

Shooting from Cover

By: Tom Perroni

The reason for this article is that just recently I was teaching a firearms in-service course for some veteran officers. I happened to be discussing with several of the other instructors and a lieutenant the difference between training & qualification this particular group must qualify every 6 months to maintain their job. And as I reviewed this agency's course of fire I realized that they were not shooting from cover at any point. So once the officers had qualified I asked if anyone wanted to stay for some additional training and 9 officers stayed behind.

So the first thing I asked was how many of you train to shoot to cover and then train on how to shoot from behind cover? Then answer was shocking none of them train in this important skill. Several said that they had not done it since the academy.

So the first thing I asked was what is the difference between Cover & Concealment?

An academic understanding of cover is being an object which effectively stops or deflects a projectile. An academic understanding of concealment is anything that hides a person from observation.

I feel it is not sufficient for instructors to train their students on how to use cover without addressing what actually constitutes cover and when and how to use it. Lest we forget what constitutes cover the object that stops a handgun round may be ineffective against a rifle round. Once we determine what sufficient cover is we then must discuss depth of cover or crowding cover.

I teach students to be no closer than arms length away from cover. It is important that they realize that by positioning themselves too close to cover will limit their field of view, it creates issues with their shooting platform when they try to return fire by rolling out left or right and limits their tactical options in general.

When shooting from cover here are a few tactics I share with students:

- Minimize the time of exposure.
- Let the subject see only a gun barrel and eyeball nothing more.
- Do not shoot from the same location continuously use different positions each time you roll out as not to give the adversary any advantage.

- Do not extend your firearm beyond cover.
- Shoot around cover not over top of cover.
- Reload from behind cover.
- Do not let the slide come in contact with cover causing malfunctions
- When shooting from the left make sure room is given to allow spent brass to fall free.
- Use a knuckle to support the firearm not the back of the hand. (Using the back of the hand causes us to expose more of the head from cover. This also causes the weapon to recoil more aggressively).

Always remember in any gunfight to shoot to stop the threat. Always check your six and be aware of your surroundings. Before we emerge from cover make sure your handgun is fully loaded. What I teach is A way to do things and not THE way.

I could talk forever about shooting from cover but this is all the room I have for this article. If you want to learn more come to class and I will teach you what you want to know.

Stay Safe & Shoot Straight!

Remember "Conflict is inevitable; Combat is an option". Stay in condition yellow and stay in the fight.