

## School Sentinel Program – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a School Sentinel?

(The) School board may implement school sentinel program. Any school board may create, establish, and supervise the arming of school employees, hired security personnel, or volunteers in such manner and according to such protocols as the board may believe to be most likely to secure or enhance the deterrence of physical threat and defense of the school, its students, its staff, and members of the public on the school premises against violent attack. (SDCL 13-64-1)

The School Sentinel is *not* a law enforcement officer. The Sentinel is present to provide deterrence and immediate response to violent attack. Tasks that are customarily the responsibility of law enforcement remain so.

The School Sentinel program should be considered a component of comprehensive efforts to enhance safety. These efforts should include awareness and training in related topics. Affirmative preparedness is a community effort whose intention is to provide education, deterrence and defense.

How is a “School Sentinel” selected?

See South Dakota Codified Law in Chapter 13-64.

What is the “School Sentinel” application process?

Found here: <https://atg.sd.gov/LawEnforcement/Training/schoolsentinel.aspx>

School Sentinel application: [https://atg.sd.gov/docs/Sentinel%20application%201-2016%20\(4\).pdf](https://atg.sd.gov/docs/Sentinel%20application%201-2016%20(4).pdf)

School Sentinel Medical Form:  
<https://atg.sd.gov/docs/Sentinel%20Medical%20Frm%201-2016.pdf>

What training is required for a School Sentinel?

School sentinel training course. Any person who acts as a school sentinel, pursuant to § 13-64-1, shall first successfully complete a school sentinel training course as defined by the Law Enforcement Officers Standards Commission pursuant to subdivision 23-3-35(16).

There is no exemption from Sentinel training, regardless of the background of the Sentinel candidate. This includes current or former law enforcement or military of any job category.

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What does the School Sentinel training consist of?

Fundamental training topic areas:

1. Firearms proficiency
2. Use of force
3. Legal aspects
4. Weapons retention
5. Identifying protocol for identifying sentinel
6. First aid (self and others)

Also covered: immediate response to violent attack, searching for attackers, functioning in low light conditions, weapon retention, handcuff familiarization, and movement tactics. Discreet, confidential, and concealed carry of a handgun is trained and practiced extensively. Sentinel candidates also learn to use a law enforcement type patrol rifle.

Who is exempt from having to go through the training, but still wants to be a Sentinel?

There is no exemption from Sentinel training, regardless of the background of the Sentinel candidate. This includes current or former law enforcement or military of any job category.

How long is the training?

This training is 80 hours or two weeks long.

What happens if I miss a day of training?

The program is progressive in that each day is built upon the previous day's training. Missing portions of the training would keep the student from completing the course of instruction.

How does a student make up missed training?

The current 'blocked' format of Sentinel training does not provide for make up days. The student would have to return to the next scheduled class.

Where does it take place?

Training is conducted at the offices of Law Enforcement Training in Pierre.

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Where can I get more information on this program?

Contact Law Enforcement Training, (605)773-3584.

### **Equipment**

It is recommended that the school purchase and provide firearms and related equipment.

Alternatively, schools may choose to authorize privately owned firearms and equipment. Use of same or similar types as those issued or authorized by area law enforcement agencies is a best practice. Firearms should be factory stock, un-modified and current on any updates or recalls. If your school does not have any firearms, contact LET for resource information.

Training ammunition is provided by LET. Duty ammunition should be similar to what is used by law enforcement.

Prior firearms training is not required. Some training can be counterproductive to learning to shoot. Please contact LET if you have questions.

Handgun: - a good quality 9mm Luger semi-auto like the Glock 17 or 19, Smith & Wesson M&P or M&P Compact, Sig P320 Compact (upgrade compliant) work well for the majority of people. Other calibers can compromise your training experience. You will need at least 3 magazines. If your magazines hold 10 rounds or less, bring enough to load (in magazines) and carry 30 – 40 rounds at a time. Small statured people may need to look at one of the single stack subcompact firearms from Glock or Smith and Wesson. (Note you will need at least 4 magazines for these single stack guns). Highly recommended that firearms should be handled prior to purchase. Visiting a commercial range that offers handgun rentals of the various above handguns is a beneficial method of determining fit.

Law Enforcement Training will provide ammo for 9mm Luger, .40 S&W, and .45 ACP.

NOTE: The gun you will perform best with at training, may not necessarily be the one you will carry when in school. This should be a policy decision made by the school.

The reason for this issue is that the school environment may require a very high level of concealment which may necessitate moving to a smaller firearm. The problem with trying to use the smaller firearms in training is simply the volume of rounds you will be shooting. For a one day class, the small guns can be made to work well with practice. For multiple days and almost 1000 rounds of fire, they will quickly become difficult for even the most experienced shooters. The small firearms are harder to grip, they require more frequent reloading and most critically, tend to rub 'hot-spots' on the shooters hands quicker. This all means that the student cannot concentrate on the skills we are teaching when flinching from rubbed blisters on their knuckles or palms.

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Holster: Strong side outside the waist band holster. Holsters can be made of kydex, polymer or leather. You likely will use a different holster while at school, but having a holster which you can easily re-holster the gun without looking or without using two hands will allow you to concentrate on the other skills we cover without distraction. Inside the waist band holsters offer concealment but often require a change in pants size and must not collapse closed when the gun is removed so you can re-holster one-handed. Hybrid style leather/kydex tend to quickly soften and start collapsing closed. Do not bring the generic 'This holster fits 10 guns' style or a soft nylon style holster. The hybrid (polymer and leather/nylon/etc.) and generic fabric holsters often compromise safety and performance. A very good inexpensive model to consider is the Standard (**not SERPA**) Blackhawk CQC, the Safariland ALS, the Safariland GLS, Comptac QB, Blade Tech Eclipse, Glock Sport-Combat, etc. Body shape may affect holster selection.

Due to safety concerns regarding holsters that require an overt movement of the trigger finger, the use of these types of holsters and any other holsters with the same type of auto locking/trigger finger release is not permitted.

Please contact LET if you have questions.

Magazine pouch: Available and made from leather, kydex or polymer. Two, single magazine pouches are optimal. The soft magazine pouches will work, open top magazine pouches with passive retention work best. A single magazine holder will work as you can have one magazine in the gun, one in the magazine pouch and then a third (and fourth for low-capacity guns) in your pocket. Examples by brand name: Blackhawk, Safariland, Glock or BladeTech.

Belt: A good gun belt is essential to safely carry this equipment. Your standard dress or stylish web belt will simply not hold a full-size firearm, a magazine pouch, magazine and 30 rounds of ammo securely. Look for something in very stiff leather or something like the Blackhawk Riggers Belt, Wilderness Tactical 5 Stitch, Galco Concealment or Bianchi Ranger Belt (with overlapping leather behind the buckle).

Concealed carry options: Carrying your handgun in a briefcase, computer bag or dedicated concealed carry bag is also an option. We will practice this, called 'off body carry,' as part of training. Holster and magazine pouches are required for training.

Rifle: – a short rifle or carbine in .223/5.56mm caliber is highly recommended and used in training. A good quality AR type semi-automatic rifle works well for most situations. While a rifle or carbine is not concealable, it has advantages in accuracy and distance capability. A sling and extra magazines will be needed. SROs may already have a suitable rifle or carbine available. Please contact LET if you have questions.

LET will provide .22 caliber AR type rifles for basic training.

Students will need to provide their own rifle for the balance of training.

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Ear and eye protection: Quality muff style electronic ear protection is preferred. It will allow you to clearly hear all range commands and instructions. Popular brands: Howard Leight, Peltor, etc. Eye protection can be purchased at Walmart or a good sporting goods store. With multiple shooters present, we may use additional ear plugs underneath the muff type protection.

Flashlight: Compact and bright with a simple switch is preferred. It should have a means of remaining accessible, either a belt pouch or clip on the light.

Clothing: Pants with cargo pockets are useful. Clothing types actually worn on the job are highly recommended. If that clothing conflicts with above recommendations for holsters, belts, etc., contact LET for further information. Bring the following: a loose-fitting vest, a jacket and a pullover type (sweater, sweat shirt) garment for use in handgun concealment practice. Concealment garments will be used in many of the training exercises.

Comfort Items: Hat, sunscreen, folding chair, cooler, bug spray, hydration, etc. We may spend some time at the outdoor range.