



After Action Report

Texas Department of Public Safety First Responder Instructor Course

Dates: November 16-18, 2022

Instructor(s): Russell Gallo, Eric Gaston, Chris Walker, John Land

Location: TX DPS Tactical Training Center, Florence, Texas

Gear Used: ATEi Glock 17 with Trijicon RM07 and Surefire X300U, Safariland 6354DO with Centrifuge NCP, Surefire Fury Tactical DF Handheld

The Texas Department of Public Safety First Responder Instructor Course is a certification course that gives License to Carry instructors the ability to certify fire/EMS professionals to carry while in discharge of their duties. This particular course was made up of twenty-eight students from a variety of backgrounds including federal and state law enforcement, military, private security, and civilian instructors. This course is the fifth course the Troopers have taught since the passage of House Bill 1069.

Training Day 1 began at 7:30AM with registration and introductions after 8AM. Gallo and Gaston began the discussion with some background information about the program and Gallo's involvement in its creation. They went over some administrative duties and discussed the agenda for the day before we hit the range for the License to Carry pre-qualification.

Important note: While the LTC pre-qualification was no different than the qualification in the LTC instructor course, the DPS is now allowing red dot optics for both the LTC and First Responder (FR) qualifications. This change affects not only instructors, but all students in LTC classes from here forward. It is nice to see the DPS changing their procedures in order to be more in line with the times and changes in technology. This qualification is nothing new but the introduction of red dot optics is a welcomed change.

Once the qualification was complete, we returned to the classroom and started going through the coursework. The Troopers focused on the structure of the program for a bit, ensuring that all the students understood that the FR program is to be taught exactly as they are outlining it in this class. They want us to use the same PowerPoints and handouts they are providing in order to keep the class consistent across the board for all students. While I would prefer more freedom in creating our own versions of the information, I understand the DPS' desire to ensure that the class is being taught at a high level of understanding and that we can gather feedback about the curriculum as a whole. After a visit from RSD and a lunch break, we returned to the course material and finished out the day in the classroom. By the end of the day,

the Troopers had inspected everyone's holster setups and disqualified some that did not meet the requirements outlined in the pre-class instructions. This gave enough time for the students to go out that evening and purchase a holster that was allowed in the class. Disallowed holsters included Blackhawk and Uncle Mike's, while the higher-quality and safer Safariland and custom Kydex holsters were allowed onto the range the next day.

Training Day 2 is comprised of mostly range work, but we started the day off with some classroom discussion about holsters, carry methods, open vs. concealed carry, firearm retention, and more. We hit the range and started with dry fire before going live. Presentations from the holster, multiple shot strings, reloads, and other defensive shooting techniques were covered in detail by the Troopers.

We took a lunch break before returning to the classroom for more discussion. This block included discussion about cleaning and maintenance of your firearm and a discussion about low-light shooting. The low-light portion was detailed and included some science about the way our eyes take in light and gather information. The Trooper discussed safety concerns with low-light instruction and provided some solutions that will help keep instructors accountable for students in a low-light environment.

After our second break, we returned to the classroom for a little more discussion before hitting the range again for a low-light shooting practical. This low-light segment was pretty basic compared to other low-light training I've taken, but it was sufficient for this type of instructor class. The conditions were in the mid-50s with significant cloud cover when we stepped on the range, so a quality headlamp was a huge benefit during loading and administrative portions. The shooting portion focused primarily on handheld lights (as it should), but made brief mention of weapon-mounted lights (WMLs) and gave a few opportunities to use them. There was very little positional work during the low-light portion - only a few strings of fire shot from the kneeling if memory serves. The low-light section was fun and eye-opening for those that had never done it.

Training Day 3 began in the classroom with Gallo discussing de-escalation techniques, verbal communication, and non-verbal cues for the first responder. We jumped into the "safe storage" section where the Troopers talked about the legal requirements for storage of a first responder's handgun, allowable safe storage devices, and what the day-to-day for a first responder may look like. We began the discussion about cover and concealment there in the classroom and moved out to the range to put it (and other skills) into practice.

Once on the range, the Troopers began covering the basics of positional shooting. These shooting positions included standing, kneeling, right/left side urban prone, and supine. The Troopers were very patient and helpful for those students that needed help in and out of the positions, but made clear that during the class we are teaching for students, we are expected to be able to demonstrate every live-fire exercise without assistance. Those that struggled in the instructor course may not be able to accomplish this task without a helping hand, so prospective instructor students should consider their physical capabilities before enrolling to be a First

Responder Instructor. Once positional shooting was complete, the Troopers split the group into smaller subgroups to work on some moving and shooting techniques. These drills generally involved the student moving around blue barrels while engaging a target ahead of them, but the Troopers did discuss how to safely move uprange with our firearms as well. We finished the day by completing a cover drill with our subgroup by shooting multiple positions from multiple pieces of cover.

Overall, this class seemed to be well-written and in touch with the newest and most relevant information the training industry has to offer. These Troopers have done their homework and have created a genuinely beneficial class for the first responder on the street. While I think the market for this program is limited and may not be a hot seller for most locales, the class itself is a great place to start getting first responders trained up to protect themselves and others against a potential deadly force encounter.

For questions, please contact me directly using the contact information below. Thanks for reading!

Jake Kiere

License to Carry/Firearms Instructor
Owner, FirstLine Development Group

Email: jake@firstlinedg.com

Website: www.firstlinedg.com