

**Schenectady County**  
**Advanced Firearm Course for an Unrestricted Pistol Permit**

A firearms license, commonly referred to as a pistol permit, can only be issued in New York State by a jurisdiction's designated licensing officer.<sup>1</sup> Amendments to a pistol permit must also be approved by the licensing officer. In Schenectady County, the licensing officer is one of the duly elected County Judges. This Advanced Training Course has been developed at the request of the Hon. Vincent W. Versaci, the current Licensing Officer for Schenectady County, to give him and future licensing officers greater insight into an applicant's proficiency in operating, storing and handling their firearms as well as their knowledge of the law as it pertains to firearm ownership before granting an amendment request. The applicant's command of the fundamentals relating to these areas of firearm safety will be tested based on the curriculum outlined generally below. More specifically, the applicant's competence will be measured by objective criteria as well as the instructor's observations of the applicant's performance demonstrated during Course instruction.

In order to successfully complete this Course, the applicant must demonstrate their knowledge of the New York State Penal Law as it pertains to the operation and possession of firearms by "passing" a written test. The course instructor will also address, and the applicant will be tested on, issues relating to the use of physical and deadly physical force by a civilian. A passing grade is defined as answering eighty five (85%) percent or more of the questions correctly. The applicant must also successfully participate in two live fire tests to demonstrate that they are sufficiently capable of operating their firearm in a safe and proficient manner.

**PLEASE NOTE: Successful completion of this Course does not guarantee that the Licensing Officer will issue the applicant an unrestricted permit. Applicant's failure to successfully complete the Course may constitute "good cause" for the denial of an unrestricted license. See, Penal Law §400.00(1)(g).**

The registration, minimum proficiency requirements and other pertinent information are outlined below:

1. Pre-registration is required. A **check or postal money order** in the amount of **\$200.00** must be sent to one of the listed instructors authorized to instruct this Course. Failure to appear for the Course will result in forfeiture of the registration fee.
2. The applicant must have had his/her pistol permit for a minimum of one (1) year.
3. Upon arrival at the selected class, the applicant must present to the instructor their

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<sup>1</sup>An applicant shall apply to the licensing officer in the city or county, as the case may be, where the applicant resides, is principally employed or has his place of business. Penal Law §400.00(3)(a).

completed application, pistol permit and a photo copy of their permit.

4. The applicant must arrive at the class with their unloaded firearm properly secured in a case (hard or soft ) and are responsible for providing 200 rounds of commercially produced ammunition suitable for use in the firearm proficiency test and three (3) magazines for semi-automatic and three speed loaders and pouch for revolvers. Eye and Ear protection is mandatory while on the range, no exceptions.

5. If a participant is unsuccessful in showing firearm proficiency during the required pre-qualification course of fire, they may reapply after 90 days. There will be a \$25.00 administrative fee deducted from the initial registration fee, the balance will be refunded.

6. The Course will consist of a minimum of 8 hours of training and include both classroom instruction and range exercises. Students must attend the entire class and successfully complete both the written exam and courses of fire in order to successfully complete this Course. The applicant must safely operate, handle and store their firearm at all times during their participation in the class. Any participant who fails to abide by the best practices of firearm safety will be summarily dismissed from the class without any refund of their application fee.

7. Certificates will be provided to all participants who successfully complete the Course.

8. Certificates are valid for six (6) months from the Course completion date.

9. If a participant is unsuccessful in shooting a qualifying score on the final qualification shooting portion of the training, they will have 90 days to retake that portion of the training. A \$50.00 administrative and range fee will be charged. If after 90 days the participant has not retaken that portion of the training that they did not successfully complete, they will be required to reapply for the entire Course, with the full cost of the training to be borne by the applicant.

