

Verified Firearms Instructor Program

Mesa County Sheriff's Office

215 Rice St. Grand Junction, CO 81501

970-244-3500 option 2

Website: www.mesacounty.us/sheriff

Email: so-records@mesacounty.us

All related administrative fees have been waived by Sheriff Rowell.

Please read through this information packet entirely before applying.

General Information about the Verified Firearms Instructor Program

Effective July 1, 2025, all firearms training certificates submitted for a Colorado Concealed Handgun Permit (CHP) must be completed through a Colorado County Sheriff's Office verified firearms instructor. To be verified by the Mesa County Sheriff's Office, instructors must:

- The firearms training class's principal location must be in Mesa County.
 - If your training occurs in another county, please contact that county for details about becoming a verified instructor.
- Hold a valid Colorado-issued CHP – Temporary emergency permits do not qualify
- Be certified as a firearms instructor through one of the following entities:
 - A federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency
 - A college or university
 - A nationally recognized organization that customarily offers firearms training
 - A firearms training school

The instructor is responsible for notifying the Sheriff's Office of firearms instructor certification renewals. Failure to do so will result in suspension of Verified Instructor status and the removal from the public list of Verified Instructors. There is no grace period for expired instructor certifications.

If the instructor's principal place of business changes location, please notify the Sheriff's Office within 30 days of your new address and business name.

In addition to the above criteria, all CHP classes taught must meet the parameters on page 2.

General Requirements for CHP Classes

- Classes must be taught in person by the Verified Instructor.
- No portion of the class may be held online.
- Classes must meet the requirements of the federal “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990”

Concealed Handgun Training Class for a new CHP

Description: This is a class for people intending to apply for a **new** CHP.

Required Duration: Minimum of 8 hours. *This does not need to be consecutive.*

Elements Required for a New CHP Training Class

- Knowledge and safe handling of firearms and ammunition.
- Safe storage of firearms and child safety.
- Safe firearms shooting fundamentals.
- Federal and state laws pertaining to the lawful purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms.
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders described in Article 14.5 of Title 13.
- Requirements for reporting lost or stolen firearms as described in C.R.S. 18-12-113.
- Requirements for secure firearms storage as described in C.R.S. 18-12-114.
- State laws pertaining to the use of deadly force for self-defense.
- Instruction on any other state law enacted within 5 years before the class that pertains to the purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms.
- Best practices to ensure concealed handgun permit holders safely interact with law enforcement personnel responding to an emergency.
- Instruction regarding techniques for avoiding a criminal attack and how to manage a violent confrontation, including conflict resolution and judgmental use of lethal force.
- Students must be required to complete a live-fire exercise on a range, discharging at least 50 rounds with a minimum accuracy score of 70%. *This does not need to be conducted in a single day.*
- Students must be required to complete a written Concealed Handgun Competency exam, which tests the student’s knowledge of the subjects described in C.R.S 18-12-205.5 (3)(a) to (3)(f), with a minimum score of 80%. *This exam must be an open-book exam.*

Concealed Handgun Refresher Class for CHP Renewal

Description: This class is for people intending to renew an **existing** CHP. *A certificate for this class will **not** suffice for **new** CHP applications.*

Required Duration: Minimum of 2 hours.

Elements Required for Concealed Handgun Refresher Class

- Instruction on changes to federal and state laws related to firearms enacted within 5 years prior to the refresher class.
- Require students to complete a live-fire exercise on a range, discharging at least 50 rounds with a minimum accuracy score of 70%.
- Require students to complete a written Concealed Handgun Competency exam, which tests a student's knowledge of the subjects described in C.R.S 18-12-205.5 (3)(a) to (3)(f), with a minimum score of 80%. *This exam must be an open-book exam.*

Class Certificate Required Elements

- Certificates issued to students must include:
 - The instructor's name printed or typed on the certificate.
 - The instructor's original signature. Digital/electronic signatures, stamps, and cursive fonts are not acceptable.
 - The instructor's Mesa County Verified Firearms Instructor expiration date.
 - The expiration date will be found on your Mesa County Sheriff's Office Verified Firearms Instructor certificate.
- Clear indication of whether the student completed a Concealed Handgun Training class for a new permit or a Refresher class.
 - *Refresher class certificates are not valid for new CHP applications.*
- The student's name printed on the certificate.
- The date the student completed the class.

