Introduction

Every organisation, including the Police, should have a well-organised training scheme. Such an assumption includes, among others, the issue of the process of acquiring and improving the skills of using service weapons by officers. It is very important that police officers acquire and improve their skills thanks to qualified instructors. The purpose of this article is to present the organization of the process of acquiring the right to carry out shooting training in the Police and the evaluation of the specialized course program in this regard. The assessment was carried out by means of a diagnostic survey, with the use of a questionnaire, developed by the Training and Vocational Development Department of the Police Academy in Szczytno (hereinafter referred to as WSPol). The tool contained 32 statements concerning both the organisation of the course and its programme as well as the instructors, materials and training environment. The questionnaire also included a final evaluation of the course combined with the level of satisfaction.

Development of firearms – historical background

Weapons have accompanied man since the dawn of time. First stones and sticks were used to hunt or defend against other people, then knives and spears, and then slings and bows. Owning a weapon was often a sign of standing in a community, bravery or reaching adulthood.

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The development of firearms is linked to the invention of gunpowder, initially used as rocket fuel. The Chinese used gunpowder in fireworks as early as the 11th century, and their knowledge of the subject came to Europe probably thanks to Arab trade routes. Another view is that gunpowder was brought back from China by the famous traveler Marco Polo, who in 1271–1292 made a trading expedition from Venice to China and back. A third theory suggests that gunpowder was independently invented in Europe. According to this theory, one of the discoverers of gunpowder was a German monk, Berthold Schwarz of Freiburg, from whom the German name for gunpowder, “Schwarzpulver,” literally meaning “black powder,” was derived. The mixture usually consists of potassium nitrate (75%), sulphur (15%) and charcoal (10%).

According to historical sources, the first artillery guns, known as bombardiers, were used in Europe in the late 14th century – at first destroying the enemy’s morale with a loud bang rather than his life force, not to mention fortifications. Progress in this area was rapid, however, and only half a century later, in 1453, Sultan Mehmed II, attacking Constantinople, deployed siege artillery against the defenders and methodically “bombarded” the city. After 40 days of shelling, the city walls succumbed to the stone.

Soon, the first designs of handheld firearms appeared. They were nothing more than short metal tubes closed at one end, which were attached to long wooden rods that acted as a butt.

Another important step in the development of firearms was the development of the integrated cartridge, in which the casing connected the other elements, i.e. the propelling charge, the ignition primer and the projectile. In the beginning, the cartridge had a primer made of paper or cardboard, later it was made of brass. Anthony E. Hartink notes that ancient firearms required not only a long time to prepare them for firing, but also dry and windless weather to ignite the powder. The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of rapid advances in firearms that can be compared to today’s advances in computer technology. Everything that people had learned and taught about shooting for the previous five centuries had lost any practical relevance in the span of just one generation. By the end of the nineteenth century, the development of propelling charges, ammunition types, and weapon mechanisms had reached a level that has only undergone minor, sometimes cosmetic changes to this day. The only thing that remains is the issue of materials used in production and additional

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3 Ibidem, p. 6.
6 Ibidem, p. 12.
7 Schulz W, 1000 ręcznej..., op. cit., p. 11.
equipment in the form of sights, lighting, etc. Nowadays, there are manufactured weapon units which have a theoretical possibility of firing even a few hundred shots per minute in any environmental conditions, and their operation is very simple.

The person who conducts shooting exercises in the Police

Currently, firearms are an attribute primarily of military and non-military armed formations and sporting, hunting and hobby environments. A device that propels projectiles by means of the energy of gunpowder gases produced during combustion of the propelling charge is both an opportunity and a huge responsibility.

In the case of police officers, in addition to the legal sphere regulated primarily by the law of May 24, 2013 on means of direct coercion and firearms\(^8\), there is the issue of adequate (correct) preparation of the user to carry out the tasks. We are talking here about effective, efficient and above all safe use of service weapons. Safety as one of the basic human needs is included in this case in two dimensions: personal safety of a police officer and safety of goods protected by the officer, therefore, the main objectives of police shooting training, regulated by the decision No. 713 of the National Police Commander of 30 December 2005 on shooting training of police officers\(^9\) are:

1) to master and perfect the skills of police officers in the safe, efficient and effective use of firearms, [...] in a variety of situations and conditions;

2) shaping and consolidating lawful behaviour of a police officer in situations close to the realities of the use of firearms [...];

3) to develop the ability to properly assess the situation, recognise and select the target, decide whether or not to use a firearm [...]\(^10\).

