



HRCJTA TB 2026-01

DATE: April 1, 2026

TO: Hampton Roads Criminal Justice Training Academy Member Agencies

FROM: Scott Barlow, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Use of Specialized Equipment During Firearms Training- HRCJTA Training Bulletin 2026-01.

The Hampton Roads Criminal Justice Training Academy (HRCJTA) provides certifications in several basic specialties such: as Basic Law Enforcement, Basic Jailer, and Basic Dispatcher/Telecommunicator. These basic certifications are governed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

For the Basic L.E. and Basic Jailer certifications, the HRCJTA is required to certify that all students meet all compulsory minimum standards to include Category 7- Weapons. These mandates can be found on the DCJS webpage under “Training Manual and Compulsory Minimum Training Standards”, “Compulsory Minimum Training Standards and Performance Outcomes”, “Category 7-Weapons”.

Firearms training is a ten-day evolution requiring all students to perform basic firearms handling skills, cleaning and maintenance of firearms, weapon loading and unloading, clearing of stoppages, qualifications courses: daytime (2), nighttime (1), and tactical firearms with officers “Approved Handgun and Holster”.

As with all basic training topics, the basics are critical for the student officers short term success, and long-term success. Skipping, or shortening the length of time presenting and practicing these basic skills is not what the HRCJTA would recommend.

The HRCJTA recognizes that policing and corrections rely on, and seek out, advanced technology. As with the move from revolvers to semi-automatic pistols, it takes time for basic training to prepare and have trained instructors capable of providing adequate training on new equipment.

The HRCJTA does not advise member agencies what type of equipment to provide to its officers, other than to ensure that any advanced or unique equipment is safe to be utilized. Firearms is complex, agencies in many cases issue a variety of firearms, flashlights, and reloading equipment (magazines).

The HRCJTA does not provide armorers that are skilled in all different types of firearms. Nor does the HRCJTA provide instructors with the skills to “Zero” advanced aiming systems. It is the responsibility of the individual agency to provide skilled knowledgeable team members whom can accomplish these tasks.

Included in the specialized equipment category are the various types of “Red Dot” systems. The HRCJTA is unable to provide Maintenance/Repairs, Zeroing, or certification in the use of the “Red Dot” systems.

The HRCJTA, at the request of the member agency, allows basic students to utilize their issued firearms with some form of a “Red Dot” system during firearms training. The only specific training offered on these systems is a familiarization course of fire to determine that the student can safely handle their issued firearm with the additional specialized equipment. It is the sole responsibility of the agency issuing any advanced equipment to its students to ensure they are comfortable and competent with the issued equipment.

The HRCJTA ensures all basic students meet all DCJS mandates for Firearms training. Simply qualifying with issued specialized equipment does not mean the HRCJTA has certified the student in any equipment other than the issued firearm and holster.

Please refer to DCJS compulsory minimum standards, Category 7- Weapons for additional understanding of the required mandates for all basic students’ certifications.