



THE DEFENDER



A publication of
Virginia Citizens Defense League
Defending Your Right To Defend Yourself

VCDL.ORG

SPRING 2024

Summer Fun with Situational Awareness

Here are some family activities to teach safety and preparedness

by Jill McDaniel, Director of VCDL Academy



May is finally here, and the 2023-2024 school year is officially ending. You're probably filling up your summer calendar with things like travel and holiday celebrations. Maybe even some college touring with those graduates along with other fun activities, but have you planned to discuss any safety practices for you and your family?

Per data provided by the Department of Justice on Seasonal Patterns in Criminal Victimization Trends, late May through August typically see the highest numbers of violent crime than any other months of the year nationwide. This could be the result of many factors, but the increase in opportunities to socialize in crowded environments tends to be a common

one. Not to mention the rise in temperatures heating things up even more (no pun intended). This is why talking with your family, especially young adults and children, about safety and strengthening their situational awareness, is extremely important.

Situational Awareness is the process of being able to absorb information from your immediate environment(s), process it rationally, and then effectively respond to a situation at hand. It's the art of heightening your senses to prepare for the possibility of conflict or a dangerous situation. As you and your family get ready to embark on some adventures here in Virginia (or out of state), take a moment to have a chat about how you can stay safe as a family this summer.

Here are a handful situational awareness "strength training" exercises you can do with your family:

VCDL Public Meeting Dates

May 21, 5:30 PM, Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library,
4100 Virginia Beach Blvd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452

June 20, 8:00 PM, XCAL Shooting Sports and Fitness,
44950 Russell Branch Pkwy, Ashburn, VA 20147

For future in-person meetings, visit vcdl.org/events.

VCDL holds **live virtual monthly meetings on the second Sunday of each month**. These meetings are simulcast on Facebook and YouTube at [VCDL.TUBE](https://vcdl.org/events) 8:00 PM Eastern Time.

Watch the events at vcdl.org/events/event_list.asp
Check the website and VA-ALERT emails for meeting updates.

Pay attention to your surroundings. While out in public, ditch the technology, especially ear pods/headphones. Things like tablets and cell phones steal our focus. "Bad guys" look for easy targets, and the more distracted you are, the better for them. Put these items away until you get to your intended destination unless needed in the event of an emergency. Plus, you don't want to bring focus to your valuables while on vacation. You also want full control of your senses in case something happens. Additionally, you should identify exit routes wherever you are in case you need to leave quickly.

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The President's Pen

Pushing Back on Social Media and in the Mainstream Media

From the Editor

Along with every liberty-minded gun owner in Virginia, I waited and watched to see how Governor Youngkin would act when the ambitious slate of anti-gun and anti-safety bills from the General Assembly landed on his desk.

He vetoed 32 of the more than 40 anti-gun bills, including an "assault weapons ban." He altered an additional seven to render them toothless.

His statement was icing on the cake: "I swore an oath to defend the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of Virginia, and that absolutely includes protecting the right of law-abiding Virginians to keep and bear arms."

In other words, Youngkin made it clear the Constitution is his lodestar, and that the right to keep and bear arms is embedded in that foundational document.

While we should loathe being in such a precipitous position, we should celebrate victories when we can. That's why I snapped up one of VCDL's limited edition coins commemorating Youngkin's veto. Check out page 7 for info. And join me in cheering Youngkin's veto!

Mark Ching
Editor

Our right to keep and bears arms is not only under attack in Congress, the General Assembly, and local government, but it is also under attack in the media, both mainstream and social media.

There is a lot of misinformation, disinformation, and downright lies about guns and gun owners in the media. This misinformation is meant to turn the general public against gun owners, to shame us into giving up our guns, or at least going "into the closet." It is important that we don't let lies go unopposed. A lie that is not countered looks like a fact to people on the fence because they only hear one side.



I am very active on X (Twitter). When I see someone posting negative things about guns or gun owners, I post a response. If the person posting is a gun-grabbing legislator, I will bring guns into the conversation, even if the original post was not on guns. I am not trying to change the mind of the person who wrote the item, I am reaching out to those fence sitters who are reading the post.

For example, gun-controller Senator Louise Lucas posted:

"I join Speaker Scott in encouraging our colleagues to do the right thing. It will only take 6 Republicans to join us in the Senate to make sure kids are not going to school with a leaky roofs and faulty HVAC systems. The buildings are falling down around our kids ears."

She was moaning about needing to get only six Republicans to vote with Democrats to get something she wants. I posted:

"It would have only taken ONE Democrat to have stopped each of those 37 gun-control bills from passing. Didn't happen, not one time. So much for protecting a basic civil right."

So jump into the social media conversations with facts and logic. Be careful not to make any personal (ad hominem) attacks like "you're an idiot!" The first person to do that has lost the argument, indicating they have run out of ideas and rebuttals.

Write letters to the editor if you see something wrong in a story in the mainstream media.

Be careful to keep your responses short and to the point, as that better guarantees someone will read them. Never let any anger show.

Let's win the war on guns in the media! If we don't spread the truth, no one else is going to do it for us.

Philip Van Cleave

UPCOMING GUN SHOWS AND EVENTS

If you'd like to work a show, email the coordinator and ask to be put on the mailing list used for volunteers. Volunteers get free admission to the show, and some vendors offer discounts to other vendors, including our volunteers. It's an excellent way to easily recruit members. Verify all schedules; this list is correct as of May 15, 2024.

