

SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

SHOOTING RANGE REGULATIONS & BEST PRACTICES

Outdoor Shooting Ranges

The New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice Police Training Commission has published detailed [Outdoor Firearms Range Facility Standards](#), which are the primary regulatory framework for police shooting ranges in the state. Key requirements of the standard include:

- Location & Security: Ranges must be in safe, isolated areas with secured perimeters (natural barriers or fencing). Consult with your agency's solicitor concerning any necessary zoning or municipal ordinance requirements.
- Impact berms: Minimum 12 ft high for 25-yard ranges, 20 ft for 50-yard ranges.
- Side berms: At least 8 ft high, extending from the impact berm to the maximum shooting distance.
- Range Surface: Must be clear of debris and vegetation to prevent ricochets and ensure safe footing.
- Target Area: Targets must be spaced and mounted to minimize ricochet risk, with clear numbering and alignment.
- Firing Lines & Lanes: Clearly marked with distance indicators and lane numbers.
- Sound System: Audible system required for voice commands.

Indoor Shooting Ranges

The New Jersey Department of Health has established regulations for indoor shooting ranges under [N.J.A.C. 12:100-8](#).

Key requirements of the standard include:

- Ammunition: Specifies the use of zinc, nylon-jacketed, or copper-jacketed bullets for practice sessions, with service ammunition allowed for qualification sessions. Addresses safety concerns related to the "bounce back" of zinc bullets.
- Ventilation System: Details requirements for air velocity, air distribution, negative pressure, exhaust systems, and interlocked supply/exhaust systems to prevent contamination and ensure proper airflow.
- Noise Exposure: Adopts the Occupational Noise Exposure Standard (29 CFR 1910.95) and recommends sound-absorbing materials, acoustical flooring, and noise reduction measures for control rooms and bullet traps.
- Water Drains: Requires floor drains and sloped flooring for cleaning purposes.
- Work Practices: Mandates the use of ventilation systems during range use and cleanup, prohibits hand brooms, requires HEPA-filtered vacuums, and specifies personal protective equipment for cleaning and maintenance tasks.
- Ear protection is required, with a hearing conservation program and annual audiometric exams for range officers.
- Eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in the range.
- Maintenance: Requires a specific schedule for maintenance and repair to ensure safe and operational facilities.

Lead Exposure

Lead exposure can occur in shooting ranges from shooting firearms with lead bullets or lead-containing primer creates airborne lead in the gun smoke. Exposure can also occur from lead bullet deformation and fragmentation, handling spent cartridges, or cleaning firearms can contaminate the hands and skin with lead or improper range cleaning methods such as dry sweeping, compressed air, non-high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtered vacuums, or inadequate cleaning of lead-contaminated surfaces.

Initial airborne exposure level monitoring should be conducted to determine the level of exposure to employees. A medical surveillance program should be implemented if employees' exposure levels are at or above the action levels set forth by OSHA. It is also recommended to conduct blood test levels of range employees that may be exposed to lead, regardless of whether the action level is exceeded. For more information about lead exposure to employees, please review the [OSHA Protecting Workers from Lead Hazards at Indoor Firing Ranges Fact Sheet](#) and the [OSHA Protecting Workers from Lead Exposure at Indoor Firing Ranges Quick Card](#).

You should consult with environmental professionals to determine an appropriate soil lead remediation schedule as necessary. Lastly, designate areas as non-eating zones, such as weapon cleaning areas, ammunition storage, weapons maintenance areas, etc.

Resources

A Shooting Range Facility Hazard Identification Inspection checklist is available on NJCE.org/Safety under [Safety Resources](#). If you need assistance with developing a Standard Operating Procedure, please reach out to your Risk Control Consultant.