



California BSIS Firearm Permit (Armed Guard)

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Practice Questions

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1. What is the single most important firearm safety rule a security officer must follow at all times?

- A. Keep the firearm loaded so it is always ready
- B. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded
- C. Carry the firearm with the safety off for a fast response
- D. Store the firearm with a round in the chamber

2. In California, which agency issues the Exposed Firearm Permit for security officers?

- A. The local sheriff's department
- B. The California Highway Patrol
- C. The Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS)
- D. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

3. Deadly force may be used by a security officer ONLY when:

- A. A suspect is fleeing with stolen property
- B. There is an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury to yourself or another person
- C. A trespasser refuses to leave
- D. Someone insults or threatens you verbally

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4. The required California firearms training course for the Exposed Firearm Permit is approximately:

- A. A 2-hour online video
- B. A 40-hour academy
- C. A 14-hour course (classroom plus range)
- D. A 4-hour refresher only



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5. The three basic parts common to most handguns are:

- A. Stock, scope, and bipod
- B. Frame (receiver), barrel, and action
- C. Trigger, magazine, and holster
- D. Sights, grip tape, and laser

6. Carrying a firearm as a security officer is best described as:

- A. A symbol of power over others
- B. A grave responsibility with legal and moral consequences for every decision
- C. A guarantee of respect
- D. An optional accessory to the uniform

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7. If an armed security officer uses force unlawfully, they can face:

- A. Only a written warning
- B. Both criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits
- C. No consequences if in uniform
- D. Only loss of the permit

8. During an active shooter event, an armed security officer's priority is generally to:

- A. Collect evidence first
- B. Find and detain witnesses
- C. Protect lives - help people escape, take cover, and stop the threat only if trained, justified, and able
- D. Wait in the parking lot for police

9. Which of the following does not meet "gun safe"?

- A. Shall be able to fully contain firearms and provide for their secure storage
- B. Shall have a locking system consisting of at minimum a mechanical or electronic combination lock
- C. A gun safe shall be capable of repeated use
- D. A gun is always loaded and ready to use

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10. Where should the muzzle of your firearm be pointed when you draw or handle it?

- A. At the suspect at all times
- B. Toward the nearest exit
- C. In a safe direction where an unintended discharge would cause the least harm
- D. Straight up into the air

11. An 'exposed' firearm permit authorizes the security officer to carry the firearm:

- A. Concealed under a jacket
- B. Openly and visibly while on duty in uniform
- C. Only inside a locked vehicle
- D. Both concealed and exposed at any time

12. What does an 'imminent' threat mean?

- A. The danger is immediate and about to happen right now
- B. The danger might occur sometime in the future
- C. The danger happened yesterday
- D. The danger is only a remote possibility

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13. To keep the firearm permit valid, an armed security officer must requalify at the range:

- A. Once every two years only
- B. Periodically during the permit period (multiple range requalifications), not just once
- C. Never after the initial course
- D. Only when changing employers

14. A modern cartridge (round of ammunition) is made up of:

- A. Case, primer, powder, and bullet (projectile)
- B. Only a bullet
- C. Powder and a fuse
- D. A shell and a battery

15. When deciding whether to use deadly force, the most important question is:

- A. Will my employer be impressed?
- B. Can I get away with it?
- C. Is there an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury, leaving no reasonable alternative?
- D. Is the suspect being disrespectful?



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16. 'Negligence' that creates liability for an armed officer includes:

- A. Careless handling causing an unintended discharge that harms someone
- B. Cleaning the firearm correctly
- C. Following all safety rules
- D. Reporting an incident promptly

17. When police arrive at an active scene and you are holding a firearm, you should:

- A. Keep your firearm drawn and approach them quickly
- B. Immediately follow their commands, drop or holster the weapon, show your hands, and identify yourself
- C. Run toward the suspect
- D. Ignore them and keep searching

18. A gun safe exterior walls shall be constructed of a minimum _____ gauge thick steel.

- A. 9-gauge
- B. 12-gauge
- C. 15-gauge
- D. 19-gauge

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19. When should your finger be on the trigger?