10. Applicants who successfully complete the Course will be required to file a copy of their Certificate of Completion with the Schenectady County Clerk, along with a notarized letter addressed to the Hon. Vincent W. Versaci detailing the reasons why there is “proper cause” for the issuance of an unrestricted license to the applicant.<sup>2</sup> In addition, at the time of filing the above documents with the County Clerk, the applicant will be required to sign a Firearms License Amendment in which the applicant verifies that they have not been “arrested or convicted of any criminal offense, or been a patient at a mental institution since the applicant’s current license was issued.”

11. Once the applicant completes and provides all the necessary documents to the County Clerks Office, these will be forwarded to Judge Versaci for his review and consideration. Once his review is complete, applicants will be sent a letter scheduling a personal interview with Judge

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<sup>2</sup>See, O’Connor v. Scarpino, 83 NY2d (1994).

Versaci to discuss the application. **Issuance of an unrestricted pistol permit is at his discretion and his refusal to issue an unrestricted permit shall not be grounds for the refund of any costs associated with attendance at the certification class.**

12. In addition to the testing requirements, the applicant will be given instruction on the best practices pertaining to the handling, storing and maintaining of their firearms. Although instruction will be given with respect to the safest and most proficient methods of using their firearm, applicants should understand that course instruction alone may be insufficient to prepare the applicant to pass the live fire component of the Course. It is recommended that the applicant engage in substantial practice before registering for this Course.

### **Course Information And Instructions:**

Applicants should arrive on the range at the stated time with a properly registered firearm that they intend to use for qualification and 200 rounds of commercially available ammunition. Applicants may use any semi-automatic pistol or revolver **that is greater than .22 caliber, with a barrel length that is (8) inches or less in length.** The firearm should be:

- **Secured in an appropriate case or gun box,**
- **Unloaded,**
- **Clean and in safe operating condition.**

**Note: All firearms will be inspected by the instructor to make certain that the firearm is safe and working properly.**

The applicant should also have a holster or carry device (fanny pack, hand bag) appropriate for carrying their firearm in a concealed manner.

### **Pre-Qualification Course of Fire:**

Upon instructions from the range officer:

1. The applicant will approach the firing line and place their carry device on the table.
2. Applicants will not load their firearm until directed to do so by the instructor.
3. The applicant will then remove their firearm and prepare it for live fire by either loading their magazine(s) (semi-automatic) or by loading the speed loaders (revolver).

After the firearm is inspected and direction is given by the instructor, the participant will take their place on the firing line, load the firearm and come to a ready position (firearm pointed down range towards target at a 45° angle) and the pre-qualification course of fire will begin.

**Upon command, the applicant will have 40 seconds to fire 10 shots at a 9 inch circular**

**target from 10 yards. 9 out of 10 shots must be in the 9 inch target to successfully qualify to continue the course.**

**The applicant will be given two opportunities to successfully complete this course of fire. If applicant fails both attempts at the pre-qualification Course, they will not be allowed to continue with this class.**

If necessary, the applicant may do a reload (semi-automatic or revolver) to shoot the appropriate amount of rounds, within the allotted time limit of 40 seconds.

Upon command of cease fire, the applicant will:

- Remove the magazine from the firearm, lock the slide to the rear or open the cylinder and remove any remaining ammunition. The applicant will do a safety inspection of their firearm, visually and physically check for an unloaded and safe firearm and then close the slide or cylinder.
- Secure a safe and empty firearm in their carry case.
- Step away from the line with all of their equipment.

**NOTE: The safe operation, handling and storage of your firearms are absolute requirements of all participants of the class. Any participant who fails to properly handle, operate or store their firearms will be summarily dismissed from the class without any refund of their application fee.**

### **Final Qualification Course of Fire:**

**15 yard line:** 8 rounds in 40 seconds with a reload.

**10 yard line:** 12 rounds 40 seconds with a reload.

**7 yard line:** 18 rounds fired in two (2) phases:

**Phase 1:** 6 rounds fired in two round increments.

**Phase 2:** 12 rounds fired in 25 seconds with a reload.

**3 yard line:** 12 rounds fired in two (2) phases:

**Phase 1:** 6 rounds fired in two round increments.

**Phase 2:** 6 rounds fired 6 seconds.