

Firearms General Information

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There have been a few questions on firearms. Questions are always good! I will attempt to provide some answers here and I am always willing to answer or discuss any questions or concerns you have on any topic. I have been a firearms instructor for the Marines, Police, Army, Secret Service, Air Marshals, Border Patrol and other federal agencies. In that time, I used a variety of pistols and shooting techniques that worked well and a few that required extra effort.

Flat Rock Region Training Center allows: conventional double action pistols (SIG 226, Beretta 92's etc.) or striker fired guns (Glocks, Smith & Wesson M&Ps ((M&P semi autos, not revolvers)).

They also approve Staccatos. **Staccatos are expensive** and Staccato **will only send or tune full-capacity magazines to/for Colorado for certified law enforcement officers, not academy cadets.** You don't need a Ferrari to pass driving or a Staccato to pass firearms.

They do not recommend (1911s, Browning High Powers, etc.) unless that is what your department issues. If you use a single-action gun, no factory safeties may be disabled. This includes grip safeties which must be operational as well as magazine disconnects. I recommend **against** buying a Kimber, Wilson, Colt Gold Cup or a similar expensive match 1911 that has tight tolerances. These guns tend to have reliability issues when they get shot a lot without cleaning or when you change ammunition types. Ruger, Springfield Armory 1911s usually work well. I have also had good luck with issued older (early 2000's) basic SIG 1911s in .45ACP. Avoid expensive match 1911's that have tight tolerances, they tend to have issues in a field environment outside the range.

At Flatrock you need to carry enough magazines to hold a minimum of 45 rounds.

1. Your pistol may have a weapons light mounted but you will still need belt flashlight.
2. You do **NOT need** a Micro Red Dot System (MRDS) to make it through the academy. Your pistol may have a Micro Red Dot System (MRDS) or reflex/optic mounted. **Do not mount it yourself!** Have an armorer or gunsmith do it. **Flat Rock will provide an armorer to do it for free.**

Your iron sights must be high enough to see through the optic so your red dot can be zeroed the same as your irons in case the red dot stops working. If you use the Micro Red Dot **mount** as a rear sight you may need to change the height of your front sight. Ask the armorer.

DO NOT RELY **ONLY** ON A MICRO RED DOT SYSTEM (MRDS)! Batteries and electronics can fail, this is why you must be able to use your back up iron sights through your Micro Red Dot.

3. I recommend **not buying a MRDS** unless you are certain your department will allow you to use it and will not issue you one. **You can pass the qualification course using iron sights; thousands of officers have done so.**

Spend extra money on practice ammo, not on extra cool stuff to put on your gun.

OK, so you don't believe me and have extra money that just needs to be spent on a MRDS. Talk to the lead instructors at Flatrock; they abuse guns and MRDS before they approve them for use. Armorers in this area have said the toughest are made by Trijicon and Holosun.

4. Weapons lights are expensive: You don't need a weapons light to do well at Flat Rock and many departments will issue you one when you are hired.

The first and most important thing to remember about firearms is that **YOU** the shooter, not the gun are the most important factor when it comes to shooting fast, accurately and SAFELY.

The instructors at Flat Rock are very good. If **you pay attention** to what they say and practice the techniques they demonstrate, you will pass the qualification course with **any** firearm that is on their approved list (posted at the end). The techniques they show you at Flat Rock may or may not be a little different than what you have learned elsewhere. Pay attention to what they show you. Their techniques have worked for hundreds if not thousands of shooters. Since the Marine Corps first sent me to Combat Pistol Instructor School in 1988, then to Jeff Coopers Gunsite in 1991 to working as Firearms Instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) through 2019; I have learned at least four different methods of shooting that were "the best" from different civilian, military and law enforcement schools. I learned something valuable from all of them once I started listening to the school I was at and stopped being fixated on what I already knew. (That was, and is still is very hard for me to do.)

If you already have a pistol that meets Flat Rock's standards and you like it, use that one. It doesn't matter what I, any other instructor, or the latest issue of Bullets and B.S. magazine think is the best police pistol. About 95% of shooting is the shooter not the gun.

Of the guns you are allowed to carry, pick the one you shoot the best. That is usually the one that feels the best in your hand. If your gun is malfunctioning with brass cased factory ammunition every 200 rounds or so, that is not acceptable. Get it fixed or get a different gun.

