

Office of the Sheriff  
Santa Clara County  
Law Enforcement Training

RIFLE MARKSMANSHIP AND SNIPER  
Sniper/Observer Course, 50 Hour  
2270-23020-  
Rev. 01/24/2021

Expanded Course Outline

Objective: This course is designed to provide the necessary rifle and tactical skills for the Sniper/Observer to function in support of high-risk law enforcement operations. Course includes ballistics, marksmanship skills, tactics, rifle maintenance, equipment, and documentation. This course complies with the legislative content and mandates of AB 392, SB 230 and PC 835a.

- I. INTRODUCTION – Lecture** **1 HOUR**
- A. Course objectives and registration
    - 1. Introduction of course and instructors
    - 2. Basic description of the sniper/observer assignment for special weapons and tactical teams.
    - 3. Basic overview of SWAT operations, movements, and objectives.
      - a. Military vs. Law Enforcement Sniper/Observer
  - B. Safety
    - 1. Range safety rules and policies
    - 2. Safe weapon handling
    - 3. Sniper range area
      - a. Facility logistics
      - b. Range target distances
  - C. AB 392 and SB230/Use of Force Legal Issues
    - 1. Emphasis of de-escalation/tactical repositioning
    - 2. Emphasis on duty to intervene
    - 3. Policy considerations/changes
    - 4. Duty to warn
    - 5. At risk populations
  - D. PC 835a
    - 1. Legal requirements of 835a
    - 2. When is a use of force justified?
    - 3. Shall use other available resources and techniques when safe and feasible
    - 4. Totality of the circumstances includes officer conduct leading up to the use of force

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5. Definition of imminent
6. Definition of deadly force
7. Definition of feasible
8. Definition of necessary force

- II. Background and History of the Sniper – Lecture, Video 4 HOUR**
- A. Evolution of the long rifle and ballistics
  - B. Chronology of sniper incidents
  - C. Officer and public safety
- III. Sniper Equipment – Lecture, Demonstration 5 HOURS**
- A. The sniper grade rifle
    1. Stock and bedding
    2. Action
    3. Bolt
    4. Trigger
    5. Barrel
    6. Scope mount
    7. Bi-pods
  - B. Sniper grade scope
    1. Internal/external
    2. Mil-dot vs. cross hair
    3. Illuminated reticule vs. standard reticule
  - C. Ammunition
    1. Match vs. standard
    2. Bullet designs
    3. Cartridge design
    4. Powder
  - D. Ballistics
    1. Internal
    2. External
    3. Terminal
  - E. Rifle maintenance
    1. Cleaning kits
    2. Cleaning tools
    3. Solvents
    4. Lubricants
  - F. Tactical equipment
    1. Uniforms

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2. Radio
3. Handgun and holster
4. Lights
5. Gloves
6. Distraction devices
  - a. Smoke
  - b. Flash bangs
7. Tape
8. Bean bag
9. Poncho
10. Wind/temp meter
11. Knife
12. Camouflage paint
13. Notebook and pens
14. Backpack

**IV. The Sniper / Observer Role – Lecture, Demonstration, Exercises**

**10 HOURS**

- A. Role of the sniper/observer for special weapons and tactical teams
  1. Deployment
    - a. Redacted
  2. Intelligence gathering and reporting
  3. Eliminate threats to protect lives
  4. Rules of engagement (ROE)
    - a. Department policies and procedures
    - b. Use of Force
    - c. Authority to modify ROE
  5. Security for entry teams during movement
  6. Shoot – don't shoot concepts
  7. Training
- B. Documentation
  1. Log book / Rifle data book
    - a. Detailed shot documentation
    - b. Training and references
    - c. Court references
    - d. Rifle maintenance
    - e. "Bear Aide" stencils
- C. Hide selection and field craft
  1. Selecting hides/positions
    - a. rural