To ensure that knowledge and skills\(^11\) have reached a stable level, they must be systematically consolidated. Shooting training consists mainly of skill formation, but also of theoretical preparation, without which it cannot be said to be complete. The level of practical skills previously achieved will not be permanent. Only as a result of a proper approach to further training will it be possible to say that it does not become lower\(^12\). It is clear that the ideal solution would be to get to a level where correct reactions with firearms are at the level of habit\(^13\). Each police officer should be aware of the need for self-improvement in this respect, and those

\(^8\) Consolidated text, Dz.U., 2019, item 2418.

\(^9\) Dz.U. of the KGP, 2006, No. 3, item 9 as amended; hereinafter: decision No. 713.

\(^10\) Ibidem, Annex No. 1(1).

\(^11\) Skill – the ability to practically perform a specific action or set of actions.


\(^13\) Habit – an acquired tendency to perform a specific action more efficiently, faster and more automatically, often previously performed.
responsible for the training and improvement process should be properly prepared for its implementation\textsuperscript{14}.

Regulating the organisation of shooting training, the function of the so-called “police officer conducting the shooting drill” was introduced. “The police officer conducting the shooting drill is a police officer who is a qualified police shooting instructor (instructor of shooting training for police officers) and has completed a course in first aid. The latest regulations included in the ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of 16 July 2019 on the conditions of safety and hygiene of service during the implementation of training in the Police\textsuperscript{15} impose an obligation to conduct shooting training classes by an instructor with the qualifications of a paramedic or to provide paramedic care during such classes.

Dictionary of Polish Language says that an instructor is “a person who teaches practical skills”\textsuperscript{16}. Such a person should demonstrate knowledge, experience and good educational and teaching skills. Only a police officer with the appropriate level of commitment provides a basis for inferring that classes will be conducted safely and at the correct level.

The basis for the training of police officers whose duties are related to maintaining an appropriate level of skills in the use of firearms by police officers are based on the provisions of the regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of 19 June 2007 on detailed conditions for professional training and in-service training in the Police\textsuperscript{17}. Paragraph 48 of the aforementioned act indicates that “the purpose of in-service training is, in particular, to acquire, update, expand and deepen the knowledge and professional skills of a police officer, required in the performance of his/her official tasks and activities, as well as to obtain additional qualifications, including instructor’s qualifications”\textsuperscript{18}.

\textbf{Police shooting instructor in the past}

As early as in 1993 a mode of training of police officers – instructors of shooting training of police officers was initiated, which took place in a two-stage system. The techniques of training in handling weapons were based on the experience of contacts with instructors from Israel, France and the United States of America. The instructor training within the realization of the I level program included police officers delegated by police organisational units and qualified after passing the preliminary examination. The training within the II level program was intended only for police officers who within 12 months after completing the course for the first level instructors actively participated in shooting training in police

\textsuperscript{14} Jagielski R, Rybicki P, Salamonik P, Metodyka..., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.
\textsuperscript{15} Dz.U., 2019, item 1375.
\textsuperscript{17} Dz.U., 2007, No. 126, item 877 as amended.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibidem}. 
organisational units and for the first level instructors from schools and training centers who do not have the second degree qualifications\textsuperscript{19}. The Police School in Słupsk was designated to implement the program.

