



VirTra Range Day

Since launching the VirTra program at the Utah Attorney General's Office, I've observed many agencies participate in the training. I haven't met a trainee that didn't enjoy the experience to some degree. The department trainers who debrief the training tell us they find value in the virtual reality scenarios that their officers experienced. Do you know that we have simulated handgun and rifle ranges available on the VirTra simulator?

The ranges include traditional static indoor and outdoor ranges. These ranges offer several target choices ranging from traditional silhouettes to hostage-takers, steel plates and dueling trees. The shooter can also experience firing from prone, kneeling, sitting and standing positions.

Currently available weapon systems include full size Glock handguns and M4 style rifles. These are actual weapons that have been modified to fire the VirTra laser system. We are evaluating adding options for Smith and Wesson and Sig Sauer handguns. VirTra boasts that these weapons are within 1/16 of an inch in accuracy to firing live ammunition. Because these are actual weapon systems, we can simulate almost any live fire range course. Trainees can work on draw strokes, reloads, malfunctions and marksmanship.

A benefit of the versatility of the simulated range is the instantaneous of target “replacement,” instead of clearing the range, walking down range and placing tape over the holes, a press of the button loads clean targets. Because the VirTra system is equipped with five screens, a different target can be placed on each screen at a different distance from the shooter. And because the VirTra system is a simulator, the sound during the course of fire can be manipulated so that hearing protection is not necessary.

The VirTra range can be used for building skills and reinforcing fundamentals. The VirTra range helps officers that struggle to qualify. After years of firearm instructor experience, I don’t recommend VirTra Simulator for weapon qualifications.

I have also instructed many non law-enforcement personnel in VirTra. In a short time novice shooters perform at a moderate level of both rifle, and handgun proficiency. I have also worked with current law enforcement officers inside of the VirTra range. Although they have been officers for some time, they have been able to “clean up” issues with reloads, malfunctions, grip and stance that can cause lower scores on qualification day.

All of this can be done for a tiny fraction of the cost in ammunition. Officers that are self-conscious about qualification can have sufficient practice time to improve their qualification scores and build confidence with their weapon systems.

If any department trainer or officer is interested in visiting our VirTra Training Center and experiencing the variety of ranges, please contact Chris Walden, Ken Wallentine or Will Fowlke at 801-281-1200. We have open range days on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month.