

Summary of Feedback and Recommendations from Learners and Trainers

The following provides an account of the feedback and recommendations received from learners and trainers who participated in the first two training sessions that were held from July 9, 2007 to July 27, 2007, in Ottawa and Chilliwack. Comments are from both successful and unsuccessful candidates. Also included is a brief description of the measures that have been taken to address the comments.

1. There is too much material included in the first 8 days – especially the first week of training. There is not enough time to fully assimilate the fundamentals prior to beginning the range sessions.

Recommendation: Proficiency training should be spread out over a longer period and qualification testing should come later than day 6.

Outcome: The course has been revised to provide for more coaching on the shooting fundamentals (groupings) that will better prepare learners for the qualification sessions.

2. There is not enough time during regular course hours to practice.

Recommendation: Build in more range practice/training time.

Outcome: The syllabus has been adjusted to allow for a total of 12 additional hours of range time – spread out over 14 days. For the most part, these hours will occur during regular course hours.

3. There is not enough time between qualification sessions to practice and correct mistakes.

Recommendation: Have at least one day between qualification sessions to allow for extra practice and/or learning assistance.

Outcome: Qualification sessions will occur later in the course (Days 10,12 and 14) and there will be a day for practice in between each session.

4. There is not enough time for trainers to provide complete feedback to learners before the Range Master calls for the set up for the next stage.

Recommendation: Range periods should be longer and not as rushed.

Outcome: Learners will be divided into two smaller groups that will allow for additional individual feedback and coaching.

5. Trainers sometimes provide conflicting advice to learners with respect to the errors they are making and corrective measures that can be taken.

Recommendation: Each trainer should be assigned a group of learners and rotation of trainers should not occur.

Outcome: Rotation of trainers is considered advisable so that learners can benefit from a variety of assessments of their performance strengths and weaknesses. The practice is not intended to confuse the learner and, if this is the case, we encourage them to draw the inconsistencies to the trainers' attention.

6. Some learners achieved the required 200 score during practice sessions; however, failed to achieve a passing score during the qualification testing.

Recommendation: The method of qualification should be changed to take into consideration practice scores.

Outcome: Qualification testing is the method of evaluating the proficiency level attained by the learners following the training period. It measures the ability of an officer to ensure that he or she can function at a minimum standard. The Practical Pistol Course of fire is designed to simulate situational factors as well as stress associated with a shooting incident. This evaluation is therefore conducted under strict guidelines as required under the course training standards.

7. In some cases, learners' pistol grips were being adjusted on days 4 and 5.

Recommendation: Spend more time on fitting grips at the outset.

Outcome: For the most part, learners are fitted for their pistol grip on day 1 of training. However, it is normal in some cases to make adjustments and try alternative grips to address difficulties that are being experienced.

8. Time spent on night and dim light shooting took away from practice time.

Recommendation: Night and dim light shooting should either be eliminated or move to after qualification.

Outcome: It is important that CBSA officers be exposed to night and dim light shooting. It is still included within the adjusted course syllabus; however, it does not feature prominently.

9. CBSA scenarios resembled more the customs duties and not so much the immigration environment.

Recommendation: Some scenarios should be adjusted to replicate immigration duties.

Outcome: More immigration-related scenarios will be added to the course for future sessions.

10. A significant amount of time was spent driving from one training location to another. In Chilliwack, this involved the 90-minute ride to New Westminster for range practice and in Connaught, the drive between the hotel and the CDT training facility was 45-60 minutes.

Recommendation: Effort should be made to minimize transportation times.

Outcome: Due to restrictions with respect to operating hours of the range in Chilliwack, it was necessary to travel to the British Columbia Justice Institute for extra practice and for night and dim light shooting. We are currently exploring other ranges that are located closer to the Pacific Regional Training Centre. However, options are limited.

With respect to the experience at the Connaught facility, it was necessary for learners to be transported from their hotel and the range in the far west end of Ottawa to the Canadian Police College (CPC) in the east end. We are currently negotiating the terms of a lease agreement for a facility in the west end. When the lease is signed and the facility fitted up (estimated to be late September or early October), the transportation time will be considerably reduced.

11. Learners were required to study for and write the written exam on one of the qualification days. The preparation required for the exam took away from practice time and distracted them from focusing on qualification.

Recommendation: The written test should not be administered on the same days as firearms proficiency qualification.

Outcome: The course has been adjusted so that the written test is not taken on the same day as qualifications.

12. Learners should be encouraged to exercise their hands and forearms in order that they have the stamina to undertake the rigorous training.

Recommendation: Learners should be provided with instructions on hand and forearm exercises well in advance of the commencement of their training session.

Outcome: Hand and forearm strengthening exercises are now posted on the CBSA Intranet site and Regional Coordinators have been instructed to emphasize the importance of hand strength. Exercise devices are also being purchased and will be made available to officers who have been identified for training.

13. Learning assistance was provided only after hours. While most learners took advantage of the opportunity, it made for very long days – especially at Chilliwack.

Recommendation: The training day should end no later than 17:00 and, as much as possible, extra practice sessions should be built into regular training hours.

Outcome: The adjusted syllabus will allow for most learning activities to take place during normal training hours.

14. Learners had the most difficulty qualifying at the 25 metres. A few questioned the need for CBSA officers to qualify at 25 metres.

Recommendation: Eliminate the need to qualify at 25 metres.

Outcome: Stage I of the approved Course of fire is aimed shooting at 25 meters and is 14 rounds in 120 sec.; 5 rounds standing, strong hand, barricade; 2 rounds standing, support hand, barricade; 5 rounds kneeling, strong hand, barricade; and 2 rounds prone. The required minimum score is

46/70 (66%). This stage is designed to evaluate the ability of the officer to perform aimed shooting and is the base for the fundamentals of shooting at all distances.

In a shooting incident, the situation will dictate if the officer will fire instinctively at close range or will be required to take an aimed shot. It is very possible that a BSO may be required to shoot at a distance in excess of 25 meters when considering the distance, which separates the primary and secondary areas at land border ports.

Other federal agencies such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as Conservation Departments from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Yukon and North-West Territories have adopted the RCMP Practical Pistol Course of fire.

15. The session on values and ethics and EAP took away valuable proficiency training time.

Recommendation: eliminate EAP and values and ethics from the curriculum.

Outcome: These topics have been removed from the course and will be provided with the pre-course material.