Many years of instructor training led to conclusions aimed at introducing specific modifications in the process of preparing officers to be instructors. As a result, in 2002 a uniform training programme was introduced, with no division into ranks\textsuperscript{20}. The basis for building the program was:

— “current analysis of the implemented training programs for instructors of first and second degree shooting training indicating, on the basis of observations of lecturers and opinions of police officers – participants of the training, to verify the organisational assumptions, two-stage structure and the substantive content of training in its current form;

— experience with the current training of instructors of the first and second degree of organisational, substantive, methodical and formal character, indicating the need for changes, the need reported by the participants of instructor training to formally strengthen the function of the instructor in the organisational unit of the Police, and thus the legitimacy of more detailed catalog of tasks and responsibilities arising from the specificity of the work of police officer – police shooting instructor;

— the possibility of building a program from scratch by the training provider resulting from the change in the training system, as well as cost-saving benefits for the organisational units delegating candidates for instructors and the training provider due to a reduction in the number of courses;

— introduction of didactic principles concerning the construction of educational programs and their implementation, \textit{e.g.} from the general to the specific, from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the difficult, from the abstract to the concrete and from the safe to the less safe (dangerous)\textsuperscript{21}.

The Police School in Słupsk was again selected to carry out the training. Another reconstruction of the training undertaking was realised in 2007, by introducing the “Program of specialist course for police shooting instructors”\textsuperscript{22}. A noticeable discrepancy between the programs was the shortening of the course by 2 days. The other contents did not contain significant differences. Again, the school in Słupsk was indicated as the “forge for instructors”.

The demand for staff with the authority to teach shooting training in field units and limited capacity to implement a very labor-intensive course

\textsuperscript{19} Decision No. 219 of the National Police Commandant of 27 August 2002 on the framework programme of training within in-service training of police officers – police shooting instructors (Dz.U. of the KGP, 2002, No. 11, item 76, Annex.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibidem}.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibidem}.

\textsuperscript{22} Introduced by Decision No. 908 of the National Police Commandant of 11 December 2007 on the programme of the specialist course for police shooting instructors (Dz.U. of the KGP, 2008, No. 1, item 4).
(two teachers for more than a month working with a group of 15 people), as well as the need for the Police School in Ślupsk to carry out other training projects with a shooting training component resulted in a request to amend the decision on the introduction of the course program in 2013. The proposed modifications include adding to the list of training units implementing the course: Police Academy in Szczytno, Police Training Centre in Legionowo and Police School in Katowice. Since 2017, when the aforementioned changes began to be implemented, there was a noticeable reduction in the load of instructors from the Ślupsk Police School. More than half of the courses were implemented by the other police schools, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of implementation</th>
<th>Police School in Ślupsk</th>
<th>Police Academy in Szczytno</th>
<th>Police Training Center in Legionowo</th>
<th>Police School in Katowice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Author’s own elaboration based on data from the Police School in Ślupsk, Police Academy in Szczytno, Police Training Centre in Legionowo and Police School in Katowice

**Police shooting instructor today**

Currently, the rights of a police shooting instructor are obtained by officers who have successfully completed the specialist course for police shooting instructors or the specialist course for police shooting instructors in the units and organisational cells of the Police which carry out tasks in the area of combating terrorism.

23 Decision No. 508 of the National Police Commandant of 9 December 2013 amending the decision on the programme of the specialist course for police shooting instructors (Dz.U. of the KGP, 2013, item 98).

24 Introduced by Decision No. 173 of the National Police Commandant of 30 May 2018 on the curriculum of the specialist course for police shooting instructors (Dz.U. of the KGP, 2018, item 64; hereinafter: Decision No. 173).

The aim of the course for police shooting instructors is to prepare police officers for to perform the function of instructors in the organisational units of the Police and to carry out the resulting duties and tasks consisting in systematic training of police officers of particular units in safe, correct use and effective shooting from firearms as well as in increasing the level of knowledge and perfecting professional skills in the field of firearms. In accordance with the assumptions, graduates should additionally acquire first aid skills including the following issues: initial victim assessment, basic resuscitation, bleeding control, skeletal system injuries, non-traumatic life-threatening conditions, and multi-organ injuries. It is understandable that due to the specificity of the activities performed by the instructors, the highest number of hours was assigned for stopping bleeding and basic resuscitation activities.