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- b. urban
- 2. Camouflage techniques
  - a. Ghillie suits
- 3. Rifle Camouflage
- 4. Firing positions
- 5. Safety and concealment in positions
- 6. Hide kits and construction
- 7. Stalking, high and low techniques
- 8. Target indicators
- 9. Range Cards and diagrams
- D. Mission Planning
  - 1. Definition of Sniper/Observer Mission
  - 2. Sniper/Observer Commander Responsibilities
  - 3. Sniper/Observer Team Leader Responsibilities
  - 4. Mission Briefs
- E. Range (distance) estimation
  - 1. Factors effecting estimation
- F. Techniques of Observation and field sketching
  - 1. Capabilities and limitations
  - 2. Observation aids
  - 3. Field sketch and principles
  - 4. Conventional shapes
  - 5. Equipment
- V. Basic Marksmanship Fundamentals - Lecture, Demonstration, Exercises      10 HOURS**
  - A. Shooting exercises
    - 1. Shooting positions - supported / unsupported
      - a. prone
      - b. standing
      - c. kneeling
      - d. sitting
    - 2. Sighting, Aiming, and Trigger Control
      - a. Relationship between the eye and the sights
      - b. Sight picture
      - c. Breathing
      - d. Trigger control techniques
      - e. Follow through
    - 3. Effects of weather
      - a. wind

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- b. light
- c. temperature
- d. humidity
- 4. Hold over vs. turret adjustments
- 5. No-reflex shot placement
- 6. Cold bore shots
- 7. Barrier penetration
  - a. Ammunition choices
- 8. Low light and night shooting
  - a. night vision equipment
- 9. Moving targets
  - a. positions
  - b. leads
- 10. Marksmanship accuracy shooting
  - a. 25 yards to 300 yards

**VI. Sniper / Observer / Marksmanship – Scenario Exercises**

**20 HOURS**

- A. Stalking
- B. Hostage taker
- C. Simultaneous Shooting
- D. Sniper initiated
- E. Target identification
  - 1. Stationary targets
  - 2. Moving targets
  - 3. Pop-up targets
  - 4. Barrier Penetration
    - 1. Shooting through mediums
- F. Vehicle
  - 1. Windshields
  - 2. Hostage taker
- G. On command shot
- H. Multiple unknown distance shots

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**Hourly Distribution**

**Day One**

0700-0900 Introduction, course overview  
Registration  
Safety Guidelines  
Emergency Contacts  
0900-1000 Description of Sniper / Observer assignment  
Overview of SWAT Operations  
1000-1200 Background and History of the Sniper  
1200-1300 lunch  
1300-1500 Sniper Equipment  
1500-1800 Marksmanship field exercises  
Rifle zeroing  
Rifle maintenance

**Day Two**

0700-1200 Sniper / Observer Role  
Deployment  
Department Policy  
Training  
1200-1300 lunch  
1300-1400 Documentation  
1400-1500 Hide selection and field craft  
1500-1800 Marksmanship field exercises  
Rifle zeroing, 25, 50, 75, 100 yards  
Rifle maintenance

**Day Three**

1300-1800 Basic Marksmanship Fundamentals  
Shooting positions  
Rifle zeroing  
Wind estimation  
Low Light  
Target identification  
1800-1900 lunch  
1900-2400 Marksmanship field exercises  
25 – 300 yards  
Low light & night vision  
Rifle maintenance

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**Day Four**

0700-1200 Sniper / Observer / Marksmanship  
Stalking  
Hostage  
Simultaneous shooting  
Sniper initiated

1200-1300 lunch

1300-1800 Marksmanship field exercises  
Cold bore shot  
Field craft / urban and rural hides  
Moving targets  
Rifle maintenance

**Day Five**

0700-1200 Marksmanship field exercises  
Sniper / Observer / Marksmanship  
Hostage taker  
Sniper initiated shot  
Vehicle

1200-1300 lunch

1300-1400 Written exam

1400-1700 Marksmanship field exercises / scenarios  
Target identification  
On command shot  
Multiple distance  
Rifle maintenance

1700-1800 Exam / Scenario review, evaluations