- A. Only when you have made the decision to fire and your sights are on the target
- B. As soon as you draw the firearm from the holster
- C. Whenever you are confronting a suspect
- D. While reholstering, to maintain control

20. Does an Exposed Firearm Permit by itself allow you to carry a CONCEALED weapon?

- A. No - concealed carry requires a separate CCW license
- B. Yes - the permit covers both exposed and concealed carry
- C. Yes, but only when off duty
- D. Yes, as long as you are in uniform



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21. The level of force a security officer uses must be:

- A. Always the maximum available
- B. Whatever the officer prefers
- C. Reasonable and proportional to the threat faced
- D. Decided after the incident is over

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22. You must have which documents available while working armed?

- A. Your guard registration card and your firearm permit
- B. Only your Social Security card
- C. Only a photo of your permit
- D. No documents are required on your person

23. What is a 'misfire'?

- A. When you hit the bullseye
- B. When the magazine falls out
- C. When the cartridge fails to fire after the primer is struck
- D. When you fire too quickly

24. An angry person is yelling insults and threats at you but has no weapon and is not advancing. You should:

- A. Keep your firearm holstered and use verbal de-escalation
- B. Draw your firearm to show you mean business
- C. Strike them to assert control
- D. Fire a warning shot

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25. Who can be held liable when an armed guard uses excessive force?

- A. Only BSIS
- B. Only the client
- C. The officer, and potentially the employer, can both be sued
- D. No one if the guard followed orders



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26. After a person is wounded and the scene is safe, an officer should:

- A. Render or summon medical aid as soon as it is safe to do so
- B. Wait for a supervisor before helping anyone
- C. Avoid touching the injured person to limit liability
- D. Take photos before calling for help

27. The mechanical or electronic combination lock utilized by the safe shall have at least _____ possible combinations.

- A. 100
- B. 1,000
- C. 10,000
- D. 100,000

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28. Before firing, what must you always be sure of?

- A. That the safety is engaged
- B. That a round is chambered
- C. That the grip is dry
- D. What is in front of and beyond your target

29. Before carrying a firearm on duty, a California security officer must hold:

- A. Only a driver's license
- B. Only the firearm permit
- C. Only a guard registration
- D. Both a valid guard registration (guard card) AND a valid Exposed Firearm Permit

30. The 'reasonable person' standard means use of force is judged by:

- A. What you personally felt was right
- B. Whether the suspect was actually armed in hindsight
- C. Your employer's profit interests
- D. What a reasonable officer would have done with the same information at that moment



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. B — Treat every firearm as if it is loaded

The foundational rule of firearm safety is to treat every firearm as if it is loaded, regardless of what you believe its condition to be. This mindset prevents negligent discharges.

2. C — The Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS)

BSIS, part of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, regulates and issues the Exposed Firearm Permit (firearms permit) for licensed security personnel.

3. B — There is an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury to yourself or another person

Deadly force is justified only to defend against an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury. Protecting property, stopping a fleeing thief, or responding to insults never justifies deadly force.

4. C — A 14-hour course (classroom plus range)

The initial firearms permit course is about 14 hours, combining classroom instruction on moral and legal aspects and safe handling with live-fire range qualification.

5. B — Frame (receiver), barrel, and action

Most handguns consist of the frame/receiver (the body that houses the firing mechanism), the barrel (through which the bullet travels), and the action (the parts that load, fire, and eject cartridges).

6. B — A grave responsibility with legal and moral consequences for every decision

Carrying a firearm is a serious moral and legal responsibility. Every decision to draw or fire can end a life and change yours. Restraint, judgment, and training matter more than the weapon itself.

7. B — Both criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits

Unlawful use of force can lead to criminal charges (assault, manslaughter, murder) AND civil lawsuits for damages, in addition to losing the permit and job. Liability is personal and serious.

8. C — Protect lives - help people escape, take cover, and stop the threat only if trained, justified, and able

The priority is protecting life: helping people evacuate or shelter, calling 911, and confronting the threat only if you are trained, it is justified, and you can do so without endangering more lives. Coordinate with arriving police.