The course offers the graduate preparation to plan, organize and conduct:

1) individual trainings with police officers in shooting from small arms, assigned for duty purposes;
2) programmed shooting training and periodic shooting tests with police officers in shooting from small arms assigned for official purposes, carried out on the basis of guidelines issued by the head of the organisational unit of the National Police Headquarters in charge of training;
3) programmed shooting training and shooting tests with police officers using other types of firearms on the basis of guidelines issued by the head of the organizational unit of the National Police Headquarters responsible for training;
4) theoretical and practical classes in handling and use of other types of weapons with police officers of particular services who do not have the training in question;
5) periodic and ad hoc training with all police officers on:
   a) regulations governing the use and application of firearms and the situational procedure for the use of firearms,
   b) principles of using firearms assigned for duty purposes,
   c) principles of safe use of firearms and safety conditions during training with firearms,
   d) the fundamentals of construction and operation of firearms assigned for service purposes,
   e) basics of construction, operation and principles of safe handling and shooting new designs (models) of firearms introduced into the armament of the Police,
   f) the ammunition used, the effects of projectiles on the human body and the use of ballistic shields,
   g) regulations governing the possession of firearms by legal entities and individuals;
6) shooting competition.”

26 Decision No. 173, Annex 1.
27 Ibidem.
In order to start the course, a police officer must plan to act as an instructor and successfully pass the qualification proceedings. The qualification proceedings are conducted by the training units delivering the course, specifying the date, place and number of candidates. The provisions of the program give the possibility to conduct one qualification for all training units. The qualification process is valid for a period of 12 months.

The purpose of the selection is to determine the psychophysical predispositions and the level of shooting skills of police officers. Additionally, in order to be admitted to the qualification it is necessary to possess certain elements of equipment: a pistol with two magazines, open type holster for a pistol and a pouch and practice uniform. Determining the level of shooting skills consists in carrying out two shootings:

“Conditions for the qualification shooting 1:
- a) target: shield TS-2,
- b) distance: 15 m,
- c) number of rounds: 6,
- d) execution time: 2 minutes,
- e) stance: standing,
- f) weapon holding: with both hands,
- g) evaluation: pass mark – minimum 40 points.

Only those candidates will be admitted to the 2nd qualification shooting who have achieved in qualification shooting 1 the minimum conditions specified.

Conditions for the qualification shooting 2:
- a) target: shield/figure TS-9,
- b) distance: 15 m,
- c) number of rounds: 6,
- d) time: 20 seconds,
- e) stance: standing,
- f) weapon holding: with both hands,
- g) evaluation: pass mark – minimum 4 hits on target”.

Decisions on the order of referral to the course are made at the referral units.

The course is designed to last 22 training days and require 165 teaching hours and a maximum class size of 15 persons. Such guidelines and the recommendation that the classes should be conducted by two, if possible the same instructors with appropriate experience, allow us to conclude that the candidates will gain competences in the scope indicated in the “Curriculum for the specialist course for police shooting instructors”.

In addition to the knowledge of the methodology of conducting shooting training classes and the role of an instructor in shooting training, the course participants acquire skills in the use of firearms and ammunition on the police equipment, keeping training records and administering first

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28 Ibidem.
aid. Noteworthy is a block of 75 class hours entitled: “Workshop presentation of activities”, during which each participant plans, organises and implements the activities (theoretical or practical) indicated by the teachers. During repeating the algorithm of lesson realization, being in the role of a teacher and a student, candidates prepare for the instructor’s exam and for performing the function of a shooting instructor in the future in police organizational units. The course ends with an instructor examination which consists of a theoretical and practical part – consisting of conducting classes on a selected topic in the field of shooting training.

It should be emphasised that the course programme is subject to review, which is reflected in modifications, the last of which concerned the introduction of the issue of the use of firearms in the event of the necessity to undertake the stopping of a vehicle if its operation endangers the life or health of people or poses a threat to important facilities, equipment or areas. This approach gives an assumption that the course programme is adjusted to the expectations of the addressees. Moreover, qualifications were separated from the content of the undertaking, which allows for full filling of subsequent editions of the course – it happened that after the qualification proceedings, for which 20 candidates applied, there were fewer officers left than the provisions of the programme assumed.

