon

Retain - The magazine on your person, still contains valuable ammunition.

Rack - The slide briskly at least 3-5 times, keeping muzzle pointed in a safe direction.

Load - Load - Use a fresh magazine, if possible. The malfunction may be caused by a bad magazine. The second magazine will also have more ammo. Assess for threats, engage if needed - remembering to FOCUS on the FRONT SIGHT - CONCENTRATE on a smooth, even pull of the trigger finger.

Phase two procedures must be performed in the proper order. Practice the entire sequence until mental imprinting has been established.

## Remedial Action

The continuing effort, after immediate action procedures have failed, to return the auto pistol to operation. Remedial action may also be indicated when stoppages (although individually corrected by immediate action procedures) have been repetitive.

There are two phases to remedial action: Determine the cause and apply a remedy.

### Remedial Action Determining the Cause

Which phase of the operation cycle has been interrupted? In what manner? The shooter may need the services of a trained armorer or qualified instructor.

In most cases an armorer will have to determine the cause and apply a remedy. Follow your department policy regarding disassembly of the firearm.