**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION

TRAINING COMMAND

27211 GARAND ROAD

QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5036

**STUDENT OUTLINE**

**COACH THE SERIVCE PISTOL FIRING POSITIONS**

**0933-MARK-2016**

**COMBAT MARKSMANSHIP COACH (CMC) COURSE**

**M02M859**

**REVISED 03/02/2017**

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

a. **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**. Given personnel with

weapons and a training area, coach pistol firing positions so that the shooter’s firing position is in accordance with MCO 3574.2L. (0933-MARK-2016)

**b. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

(1) Given personnel with weapons and a training area,

reinforce stability of hold so that the shooter’s firing position is in accordance with MCO 3574.2L. (0933-MARK-2016a)

(2) Given personnel with weapons and a training area,

evaluate stance so that the shooter’s firing position is in accordance with MCO 3574.2L. (0933-MARK-2016b)

(3) Given personnel with weapons and a training area,

evaluate grip so that the shooter’s firing position is in accordance with MCO 3574.2L. (0933-MARK-2016 c)

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2**. PURPOSE OF A PISTOL FIRING GRIP**

A proper grip is one which provides maximum control of the pistol before, during, and after firing:

a. A Proper Grip Must Stabilize the Weapon Sights Before

Firing. To fire an accurate shot, the pistol sights must be stabilized prior to and as the bullet exits the muzzle of the weapon.

(1) A proper grip controls the alignment of the weapon

sights and stabilizes the sights so an accurate shot may be fired.

(2) To have a proper grip, there must be muscular

tension in the wrist and forearms. Consistent muscular tension in the wrist, forearms, and grip helps maintain sight alignment by reducing the movement in the grip which can cause movement in the weapon sights. The grip is correct when it allows the pistol sights to be naturally aligned to the aiming eye.

(3) When establishing a two-handed grip, equal pressure

must be applied with both hands. Consistent, equal pressure from both hands will stabilize the weapon sights and allow them to be aligned and level with respect to the aiming eye.

b. A Proper Grip Must Allow Trigger Control to be Applied

During Firing. The grip should provide a foundation for the movement of the trigger finger. The trigger finger must apply positive pressure on the trigger as an independent action, completely free of the other muscles of the gripping hand. There should not be excessive pressure on the web of the hand on the back strap of the pistol because it will interfere with the manipulation of the trigger by the trigger finger.

c. Proper Grip Must Manage Recoil After Firing. Once a

shot is fired, the pistol recoils, disturbing alignment of the sights. A proper grip must facilitate a quick recovery from recoil so the sights quickly return to the same area on the target.

(1) The amount the muzzle climbs during recoil depends

on the amount of controlled muscular tension in the grip and wrists applied to stabilize the weapon and create consistency in resistance to recoil. Controlled muscular tension allows the weapon sights to recover consistently back on target within a minimum amount of time.

(2) Equal pressure must be applied to the grip with

both hands because recoil will travel where there is least resistance and the sights will not return to the same area on the target. Firm pressure ensures the pistol does not slip during recoil.

(3) An improper grip or lack of controlled muscular

tension will cause the pistol to move in the shooter’s hand after the shot is fired, disrupting sight alignment and requiring the shooter to reestablish their grip.

**NOTES**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3**. ISOSCELES STANDING POSITION AND GRIP**

a. Assuming the Isosceles Standing Position and Grip. In

the Isosceles position, the body is squared to the target and equal pressure is applied on the pistol from the grip. When confronted with a target, the natural physical reaction is to face the target and push out with the arms. The Isosceles position capitalizes on this natural response. To assume the Isosceles standing position:

(1) Face the target with the feet approximately shoulder

width apart. The support foot may be slightly forward of the strong foot (approximately half a boot length) to balance the position. The shoulders are squared to the target.

(2) Establish a two-handed firing grip in the Isosceles

position:

(a) Firmly grip the pistol with the strong hand on

the pistol grip. The coach should ensure the shooter’s webbing between the thumb and trigger finger is high and just under the back strap of the pistol. The pistol is offset in the hand such that the pistol is not in line with the forearm.