Adding the instructor's Firearms Instructor ID and expiration date (optional).

How to Apply for the Verified Instructor Program

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact the Mesa County Sheriff's Office, Records Unit, at 970-244-3500 ext. 2.

Steps to Apply if You Already Have a CHP

1. Fill out and sign the Mesa County Sheriff's Office Verified Firearms Instructor application.
2. Submit documents in person to the front counter of the Mesa County Sheriff's Office or to so-records@mesacounty.us. Once your application has been received, you will receive an email response.

3. Required documents submitted must include:
 - The completed and signed Verified Firearms Instructor application.
 - Your Colorado Driver's License or Colorado ID.
 - Your valid Colorado Concealed Handgun Permit.
 - Proof that you are a certified firearms instructor, such as an NRA instructor certificate or Colorado POST instructor certificate.
4. Your application will not be processed if any required documents are missing or incomplete. Please do not send additional documentation unless specifically requested.
5. This process may take up to 30 days to complete. Once your complete application and all required documentation have been received and processed, a Mesa County Verified Instructor certificate will be issued upon review and by the authority of the Sheriff.
6. Your name, business, and verification expiration date will be added to our public list of Verified Instructors on our website at <https://mesacounty.us/sheriff>.
7. Once you have been verified, you will be notified to pick up your certificate from the front counter of the Mesa County Sheriff's Office.

How Do I Apply if I Do Not Have a CHP?

If you need to apply for a CHP at the same time as the Verified Instructor Program, please visit the Mesa County Sheriff's Office website at <https://mesacounty.us/sheriff> to find the Concealed Handgun Permit application and complete the CHP application process.

- You may also submit your verified instructor application during your CHP appointment.
- Processing time for your Verified Instructor ID may take more than 30 days due to the wait time associated with receiving a Colorado CHP.

How are Verified Instructors Revoked or Suspended?

- If an instructor no longer meets the requirements for verification, your status as a Verified Instructor will be revoked.
- If an instructor no longer meets the requirements to hold a Colorado Handgun Permit, your status as a Verified Instructor will be revoked.
- If an instructor provides a certificate for the completion of a Concealed Handgun Training class or Refresher class that fails to meet the class requirements, your status as a Verified Instructor will be suspended. You may appeal for reinstatement no earlier than 30 days following the suspension per C.R.S. 18-12-202.7 (4)(b).
- If your Verified Instructor status is revoked or suspended, you will be removed from our public list of Verified Instructors.

What if My Verified Instructor Application is Denied?

If your application is denied, you will receive a letter explaining the grounds for the denial, suspension, or revocation and explaining how the applicant may appeal the decision. Applicants may also seek judicial review of the Sheriff's decision, per C.R.S. 18-12-207 (4)(a).

Relevant Colorado Revised Statutes (HB 24-1174)

C.R.S. 18-12-202. Definitions.

(3.5) "Concealed Handgun Training Class" means a concealed handgun training class as described in section 18-12-202.5 and does not include a refresher class.

(6.5) "Refresher Class" means a concealed handgun refresher class as described in section 18-12-202.5 (4).

(8) "Training Certificate" means a certificate issued by a Verified Instructor who conducts a concealed handgun training class or a refresher class that evidences an applicant's successful completion of the class requirements.

(9) "Verified Instructor" means an instructor for a firearms safety course who has been verified as a firearms instructor by a sheriff pursuant to section 18-12-202.7.