If you don't already have a gun you like and are relatively new to police type pistol shooting and are looking for a new gun, here are some recommendations to try and see which you like the best:

Caliber

Look at weapons in **9mm (Luger/parabellum)**. The ammunition is cheaper than other calibers and the recoil is a little less than .40 or .45 which makes it a little easier to shoot. Only get new brass cased ammo. If you are a new shooter with a Glock, 124 grain ammunition works a little more reliably than 115 grain ammunition.

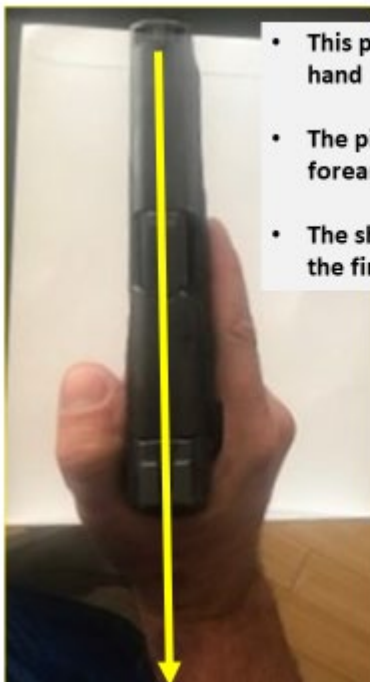
Ammo seek online is a good source

<https://ammoseek.com/ammo/9mm-luger?ca=brass&co=new>

Get a pistol that feels comfortable in your hand (It is not the end of the world if it doesn't fit perfectly).



- This pistol is about right for the shooters hand
- The pistol does align with the forearm
- The shooter can place enough of the finger on the trigger



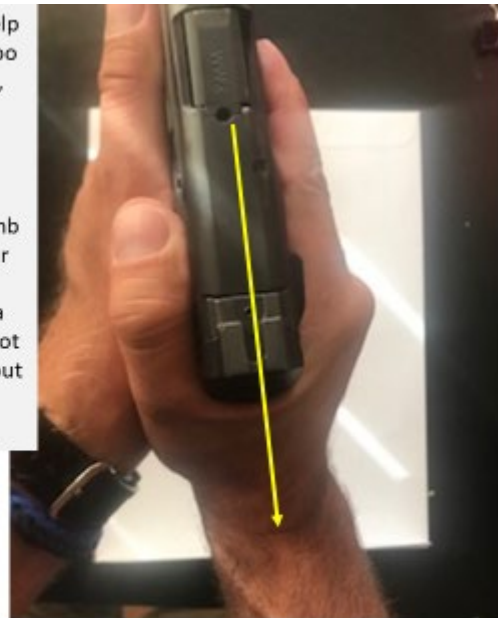
- This pistol is too big for the shooters hand
- The pistol does not align with the forearm,
- The shooter can place only the tip of the finger on the trigger





This gun is a little too big for the shooter. Some of the recoil is going into the shooter's thumb instead of the web of the shooter's hand.

- A two handed grip can help mitigate a pistol that is too big for the shooter's hand, as your wrist will not be straight anyway when shooting two handed.
- However, using your thumb instead of the web of your hand to control recoils /muzzle flip will make it a little more difficult to shoot multiple rounds quickly, but not impossible.



This gun is a better fit for the shooter as it will recoil more into the web of the shooter's hand instead of the thumb

Do not buy any manufacturer's, Ninja Covert Operator Alpha Force custom blaster! Don't get it, even if it is made by German gnomes in secret caverns and you become a member of the Spartacus club and get a secret decoder ring. Use the money you save to buy ammunition for practice.

Adamson's Police Supply in Frederick often has Police trade in Smith & Wesson M&Ps or Glocks

They also have a "Blue Label" or police discount program for Glocks and Smith & Wesson.

Liberty Arms in Johnstown and Fort Collins have one for Glocks.

Springfield Armory has a "Firstline" program for Law Enforcement

Sig Saur has the "SIG Professional Program" for Law Enforcement.

Models: I recommend **avoiding conventional double action autos** like the Berretta 92 and SIG 226, 228 and 229. **DO NOT buy a Beretta 92** because you carried one in the military.

I would look at striker fired firearms. Their trigger pull stays the same for every shot and it is generally easier to press than double action triggers. This makes it easier for most but not all shooters to master. Examples of some striker fired weapons are below.

Models of pistols you should look at should have a barrel between 4" and 5" inches long. Longer than 5" can be difficult to draw while sitting at a table or in a car; shorter than 4" can be a little more difficult to shoot at 25 or 50 yards.