(b) Place the heel of the support hand on the

exposed portion of the pistol grip in the pocket formed by the fingertips and heel of the strong hand. There should be maximum contact between the pistol grip and the hands. Wrap the fingers of the support hand over the fingers of the strong hand.

(c) Ensure both thumbs rest on the left side of the

pistol and point toward the target.

1. The coach should ensure the shooters

support thumb does not apply excessive pressure to the slide stop or the slide to interfere with the operation of the weapon.

2. Rolling the support thumb forward will

keep the thumb from interfering with the slide stop. It further changes the angle of the support hand fingers so they are in a better position to grasp the firing hand without sliding off.

(d) Apply equal pressure on both sides of the

pistol to allow for the best management of recoil. Muscular tension and grip pressure are evenly distributed around the pistol, minimizing the effects of recoil and allowing quicker recovery of the sights on target.

(e) Rest the trigger finger naturally, straight and

outside of the trigger guard, so the finger can be moved quickly and easily to the trigger.

1. Elevate and extend the arms toward the

target. The elbows face outboard with the arms slightly bent to absorb recoil.

2. Roll the shoulders forward and shift the

body weight slightly forward to stabilize the position and better manage recoil. There should be an equal amount of muscular tension on both sides of the body to best manage recoil.

3. Do not tuck the head between the shoulders; the head is extended forward but kept erect so the aiming eye can see through the sights. The coach should observe the shooter’s head position to ensure it remains erect so the aiming eye can look directly through the sights. In an Isosceles position, shooters can incorrectly tilt the head up or down so that it is more difficult to look through the sights.

4. If the pistol sights are significantly out

of alignment when the weapon is at eye level, it may be an indication of a poor grip. When the grip is correct, to include the muscular tension in the grip, wrist, and forearms, the pistol sights should be aligned to the point that only minor adjustments are needed to align the sights to the aiming eye.

b. Position Analysis

(1) Grip. The coach looks at the shooter’s grip and

weapon while firing.

(a) If the grip is poor, the coach may see:

1. The support hand slipping from the grip

during recoil or the hands separating during recoil. Check the tension in the grip, particularly from the support hand, to ensure it is sufficient to manage recoil. To correct for the hands slipping, have the shooter roll his support thumb forward to change the position of his hand so that it’s in a better position to grasp the firing hand without sliding off. The support fingers will overlap the firing fingers.

2. A poor management of recoil or lack of

control of the weapon. Recoil should be controlled and go straight back and slightly left due to the twist in the barrel. If the muzzle of the weapon ‘fishtails’ or shakes left to right during recoil, the shooter has a poor grip and is not controlling the weapon. The coach can observe for controlled muscular tension in the grip and forearms by observing recoil. Check the tension in the grip, particularly from the support hand, to ensure it is sufficient to manage recoil.

3. Poor recovery of the sights back on

target. The weapon should automatically go back on target. During recoil, if the weapon recoils too high, it will stop short of recovery to the same point, indicating there is not enough controlled muscular tension in the grip and forearms. Ensure the shooter maintains muscular tension in the arms throughout the entire shooting process.

(b) The pistol should not be aligned with the

shooter’s firing arm. Some people call this ‘grip alignment’. The pistol should be offset in the hand so that when the arm is brought up, the pistol sights are aligned with the shooter’s eye and not the arm.

1. An indicator is a shooter who is tilting

their head to the right/left to achieve sight alignment or a bend in the wrist.

2. This position of the weapon in the grip

will further make it difficult to sweep the safety with the firing thumb.

(2) Wrists. The coach looks at the shooter’s wrists. When the grip is correct, the support wrist is forward of the strong-side wrist.

(a) If it isn’t, the coach should have the shooter

roll his support thumb forward to change the angle of the support hand on the grip and the position of the wrists.

(b) If the position is correct, the shoulders are squared to the target, the arms will be the same length with the firing foot slightly to the rear.

(3) Arms. The coach ensures both arms are

extended and there is not a bend in the support arm. Recoil follows the path of least resistance and if the elbow is bent, the weapon will recoil higher and more to the side rather than straight back, increasing recovery time. If the support elbow is bent, look at the grip and angle of the body.