Assessment of the course for the purpose of training as a shooting instructor

In the years 2017–2019, 6 editions of the specialist course for police shooting instructors were conducted at the Police Academy in Szczyno. In order to evaluate the programme content and improve the course of the subsequent editions of the training, a survey was conducted in relation to selected editions. Using a survey questionnaire as a tool, the respondents evaluated such issues as: organisation of the course, programme contents, instructors, as well as making a final evaluation of the course combined with an indication of the level of satisfaction of the participation in the training undertaking. In the indicated period, the number of editions covered by the survey amounted to 50% of all completed courses.

Thirty-seven individuals participated in the study, noting that not every respondent answered all of the questions on the surveys. On this basis, it can be concluded that the candidates for instructors are mostly men. Female police officers are very rarely candidates for the function of an instructor (there was one woman among the respondents).

On the basis of the data collected, it should be concluded that higher education was held by 49% of the total (Chart 1).
The most numerous group of respondents – 64% of all respondents (1 person did not provide an answer) – were people between 26 and 35 years of age and between 36 and 45 years of age – 31% of respondents respectively, which is also visible in the distribution of the length of service – 81% of respondents indicated a length of service of between 4 and 15 years. This gives a high probability that officers who have an appropriate level of experience in the service and at the same time are engaged in performing additional duties are authorised to conduct shooting training classes.

The dominant group of respondents were officers serving in the prevention division. It should be pointed out that a good practice would be to divide the instructors evenly among the departments. The instructors who know the specificity of a given service and have experience in it, can better adapt the exercises to the recipients of their activities. Taking into account the full-time division in the state of employment in the Police as of 1 January 2019\(^{29}\), indicating that 63% was the prevention service and 30% the crime service, it can be concluded that the allocation of places on the course is planned evenly (Chart 2).

The analysis also covered the respondents’ opinions as to their satisfaction with participation in the course and evaluation of knowledge and skills acquired during the course. As indicated by the results obtained, all the respondents found the participation in the training satisfactory. The level of expectation fulfillment in terms of improving knowledge and professional skills was assessed in the same way.

The respondents, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was the lowest rating (maximum negative) and 5 was the highest rating (maximum positive), also evaluated the knowledge and skills acquired during the training course. The average mark for the knowledge and skills obtained was respectively: 4.75 and 4.77 (one person did not assess the level of the skills obtained).

The questionnaire addressed to the course participants also made it possible to freely assess the strengths and weaknesses of the course and to propose potential changes that would positively influence the effectiveness of the training. Having analysed the opinions voiced, one can see that the candidates are aware of the seriousness and importance of the function of police shooting instructor. It is worth emphasising that the respondents indicated the range of potential changes, with the most important being: increased number of shooting sessions and including more kinds of weapons in the training. What is also worth of being taken into account is the idea to introduce more hours of first aid and to organise classes in which students of basic training can practice.

Summary

The strength of a proper and efficient police training process is its adaptation first of all to the needs of police officers themselves, based on their own suggestions.

It should be noted that only professionals who have an appropriate level of commitment, motivation and skills, backed up by their superiors and logistic support can guarantee that the classes will be conducted at a high level and in accordance with safety standards. There is also no doubt that instructors responsible for the level of police training should be supported by the training units at the regional police headquarters and police schools. Only high-level cooperation in the form of e.g. recurrent workshops gives the possibility to properly prepare officers to respond to a life- or health-threatening situation.

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Keywords: Police, instructor, firearms, shooting training, specialised course

Summary: Armed forces are characterised, among other things, by an extensive process of preparing officers to carry out the tasks imposed. Training, and then in-service training in the police, is based primarily on the experience and expertise of those responsible for it. A significant role among
police teachers is played by instructors, including police shooting instructors. The article describes the process of acquiring the authority to teach the indicated classes with police officers. Additionally, on the basis of evaluation research conducted at the Police Academy in Szczytno, taking into consideration such elements as course program evaluation, acquired knowledge and practical skills, the level of adaptation of the content of specialist course for police shooting instructors to the needs of course participants has been established.