Smith & Wesson M&P9 2.0 and M&P9 2.0 4" Compact – lots of holsters available (Not the S&W Shield or EZ models, these are good for concealed carry but the grip adapters on the magazine extensions can slow your reload if they work lose.)

A great police gun. Maybe better than a Glock, maybe not. M&Ps grips come with four different-size inserts and generally fit better in most people's hands than a Glock. The metal inserts in their frames make them much less susceptible to limp wristing malfunctions than a Glock. This makes them an excellent choice for a new shooter. I had no experience with the Smith and Wesson M&P series until eight years ago when some of the students were carrying them at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Since then I have seen a couple hundred or so students both Federal and Local, from beginners to Firearms Instructors put thousands of rounds of 9mm and .40 through both the older model and the new 2.0 model without a problem and I have as well. They are very good guns and the 2.0 series will take almost as much abuse from mud & sand as Glocks before they malfunction. Some people, especially those with smaller hands like the M&P adjustable grips better than Glocks.

Because the M&P 2.0 models have a steel insert in their frame they **are less likely to malfunction because of a weak grip** than a Glock. Their **grips are more adaptable** to hand size than a Glock. The M&P9 full size and M&P9 2.0 (4" barrel) compact are about the same size as the Glock 17 and 19 respectively. I frequently carry an M&P 2.0 compact 4". I have no experience with M&P9 3.6" compact.

Issues with M&Ps :

Extended magazine floor plate on the full size M&Ps

M&P Magazines

Glock Magazines



The floor plate on the full size (not the Compact) M&P magazine sticks out more than most. Some people will catch the pinky of their support hand on the second magazine when performing a speed reload and inadvertently pull both magazines out, keeping your pinky curled a little during reloads will prevent this, as will buying an aftermarket floor plate or using the M&P 2.0 compact.

Manual Safeties: You can get the M&Ps with or without a manual thumb safety. Both work fine. Most prefer no manual safety as it is simpler to operate the gun.

The **disadvantage** of a manual safety is that it requires more practice to operate it effectively. The Cherokee Marshalls had an officer fumble disengaging the safety on a handgun during a gunfight.

The **advantage** of having a good manual safety like that on an M&P or 1911 is on some occasions when officers have been disarmed by bad guys; the bad guy was unable to operate the safety and fire the officer's weapon.

Glock- most popular police & military handguns with lots of holsters available for them

I have had hundreds of students carry Glocks; I have as well and still carry a Glock 10mm frequently.

The Glock 17 and 19 are outstanding firearms. Glock is the most popular manufacturer of police and military handguns for a good reason. They are extremely reliable even in mud and sand. They are simple to use and their trigger pulls are fairly light and short making them easy to shoot well. Everyone makes holsters and accessories for them. The Glock 17 is a little bigger which some people find makes it a little easier to shoot. The Glock 19 is a little easier to carry concealed off duty.

Issues with Glocks:

The grips on Glocks are a little bigger than those on, Smith & Wesson M&Ps, CZ P-10F and P-10C, H&K VP9s.

Because the frame of the Glock is polymer it flexes a little when it is fired. **If it is not held with a firm grip it may malfunction. I have seen a few shooters with small hands or weak grip strength have this problem. Using 124 grain 9mm ammunition instead of 115 grain ammunition helps.** The initial run of 4th generation Glock 17 and 19s had stiffer .40 recoils springs in the 9mm guns and experienced this problem a lot with smaller shooters. They now come with a lighter 9mm recoil spring and that fixed the problem for most people.

Some of the early 3rd generation Model 22s in .40 S&W would not function reliably when flashlights were attached to them. I have not seen this occur in last 8 years or so.

Change the sights on your Glock if you want, but avoid other modifications.

Don't buy a ZEV or other custom Glocks- expensive highly modified Glocks even ones from ZEV technology are the only Glocks I have seen that do not perform well and have a lot of malfunctions. Avoid them for duty or self-defense.

CZ P-10F and P-10C

These are the full size (F) and compact (C) striker fired guns made by CZ. CZ's are noted for having **very good grips** that fit the hands of most people making them very easy to shoot. Several Border Patrol firearms instructors have bought them for matches and off duty carry and like them. I have liked the few I have shot but other than that I have no experience with them. Some instructors at Flat Rock carry them and like them.

SIG Sauer 320

I have only seen about 26 SIG Sauer 320s come through FLETC. Two had to be sent back to the factory for broken parts. The others worked just fine. Their **frames and grips are very adaptable to hand size**. Some instructors at Flat Rock carry them and like them. Students here have had no issues with the SIG 320's.

