

**Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training**880 Stillwater Road, Suite 100  
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Bulletin: No. 2015-16

Subject: **Rifle and Shotgun Training Requirements**

This bulletin provides an overview of the training required for peace officers to possess long and short barrel rifles and shotguns in the scope of their duties. It also reviews the legislative training mandate which only applies to short barrel rifles and shotguns and the Commission's action to extend the training requirement to include long barrel versions of both types of firearms.

**Background**

The training requirement for specified peace officers to possess short barrel rifles and shotguns was enacted by the Legislature as part of Senate Bill 359 with an effective date of July 13, 1999. The legislation extended the exemption to possess short barrel rifles and shotguns to additional peace officer classifications, established a training requirement and directed POST to develop a training course for each type of firearm. The shotgun training requirement is satisfied by completion of the standard format of the Regular Basic Course (RBC), Module II of the RBC – modular format, Reserve Module B or the Specialized Investigator's Basic Course (SIBC).

Training in the use of the shotgun is required in the peace officer basic courses noted above; however, it is not part of the PC 832 Course. Rifle training is not a required subject in any of the basic courses.

The legislation specified that the training course must be certified by POST. In response to the training mandate, POST brought together a committee of subject matter experts (SMEs) to develop the necessary course. Although the legislation only applied to short barrel rifles and shotguns, it was the recommendation of the committee that the training requirement should also include long barrel rifles and shotguns. The rationale was that the competencies and safety factors addressed in the training would be the same, regardless of barrel length. The committee's work led to the development of a two-part training course – Part I for long/short barrel shotgun training (minimum of 16 hours) and Part II for long/short barrel rifle training (minimum of 16 hours). A staff report was developed and submitted to the Commission recommending that it approve the two-part course (including training for both long and short barrel rifles and shotguns).

**Commission Action**

On October 28, 1999, the POST Commission unanimously approved the two-part course as an addition to Commission Regulation 1081. By approving the SME committee's recommendation to include long barrel rifles and shotguns in the training requirement, the Commission enhanced the mandate from the Legislature which only applied to short barrel firearms.

This resulted in a bifurcated training standard as follows:

- The training requirement for short barrel rifles and shotguns is a legislative mandate as delineated in Penal Code section 33220(b) (<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=pen&group=33001-34000&file=33210-33290>) and applies to peace officer members of a police department, sheriff's office, marshal's office, CHP, DOJ and CDCR.
- The training requirement for long barrel rifles and shotguns is a Commission requirement as delineated in Regulation 1081 (<https://www.post.ca.gov/regulation-1081-minimum-standards-for-legislatively-mandated-courses.aspx>) and applies to peace officer members of agencies that participate in the POST program.

#### **How this affects California law enforcement agencies in the POST program**

Senate Bill 359 established a training requirement for peace officers to possess short barrel rifles and shotguns in the scope of their duties. The legislation specified that the training must be POST certified which caused POST to develop the necessary courses. However, the deployment of rifles by an agency is a local decision and, as such, is not subject to review by POST.

Since 1999, a number of agencies in the POST program have issued rifles to peace officers to use in the course and scope of their duties. The two levels of training requirements have caused some confusion, thereby giving some agencies the impression that the training requirement only applies to short barrel rifles and shotguns.

Some agencies have inquired if there are alternatives to completing the Rifle Course. In order to meet the training requirement a course must be POST certified, be a minimum of 16 hours in length, and contain the topics listed in Commission Regulation 1081. Completion of a POST-certified rifle course, that meets the criteria listed above, is the only way to meet the legislative mandate and Commission requirement.

Questions regarding rifle or shotgun training requirements may be directed to the POST Regional Consultant (<https://www.post.ca.gov/regional-training-map.aspx>).

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