C.R.S. 18-12-202.5. Concealed Handgun Training Class - Refresher Class - Rules.

(1) A concealed handgun training class is any of the following:

(a) a law enforcement training firearms safety course or

(b) a firearms safety course taught by a verified instructor and offered by a law enforcement agency, an institution of higher education, or a public or private institution, organization, or firearms training school that is open to the general public and taught by a verified instructor.

(2) A concealed handgun training class must be held in person with the instructor of the class at the same location as the students, and no part of the class may be conducted via the Internet. A concealed handgun training class must provide a minimum of eight hours of instruction, including the live-fire shooting exercise described in subsection (3)(g) of this section and the written concealed handgun competency exam described in subsection (3)(h) of this section. The eight hours of instruction in a course do not need to be consecutive.

(3) A concealed handgun training class must include the following elements:

(a) Instruction regarding knowledge and safe handling of firearms and ammunition;

(b) Instruction regarding safe storage of firearms and child safety;

(c) Instruction regarding safe firearms shooting fundamentals;

(d) Instruction regarding federal and state laws pertaining to the lawful purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms, including instruction on extreme risk protection orders described in article 14.5 of title 13, requirements for reporting lost or stolen firearms described in section 18-12-113, secure firearms storage requirements described in section 18-12-114, and any other state law enacted within five years before the class that pertains to the purchase, ownership, transportation, use, and possession of firearms;

(e) Instruction regarding state law pertaining to the use of deadly force for self-defense;

(e.5) Instruction regarding best practices to ensure concealed handgun permit holders safely interact with law enforcement personnel who are responding to an emergency;

(f) Instruction regarding techniques for avoiding a criminal attack and how to manage a violent confrontation, including conflict resolution and judgmental use of lethal force;

(g) A requirement that a student achieve a minimum seventy percent accuracy score, as determined by the instructor, in a live-fire shooting exercise conducted on a range, which requires discharging at least fifty rounds of ammunition and which does not need to be conducted in a single day; and

(h) A requirement that a student achieve a passing score of at least eighty percent on a written concealed handgun competency exam that tests a student's knowledge of the subjects described in subsections (3)(a) to (3)(f) of this section. The exam must be administered as an open-book exam.

(4)

(a) A concealed handgun refresher class requires a student to demonstrate safety and competence with a handgun. A verified instructor must teach a refresher class and must include instruction on changes to federal and state laws related to firearms enacted within five years before the refresher class; a live-fire shooting exercise conducted on a range, which requires discharging at least fifty rounds of ammunition; and a written concealed handgun competency exam that tests a student's knowledge of the subjects described in subsections (3)(a) to (3)(f) of this section.

(b) A refresher class must be held in person with the instructor of the class at the same location as the students, and no part of the class may be conducted via the Internet. A refresher class must include at least two hours of instruction, including the live-fire exercise and the written exam. In order to complete a refresher class, a student must achieve a minimum seventy percent accuracy score, as determined by the instructor, in the live-fire shooting exercise and a passing score of at least eighty percent on the written exam. The exam must be administered as an open-book exam.

(c) A training certificate issued for the completion of a refresher class is valid for renewal of a permit to carry a concealed handgun pursuant to section 18-12-211 but is not valid for an initial application for a permit to carry a concealed handgun pursuant to section 18-12-203 (1)(h)(VI).

(5) A verified instructor shall provide a training certificate that includes the printed name and original signature of the class instructor to any student who completes a concealed handgun training class or a refresher class so that the student may submit the certificate to a sheriff as part of an initial application for, or an application for renewal of, a permit to carry a concealed handgun. The training certificate must clearly indicate whether the student completed a concealed handgun training class or a refresher class.

(6) A concealed handgun training class and a refresher class are subject to the requirements of the federal "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990", 42 U.S.C. Sec. 12101 et seq.