(4) Body Position

(a) The coach ensures the shooter is not leaning

back from the waist. Body weight must be distributed evenly over both feet with the weight of the torso slightly forward. The support foot should be slightly forward of the strong-side foot to support the weight distribution forward and balance the position. The legs are not locked and may be slightly bent. If the shooter is leaning backward, the coach can do the following during dry practice to illustrate to the shooter that his position lacks recoil management:

1. To test the shooter’s recovery and

management of recoil, the coach can push back on the shooter’s grip. This should be done during dry practice, before the first round is ever fired.

2. Standing to the right of the shooter, the

coach brings his right hand up underneath the weapon, taking care to not place his hand in front of the muzzle.

3. The coach then taps his hand back against

the front of the shooter’s grip to see if the shooter can manage the recoil and recover his sights to the same place.

4. The coach ensures the shooter’s body is

aligned with the target such that excess muscular tension is not needed to bring the sights on target.

a. Head. The coach ensures the shooters

head is erect so the shooter can look directly through the sights. The head should not be canted to the side. If it is, it may indicate a poor grip. If the weapon is aligned with the forearm, that will cause the shooter to have to cant his head to look through the sights. The weapon should be offset in the hand.

**NOTES**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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4. **STABILITY OF HOLD**

a. Definition. The ability to hold the pistol sights still

on a designated area of a target is considered stability of hold. Size and distance to the target dictates how critical stability of hold must be. The smaller the target or the longer the range to the target requires more stability of hold. Likewise, the larger the target or the shorter range requires less stability of hold.

b. Purpose of Stability. A consistent, stable position is

assumed for two distinct purposes:

(1) Minimize Movement of the Weapon Sights. A pistol

firing position must be stabilized to minimize movement of the weapon sights so an accurate shot can be fired. A stable firing position enables the weapon’s sights to be controlled to deliver accurate fire on a target.

(2) Minimize the Effects of Recoil. A pistol firing

position must be stabilized to minimize the effects of recoil for recovery of the sights to the same area on the target. In combat, it may be necessary to engage the same target more than once to eliminate it. If the firing position is stable, the pistol sights should recover to the same area on the target, allowing rapid reengagement. Distributing the body’s weight to balance the position will stabilize it and allow better management of recoil.

c. Controlled Muscular Tension. A pistol firing position is stabilized through controlled muscular tension. Because the pistol is fired without benefit of bone support, muscular tension is needed in the body to stabilize the position and the weapon sights.

(1) A consistent amount of muscular tension is needed to

hold the weapon steady so the sights can be aligned with the aiming eye and the target.

(2) Controlled and consistent tension in the body allows

the shooter to offer resistance to manage recoil and bring the sights back on target quicker.

(3) Too much tension, however, can cause strain or

produce additional movement by trembling.

(4) Muscular tension is correct when the shooter can

control the pistol before, during, and after firing the shot.

d. Fault Checking Stability of Hold

(1) Observation. The coach can observe the shooters

stability of hold, which may indicate problems in acquiring or maintaining sight alignment and sight picture. There should be less than a one-inch arc of movement on the target at 7 yards.

(a) To do this, the coach stands directly behind

the shooter in a position (over the shooter’s right shoulder) in which he can observe the pistol’s front sight.

(b) The coach then focuses his vision on the front

sight blade with a reference point downrange (e.g., a target, a mound of dirt) in the background.

(c) Through this process the coach identifies the

amount of movement in the muzzle and can determine if the amount of movement is excessive or if trends exist that may indicate “muscling” the weapon to bring it on target. The coach should look at the shooter’s wrists to see if they are being moved to bring the weapon on target.

1. Laser Pen Method. To illustrate to a shooter

Their lack of stability and to work on refining his stability of hold, the coach can use the Laser Pen Method.

a. Have the shooter hold laser with his grip

in their firing stance and assume a position at a range (e.g., 7 yards) from a target in which the laser is visible.

b. The laser will indicate the shooters

aiming area and stability of hold. The coach works with the shooter to refine his stability of hold until the laser projects within an acceptable aiming area that will fit in the center of the target. It is not enough to hold on the target; the shooter must hold within the center of the target.

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