Issues with SIG

Unintentional discharges. The military SIGS have a manual thumb safety and I know of no accidental discharges while the manual safety was engaged. Most civilian SIGS do not have a manual safety. The first versions could fire when dropped on the rear of slides because inertia combined with the weight of the trigger would cause the gun to fire. That was fixed with a lighter-weight trigger.

There have been several documented instances of SIG 320s discharging while in Officers' Holsters. SIG says the gun was not fully seated in the holster and which left the trigger exposed. When the gun was pushed/jostled during the arrest something pressed the trigger causing the gun to fire.

<https://www.thetruthaboutguns.com/sig-sauer-issues-a-statement-regarding-the-video-of-a-montville-ct-police-officers-p320-discharge/>

SIG 320s need a **quality holster that will not bend** to keep anything from touching the trigger. ALL guns should always be fully holstered when not in use.

Sigs do NOT have an additional "trigger safety" so if anything puts rearward pressure on the front or side of a SIG 320 the gun will fire.



Glocks and most other striker-fired guns have a “trigger safety” which must be depressed usually by the shooter's finger before the trigger can move to the rear and fire the gun. They can still be fired if they are not in a good holster but an object must get further inside the trigger guard and depress the trigger safety then the trigger before the gun will fire.

Glocks too should only be carried in a good holster even though pressure against the side of the trigger will not fire them.

After market Glock trigger safety in red. Factory ones are black.



I do not know the details of the other incidents, but so far SIG has won 3 court cases that I am aware of.

Springfield Armory XD's

I have seen almost as many Springfield XD's come through as M&P's and used them too. They all have worked very well. The only thing I have seen break on them is the cocking indicator button on the rear of the slide in an advanced class after a few thousand rounds. The guns continued to function safely in spite of this and the students finished the course. Several instructors at Federal Law Enforcement Training Center carry them for matches and self-defense.

H&K VP9s

H&K VP9s have **very adaptable grips** and are very easy to shoot. Several of the Border Patrol firearms instructors purchased these to shoot in matches and carry off duty. They were very happy with them. I have liked the ones I shot but I have very little personal experience with them. Some Instructors carry them at Flat Rock and like them. Several students have used them and had no issues.

Ruger American Pistol

Ruger is a name brand and they make outstanding revolvers, especially in .44 magnum which I have used quite a bit. I have no experience with their fairly new Ruger American semi-automatic pistols. They have received good write-ups in various magazines. They have not become popular with officers in Northern Colorado.

Try before you buy- You can rent guns to see if you like them at Liberty Arms in Johnstown. You can check prices by phone or Internet.

Holsters- Flat Rock has recommended the Safari land ALS holster. Get a level I or level II ALS.

***GEN 5 GLOCK NOTE.** Some student's GEN 5 Glocks fit too tight in the Safariland ALS holsters and students could not draw their weapon smoothly.

Level I is faster, level II is a little more secure. **Do not buy a level 3 unless you are willing to spend extra time practicing with it.** It will slow your draw stroke and make qualification more difficult.

ALWAYS use ALL of the retention devices on your holster **ALL the time**, including a level III holster. If you get into the bad habit of only using some of your holster's retention devices when you want to be fast, one day you will forget that all the devices are on. You will then wrestle with your holster to get your gun out. You will lose. I have seen beginners and experts make this mistake.

https://www.safariland.com/als_landing.htm

If you do not already have "basket weave duty leather get plain black, so it will match a plain black nylon belt and accessories. They are usually cheaper than basket weave.



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Model 6390 ALS®
Mid-Ride Level I Retention™ Duty Holster
MODEL: 6390 | SKU: | PART:

The Safariland® 6390 holster is a popular mid-ride duty holster with the added security of ALS® (Automatic Locking System), which provides Level I Retention™ without inhibiting the draw stroke. The ALS engages immediately upon holstering, but releases quickly and easily with a swipe of the thumb during the draw.

Model 6280 SLS Mid-Ride Level II Retention™ Duty Holster
MODEL: 6280 | SKU: | PART:

The Safariland® 6280 SLS Mid-ride model is a top draw, straight cant duty holster with the SLS (Self Locking System) rotating hood, which allows for a smoother single-motion draw and greater protection against attempted takeaways. The hood can only be released by being simultaneously pushed down and rotated forward. With Level II Retention™ capabilities, the 6280 can be

A lot of women prefer the extended or lower belt loop holster over the mid ride. ("Low ride", this is not the thigh rig. Thigh rigs are not allowed at flat rock.) This is because women in general have shorter torsos but longer legs than men. However, some women do not like the lower holster as their hips may push it more into their side. Try several, see which you like the best.