CHANTILLY, Dulles Expo Center

Jun 14–16 | July 19–21 | Sep 27–29

CHESAPEAKE, Chesapeake Conference Center

None scheduled at this time

DOSWELL, Sportsman Show, Meadow Event Park

Aug 2–4

FISHERSVILLE, Augusta Expo

Sep 7–8

FREDERICKSBURG, Fredericksburg Fairgrounds

Oct 12–13

HAMPTON, Hampton Roads Convention Center

July 27–28 | Sep 14–15

HARRISONBURG, Rockingham County Fairgrounds

None scheduled at this time

RICHMOND, Richmond Raceway Complex

July 13–14 | Aug 24–25

ROANOKE, Roanoke Rifle and Revolver Club (Hardy, VA)

VCDL benefit IDPA match

Jun 8

SALEM, Salem Civic Center

July 20–21 | Oct 19–20

VIRGINIA BEACH, Convention Center

Oct 19–20

WEYERS CAVE, Weyers Cave Community Center

None scheduled at this time

WINCHESTER, Winchester Sportsplex

None scheduled at this time

WOODSTOCK, Woodstock Moose Lodge

None scheduled at this time

WYTHEVILLE, Apex Expo Center

None scheduled at this time

COORDINATORS

Chantilly— Sean Kennedy, Gus Spier, Terrell Prude—
gunshows.chantilly@vcdl.org

Chesapeake—Vic Nicholls, Mark Ashley—
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Doswell—**Main coordinator vacant**, Twyman Andes,
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Fishersville/Harrisonburg/Weyer's Cave—Jim Kiser (**need assistant coordinator**)—gunshows.vawest@vcdl.org

Fredericksburg —Stephen Rochkind, Bob Williams—
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Hampton— Randy Braddock, Bryan Dunn, Michael Mumford
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Louisa— Brandy Polanowski—events.louisa@vcdl.org

Richmond—John Gosney, Dave Eckart, Dave Troxel,
Patrick Schrek—gunshows.centralva@vcdl.org

Roanoke/Salem—Nat Weigle (**need assistant coordinator**)—
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Virginia Beach—Phil Terrazas, Vic Nicholls—
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Winchester/Woodstock—Mark Lintz (**need assistant coordinator**)—gunshows.winchester@vcdl.org

State Gun Show Coordinators

Bryan Dunn, Brendan Mooney—gunshowcoord@vcdl.org

PROMOTERS

C&E Gun Shows www.ceggunshows.com

SGK Gun Shows www.sgkshows.com

Showmasters www.showmastersgunshows.com

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS

Fishersville, Jan 27–28

Seth Hower, Robert Mortenson, Brian Meyer, Brian Weidman,
Gaert Sime, Jeff Miller, Kenneth Cunningham, Jim Kiser

Virginia Beach, Feb 10–11

Timm Lynch, Brian Wrenn, Manny Perez, Alexander Rogge, Rob
Allen, Jeremy Dalziel, Neal Smith, Mike Ferris, Dustin Burris, Steve
Toth, Todd Morgan, Mark Ashley, Vic Nicholls

Doswell, Feb 17–18

Rowley Molina, Richard Roberts, Bob Charlton, David Cooper,
Lee Hurlock, David Crosby, Dave Morgerson, Vincent Ikley, Mike
Young, Roger Nixon, John Gosney, Stephen Rochkind

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Roanoke, Safeside Days, Feb 23–24

John Hoinowski, Elly Hoinowski, S Hollingsworth, Al Steed, Jr., Adam Volk*, Bob Lutjen, Michael Dalton, Sr., Mary Dalton, Neil Motter, Jim O'Steen, Nat Weigle

Salem, Mar 9–10

Michael Johnson, Madison Johnson, Michael Dalton, Sr., Mary Dalton, Larry Lewis, Robert Lutjen, Sam Hollingsworth, Neil Motter, Bob Schaller, Richard McNamara, Jim O'Steen, Chris Fennell, Robbin Weigle, Elly Hoinowski, John Hoinowski, Dave Knight, Jeff Miller, Nat Weigle

Fredericksburg, Mar 16–17

Bob Charlton, Lloyd Williams, Samuel Redwine, David Lee, Brian Gudmundsson, John Walt, Steve Giese, Paul Williamson, Theron Keller, Jim Thompson, Stephen Rockkind

Hampton, Mar 23–24

Bryan Dunn, Gregg Horne, Penny Adams, Ken Vann, Dave McCain, Todd Morgan, Steve Toth, Ken Harper*, Mike Ferris, Tom Brunton, Billy Taylor, Matthew Taylor, Randy Braddock, Steve Pautler*, Mark Peters, Judy Peters

Fishersville, Apr 6–7

Robert Mortenson, Brian Weidman, Gaert Sime, Jeff Miller, Thom Verga, Larry Blankenship, Jim and Cindy Stuart, Pavel Vorobgey, Jeff Miller, Jim Kiser

Appomattox Oyster Fest, Apr 27

Larry Lewis, Nat Weigle

Virginia Beach, Apr 27–28

Dan Farnsworth, Sarah Crumpler, Jayren Enriquez, Mark Eggerman, Mike Ferris, Mike Durig, Steve Toth, Phil Terrazas

Williamsburg, Eclipse Holster Open House, Apr 28

Dave McCain, Bryan Dunn

Chantilly, Apr 19–21

Brian Wrenn, John Glass, Larry Zabel, Manny Perez, Kurt Darr, Alexander Rogge, