

**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
TRAINING COMMAND
27211 GARAND ROAD
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5036

# LESSON PLAN

PISTOL TECHNIQUES OF FIRE

CPP.7

COMBAT PISTOL PROGRAM

CID XXXX

REVISED 10/1/2012

APPROVAL_____ DATE_____



INTRODUCTION (3 MIN)

**(ON SLIDE #1)**

1. GAIN ATTENTION. To successfully engage a combat target with the service pistol, the Marine must have the ability to employ effective techniques of fire. The Marine's performance of these skills, along with proper application of the fundamentals of marksmanship, are the keys to his success in a combat situation.

2. OVERVIEW. This lesson will cover the techniques of fire for double and single action firing, controlled pairs, and failure to stop.

3. INTRODUCE LEARNING OBJECTIVES. The Terminal Learning Objective and Enabling Learning Objective pertaining to this lesson are as follows:

   a. TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE. Given a service pistol, (2) magazines, magazine pouch, ammunition, target, unit-issued holster, and personal protective equipment (PPE), without the aid of references, engage stationary threats with the service pistol to eliminate threats while achieving a qualifying score of 264 on the Combat Pistol Program (CPP) Firing Table One, Training Block Five in accordance with MCO 3574.2_.

   b. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE. Given a service pistol, (2) magazines, magazine pouch, ammunition, target, unit-issued holster, and personal protective equipment (PPE), without the aid of references, apply techniques of fire IAW MCRP 3-01B.

4. METHOD. This lesson will be taught in a classroom/outdoor setting using lecture, demonstration, and practical application.

5. EVALUATION. Performance will be evaluated during Pistol Firing Table One, Training Block Five, CPP.14.

TRANSITION: There are several techniques of fire used for target engagement with the service pistol. Double and single action firing are tied directly to the functional capability of the pistol. Based on the combat situation, each can be employed to effectively engage a target. We will begin by discussing double and single action firing.

BODY (25 MIN)

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION: (25 Min)** Use the EDIP (Explain, Demonstrate, Imitate, Practice) method to conduct this demonstration and practical application. The practical application requires (1) pistol, (2) magazines, (1) holster, (1) belt, and magazine pouches per demonstrator; (1) target per shooter set up at 7, 15, and 25 yards.

**STUDENT ROLE:** The students will be in a good position to view the demonstration and will hold all questions until prompted at the end of the demonstration. The students will be spaced out to provide enough room to practice the skills.

**INSTRUCTOR ROLE:** Explain and demonstrate each step of a procedure and have students imitate that step before moving on to the next step. Once all of the steps are taught using EDIP, have students practice the entire procedure until they are performing it correctly. Emphasize the four safety rules throughout. The instructor must Unload, Show Clear and let at least one other individual inspect the weapon and all magazines before commencing the demonstration. Ensure shooters determine the condition of their weapon every time they holster.

1. **Safety Brief:** (From the ORAW) Brief the shooters on what to do if there is a mishap.

2. **Supervision and Guidance:** The instructor(s) will explain every step of the procedure/technique. The instructor(s) will demonstrate at half speed so all shooters can follow every step. The instructor will supervise performance and provide feedback.

3. **Debrief:** The instructor(s) will provide overall feedback, guidance on any misconceptions, and review the learning points.

## 1. (10 MIN) DOUBLE AND SINGLE ACTION FIRING

The service pistol is capable of firing both double and single action.

**(ON SLIDE #2)**

a. Pistol Design. The design of the service pistol causes the first shot fired to be a double action shot. Once the first shot is fired, subsequent shots are fired single action because the cycle of operation leaves the hammer cocked to

the rear, automatically placing the pistol in the single action mode.

**(ON SLIDE #3)**

b. Double Action Mode. In double action firing, two actions occur as the trigger is moved to the rear; the hammer moves to the rear, cocking the weapon, and then the hammer moves forward, firing the weapon.

1) More pressure is required on the trigger to fire a double action shot due to the distance the trigger and hammer have to travel and the weight of the trigger. A double action shot requires approximately 9 - 16 pounds of pressure to move the trigger rearward.

2) Sight alignment/sight picture must be maintained for a longer period when firing a double action shot due to the longer trigger pull. Therefore, focus on sight alignment/sight picture should be made to ensure the sights do move out of alignment or outside the aiming area when applying trigger control.

**(ON SLIDE #4)**

c. Single Action Mode. In single action firing, the only action taking place as the trigger is moved to the rear is the hammer moving forward, firing the weapon.

1) A single action shot requires approximately 4 - 6 pounds of pressure to move the trigger rearward.

2) The trigger pull is much shorter when firing a single action shot as compared to a double action shot.

3) Thumbcock Technique. To enable the first shot to be fired single action, the pistol's hammer can be manually cocked with the thumb.

| **NOTE** |
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| The weapon must be taken off safe before it can be thumbcocked. |

a) To thumbcock the pistol, use the support thumb to pull back on the hammer to cock it. This ensures the firing grip of the strong hand does not have to be



broken.

b) When thumbcocking the pistol, ensure the hammer is moved all the way to the rear, and the trigger finger remains straight along the receiver until the pistol is fully cocked.

c) Reestablish the firing grip with both hands once the weapon is cocked.

**(ON SLIDE #5)**

4) Precision Shot. For targets at longer ranges, it may be necessary to slow down the application of the fundamentals to deliver a single, precision shot. This can be accomplished through a slow fire technique in the single action mode. Sight alignment becomes more critical the smaller the target and the greater the distance to the target. To engage small targets (i.e., partially exposed) and targets at longer ranges where precision is required, a precision shot is fired in the single action mode:

a) Thumbcock the pistol for a single action shot.

b) Close one eye and focus on the front sight.

c) Fire one well-aimed, precision shot on the target.

**(ON SLIDE #6)**

d. Factors Affecting Whether to Fire Single or Double Action. The Marine must make a quick decision whether to fire single or double action. Ultimately, the decision will be based on the Marine's capabilities, but the decision will also be based on time and accuracy.

1) Time. There is a payoff between time and accuracy. The Marine will sacrifice time to fire a single action, precision shot; but what he sacrifices in time, he will gain in accuracy.

a) For quick engagements at close range, there may not be time to thumbcock the pistol for a single action shot because shots are needed on target quickly and stability of hold and sight picture are not as critical to accuracy.



b) When time permits and for targets at longer ranges, the pistol may be thumbcocked to place it in the single action mode to reduce the weight of the trigger and the distance it must travel rearward to fire the first shot.

2) Distance and Size of the Target. The smaller the target, the more critical the application of the fundamentals to engage it accurately. The pistol should be thumbcocked and fired in the single action mode when the fundamentals are more critical to accuracy (i.e., long range, small targets at close range). Likewise, the pistol should be fired in the double action mode when trigger control, sight picture, and stability of hold are not as critical for accuracy (i.e., close range, large targets).

| Confirm by questions. |
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TRANSITION: Understanding how the firing action of the pistol affects sight alignment and trigger control will help the Marine develop greater accuracy in target engagement. To enhance the Marine's effectiveness of target engagement in combat, the Marine may have to fire more than one shot to successfully engage a target. This lesson will cover the controlled pair technique that involves firing two shots in rapid succession.

**2. (5 MIN) CONTROLLED PAIR**

**(ON SLIDE #7)**

a. Definition. A controlled pair is two aimed shots fired upon a target in rapid succession. A sight picture is acquired on both shots.

1) Two shots increase the trauma (i.e., shock, blood loss) on the target, thereby increasing the Marine's chances of quickly eliminating the threat.

2) The range to the target will determine the rate of fire, i.e., the closer to the target, the faster the rate of fire. However, the Marine should not shoot so fast that he exceeds his capability for firing accurately.



b. Technique

1) After the pistol is fired, the pistol's muzzle climbs with the recoil of the weapon. To fire two shots, the Marine must quickly recover the sights to the same area on the target while reacquiring sight alignment and sight picture.

2) Proper recovery automatically brings the sights back on target following recoil. Recovery begins immediately after the application of the fundamentals to bring the pistol sights into alignment with the target in preparation for firing the next shot.

3) As soon as sight picture is acquired, apply trigger control to fire the next shot.

| Confirm by questions. |
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TRANSITION: Firing two shots in rapid succession will allow the Marine to effectively engage many combat targets. There are times, however, when two shots do not eliminate the threat. In these instances, it may be necessary to employ a failure to stop technique.

**3. (10 MIN) FAILURE TO STOP**

**(ON SLIDE #8)**

a. Purpose of a Failure to Stop Engagement. A failure to stop consists of an assessment of the target following an engagement in which the target is not incapacitated after two shots, followed by a single shot fired to an alternate aiming area. If the Marine has engaged a target and the target still poses a threat, the Marine may choose to slow down his application of the fundamentals and fire a slow fire, precision shot.

1) There may be numerous reasons why body shots did not work, for example, body armor, psychological or physiological reactions to stress, etc. They may not have worked because the Marine's shot placement was not accurate.



2) The placement of one well-aimed, precision shot to a designated area on the target (e.g., head) will increase the chances of eliminating the target as a threat.

3) The key to the success rests with the Marine's ability to slow down his performance and focus on the application of the fundamentals of marksmanship to ensure accurate shot placement.

b. Assessing Performance. When assessing the situation, the Marine must assess his own performance to determine whether he is applying the fundamentals of marksmanship correctly. Failure to eliminate a target may be attributed to problems in the Marine's shooting performance.

**(ON SLIDE #9)**

c. Shot Placement. For targets at close range and within the capability of the Marine, a precision shot may be placed in the head to immediately eliminate the target as a threat. A shot in the head is considered an incapacitating shot. This is only done if the Marine is accurately engaging the target, but the target still does not go down. Even at close ranges, the Marine may only be presented with a small target if it is partially exposed. In this situation, the Marine will aim his sights on the portion of the target that is exposed.

d. Time. The time the Marine has to engage the target affects whether he can slow down his application of the fundamentals to fire a precision shot. Firing a precision shot takes time, so the Marine will sacrifice time for accuracy.

e. Technique

1) After firing two shots to the torso, assess the situation.

2) If the target has not been eliminated, establish sight picture on the designated aiming area.

3) Close one eye, focus on the front sight, and fire a precision shot.

4) Search and assess.



Confirm by questions.

TRANSITION: If the target is not eliminated, it may be necessary to follow-up with a precision shot to an alternate aiming area using the failure to stop technique. Dry practice in firing the pistol using the techniques discussed in this lesson will increase the Marine's confidence with the weapon and enhance his combat effectiveness.

OPPORTUNITY FOR QUESTIONS: (1 MIN)

1. Respond to questions from the class.

2. Prompt Marines with questions to the class.

   a. QUESTION: What two actions occur when the service pistol is fired in double action mode?

   ANSWER: As the trigger is moved to the rear, the hammer moves to the rear, cocking the weapon, and then the hammer moves forward, firing the weapon.

   b. QUESTION: What is the preferred technique of fire for firing a precision shot?

   ANSWER: Slow fire in the single action mode.

   c. QUESTION: What is the technique used to engage a threat with two rapidly fired shots?

   ANSWER: A controlled pair

   d. QUESTION: Why may it be necessary to employ a failure to stop technique?

   ANSWER: There may be numerous reasons why two body shots did not work, for example, body armor, psychological or physiological reactions to stress, etc. They may not have worked because the Marine's shot placement was not accurate.

***INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE:*** *Ask Marines as many questions as necessary to ensure they fully understand the material presented in this lesson.*



SUMMARY: (1 MIN)

This lesson covered techniques of fire with the service pistol for double and single action firing, controlled pairs, and failure to stop. Understanding and applying these techniques will increase the Marine's accuracy and effectiveness during target engagement.