Some officers are now carrying the Alien Gear “Rapid Force” **Duty Holster** and like it.

<https://aliengearholsters.com/duty-holsters>



FAST. SECURE. DURABLE.

The Rapid Force Duty Holster protects your firearm so that you can protect and serve. Engineered to meet the needs of active law enforcement and military service members, Rapid Force features a secure Level 2 or Level 3 retention, a fast and intuitive draw, and extreme durability.

The Bianchi Nylon duty belt is usually the least expensive quality option available.

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Get a plain black open top magazine pouch as they make it easier to conduct a fast reload.

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SAFARILAND

Model 73 Open Top Double Magazine Pouch

MODEL: 73 | SKU: 1129908 | PART: 73-83-41

The Model 73 is an open top double magazine pouch designed to carry two magazines of ammunition on a 2.25" (58mm) duty belt. It features both vertical and horizontal carry on the belt and secures the magazine in a butt-up position on the belt for easy access. A tension screw allows retention adjustment by the user. It is constructed of SafariLaminate™ and is available in four scuff resistant finishes: Plain, Basket, Hi Gloss and STX Tactical.

1. Material

HARDSHELL

2. Finish

STX PLAIN

3. Color Mt



4. Pouch Size

GROUP 5

Quantity

1

\$38.50



Bianchi Model 7320 Accumold Open Top Double Magazine Pouch

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\$29.99

AVAILABILITY: In-St
SKU#:

Magazine

Choose an Option...

Qty

1

ADD TO CART

♥ Add To Wish List

Do not buy a Blackhawk SERPA holster unless your department requires one. They are not allowed at any of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers or many civilian shooting schools such as Gunsite. This is because the holster **release is activated with your trigger finger.**

Master class shooters (not just guys on the internet) have had negligent discharges with them, including law enforcement officers and firearms instructors. Black Hawk makes very high-quality gear but no one can change how involuntary reflexes work. If the gun hangs up even for a split second coming out of the holster ALL of your fingers will start to curl inwards to grip it tighter, depress the holster release and pull the gun out of the holster, just like they would if someone tried to snatch the gun from your hand. If you remember to consciously straighten your trigger finger it will take about .6 seconds to do so which is not always enough time to keep the trigger finger from touching the trigger as your gun clears the holster.

Adamson's Police Supply in Frederick Colorado has a lot of duty gear in stock you can look at firsthand. Liberty Firearms Arms Institute in Johnstown has some as well.

FLAT ROCK's Information on Firearms:

FIREARMS

The only firearms that will be allowed during training at Flatrock will be semiautomatic pistols that MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- Reputable Manufacturer: e.g. Smith and Wesson, Sig Sauer, Beretta, Glock, or H&K (except model 87).
- Caliber: 9mm, 40 S&W, or 45 A.C.P.
- Action: Capable of double and single action.
- Colt model 1911 is not allowed for Adams County cadets.
- All pistols must be equipped with a firing pin safety. Staccatos were allowed last Spring.
- Barrel length: Not less than 3.5 inches, or more than 6 inches. (**I recommend no less than 4" and no longer than a 5" barrel.** It takes practice to shoot shorter barrels well at 25 yards and longer barrels can be hard to draw while sitting)
- Finish: Factory finish.
- Sights: Fixed or adjustable.

- **Safety Devices: All factory safety devices and systems must be in place and held to factory specifications.**
- All Beretta pistols must be equipped with a safety slide lock lever.

If a student is not sure if their weapon is acceptable, they will need to check with the Range Staff at Adams County Sheriff's Office and/or the Academy Director.

AMMUNITION

Ammunition MUST BE NEW FACTORY MANUFACTURE – NO RELOADS ARE ALLOWED – and may be the least expensive ball type. Each student must provide AT A MINIMUM 1700 rounds of ammunition. (Regarding the cost: If you order ammo in bulk as a group, you may get a discount.)

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Each student will need:

- 1 holster with safety retention mechanism
- 3 pistol magazines (**have enough magazines for a minimum of 45 rounds at the range**)
- 1 firearms cleaning kit
- 1 pair shooting ear muffs
- 1 pair shooting safety glasses
- 1 duty belt (leather or nylon)
- 4 belt keepers
- 1 double pouch magazine holder
- 1 pair handcuffs
- 1 handcuff case
- 1 police-style flashlight.