C.R.S. 18-12-202.7. Concealed Handgun Training Class – Instructor Verification

(1) Each sheriff shall verify as a firearms instructor a person whose principal place to conduct firearms training is in the sheriff's county and who:

- (a) Satisfies the requirements for verification described in this section; and
- (b) Pays any fee required pursuant to subsection (5) of this section.

(2) To become a verified instructor, an applicant must:

(a) Hold a valid permit to carry a concealed handgun issued pursuant to this part 2 that is not a temporary emergency permit issued pursuant to section 18-12-209; and

(b) Be certified as a firearms instructor by one of the following entities that have instructors certified by a nationally recognized organization that customarily offers firearms training:

- (I) A federal, state, county, or municipal law enforcement agency;
- (II) A college or university;
- (III) A nationally recognized organization that customarily offers firearms training; or
- (IV) A firearms training school.

(3)

(a) An instructor verification issued pursuant to this section is valid for ten years and may be renewed at any time before expiration.

(b) A sheriff shall issue evidence of verification to a verified instructor. The evidence of verification must include the date of expiration of the verification.

(c) Each sheriff shall maintain a record of firearms instructors verified by the sheriff and shall post a list of verified instructors on the sheriff's website. The list must include the expiration date of an instructor's verification.

(4)

(a) A sheriff shall revoke a verification issued pursuant to this section if the verified instructor ceases to meet the requirements for verification.

(b) A sheriff may revoke or suspend a verification issued pursuant to this section if the verified instructor provides instruction in a concealed handgun training class or refresher class that fails to meet the requirements for the class pursuant to this part 2 and that results in the issuance of a training certificate. A person who has had a verification suspended pursuant to this subsection (4)(b) may apply for reinstatement no earlier than thirty days following suspension.

(c) If a sheriff denies a person's application for verification as a firearms instructor or suspends or revokes a person's firearms instructor verification, the sheriff shall notify the person in writing. The notice must state the grounds for denial, suspension, or revocation and inform the person of the right to seek judicial review pursuant to section 18-12-207.

(5) A sheriff may establish and impose a fee to cover the actual direct and indirect costs of processing applications and issuing and renewing verifications pursuant to this section.

C.R.S. 18-12-207. Judicial Review - Permit Denial - Permit Suspension - Permit Revocation - Denial, Suspension, or Revocation of Instructor Verification.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, at a judicial review sought pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the sheriff shall have the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the applicant or permittee is ineligible to possess a permit under the criteria listed in section 18-12-203 (1) or, if the denial, suspension, or revocation was based on the Sheriff's determination that the person would be a danger as provided in section 18-12-203 (2), the sheriff shall have the burden of proving the determination by clear and convincing evidence. Following completion of the review, the court may award attorney fees to the prevailing party.

(4)

(a) If a sheriff denies a person's application for verification as a firearms instructor or suspends or revokes a person's firearms instructor verification, the person may seek judicial review of the sheriff's decision. The procedure and timelines described in subsection (2) of this section apply to judicial review of a sheriff's decision pursuant to this subsection (4).

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, at a judicial review sought pursuant to this subsection (4), the sheriff has the burden of proving by a

preponderance of the evidence that the person does not meet the requirements to be verified as a firearms instructor or satisfies the criteria for suspension or revocation of a firearms instructor verification.

C.R.S. 18-12-215. Immunity.

(2) A law enforcement officer or agency, medical personnel, and an organization that offers concealed handgun training classes or refresher classes and its personnel who, in good faith, provide information regarding an applicant are not liable for any damages that may result from issuance or denial of a permit.

6-1-707. Use of title or degree - deceptive trade practice.

(1) A person engages in a deceptive trade practice when, in the course of the person's business, vocation, or occupation, the person:

(f) Claims to be a verified instructor for a firearms safety course that satisfies the requirements for a concealed handgun training class described in section 18-12-202.5 unless the person is verified as a firearms instructor by a sheriff pursuant to section 18-12-202.7.