

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

### Retired officers aim for special gun permits

**South Florida law enforcement agencies offer courses to give retired officers the chance to carry a handgun almost anywhere in the country.**

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As bullets ripped through blue-bodied targets, the concussions from the shots echoed around the outdoor firing range.

Twenty former officers reloaded their handguns -- semi-automatics and revolvers -- and waited for the signal to fire again.

Not an unusual scene at the Broward Sheriff's Office gun range.

The 20 men -- retirees from 37 to 72 -- came out to the shooting range in Sunrise's Markham Park on Saturday to qualify to carry a handgun almost anywhere in the country.

The federal Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 allows current and retired law enforcement officers to do so as long as they remain proficient in using their weapon.

This is the first time BSO has offered a course allowing retirees to qualify.

Another class is planned for August, with additional courses expected in the future depending on demand, said BSO spokesman Jim Lejedal.

Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties offer similar programs.

In Broward, a \$75 fee covers the cost of ammunition, targets, safety equipment and instructors. BSO provides the bullets to make sure no one uses old ammo.

To pass the course, participants had to hit the target 32 of 40 times, which Lejedal said is the standard for all current Florida law enforcement officers.

On Saturday, the retired officers shot at distances of five, seven and 15 yards under the supervision of BSO instructors.

Arthur Halperin, 69, of Boynton Beach, said he came down to Broward to qualify because the course is half the price of the one offered by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office.

"We're retired, [so] we're basically on a fixed income," said Halperin, a 20-year veteran of the New York Police Department.

He passed the course.

Most of Saturday's participants were former NYPD cops.

Everyone who passed received a "firearms proficiency verification card." The official permit comes in the mail.

Kevin Trollinger, 37, of Hillsboro Beach, proudly showed his card after passing. He retired in June after 18 years with the BSO.

"I did it because I want to be able to keep my firearm on my person to protect myself or others if need be," Trollinger said.

Out of 20 participants, only two did not initially pass.

Sweat in his eyes prevented Alan Rich, 72, of Hollywood, from making the grade the first time.

He retook the course immediately after and passed, missing the target only once.

If he did not pass the second time, he would have had to attend the course again.

"It sounded like a good idea because now I'm certified to carry it [a handgun] nationwide," Rich said.

He worked 20 years as a New York City detective before moving to South Florida and becoming a federal marshal.

Rich sees another possibility now that he is certified.

"If I'm ever in the position to help a police officer, I could step in and not worry about liability," he said.