9. D — A gun is always loaded and ready to use

10. C — In a safe direction where an unintended discharge would cause the least harm

Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction - one where a negligent discharge would not strike a person. This rule applies whether the firearm is believed loaded or unloaded.

11. B — Openly and visibly while on duty in uniform

The exposed firearm permit allows the firearm to be carried openly (visibly) while the officer is on duty and in uniform. It does NOT authorize concealed carry, which requires a separate CCW license.



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12. A — The danger is immediate and about to happen right now

An imminent threat is one that is immediate - it is happening or about to happen at that moment. A past threat or a vague future threat does not justify the use of deadly force.

13. B — Periodically during the permit period (multiple range requalifications), not just once

California requires periodic range requalification (multiple times during the two-year permit period) to keep skills and certification current. Failing to requalify on schedule can invalidate the permit.

14. A — Case, primer, powder, and bullet (projectile)

A complete cartridge has four parts: the case (holds it together), the primer (ignites when struck), the powder (propellant), and the bullet (the projectile that leaves the barrel).

15. C — Is there an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury, leaving no reasonable alternative?

The deciding factor is always whether a reasonable person would perceive an imminent threat of death or great bodily injury with no reasonable alternative. Ego, property, and disrespect are never justifications.

16. A — Careless handling causing an unintended discharge that harms someone

Negligence is failing to act with reasonable care - for example, a negligent discharge from careless handling that injures someone. It creates both civil and potentially criminal liability.

17. B — Immediately follow their commands, drop or holster the weapon, show your hands, and identify yourself

Responding officers may not know who you are. Immediately comply with their commands, make your hands visible, secure or holster your firearm, and identify yourself as security to avoid being mistaken for a threat.

18. B — 12-gauge

19. A — Only when you have made the decision to fire and your sights are on the target

Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until your sights are on the target and you have decided to fire. Finger on the trigger too early is a leading cause of negligent discharge.

20. A — No - concealed carry requires a separate CCW license

The Exposed Firearm Permit only authorizes open/exposed carry on duty. Carrying concealed requires a Carry Concealed Weapon (CCW) license issued separately by a sheriff or police chief.

21. C — Reasonable and proportional to the threat faced

Force must be objectively reasonable and proportional to the threat. You use only the amount of force necessary to control the situation and must de-escalate as the threat decreases.

22. A — Your guard registration card and your firearm permit

While on duty armed you must have your security guard registration (guard card) and your Exposed Firearm Permit available, and produce them on lawful request by BSIS or law enforcement.

23. C — When the cartridge fails to fire after the primer is struck

A misfire occurs when you pull the trigger and the cartridge does not fire even though the primer was struck. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction and wait before clearing it, as a hangfire is possible.

24. A — Keep your firearm holstered and use verbal de-escalation

Words alone, without an imminent physical threat, do not justify drawing a firearm or using force. De-escalate verbally, keep distance, and call for backup or police if needed.



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25. C — The officer, and potentially the employer, can both be sued

Both the individual officer and the employer (under theories like negligent hiring, training, or supervision) can be held liable. 'I was just following orders' is not a defense for unlawful force.

26. A — Render or summon medical aid as soon as it is safe to do so

Once the threat is controlled and the scene is safe, summon EMS and render aid within your training. Protecting life continues after the threat ends; delaying aid can increase harm and liability.

27. C — 10,000

28. D — What is in front of and beyond your target

You must always be sure of your target and what is beyond it before firing - a bullet can pass through or miss and strike unintended people or property. This is one of the four universal safety rules.

29. D — Both a valid guard registration (guard card) AND a valid Exposed Firearm Permit

To carry a firearm on duty you must have BOTH a current security guard registration and the Exposed Firearm Permit. The firearm permit alone does not authorize you to work as a guard.

30. D — What a reasonable officer would have done with the same information at that moment

Courts judge force using the objective 'reasonable person/officer' standard: what a reasonable, well-trained officer would have done given the facts known at the time - not hindsight.



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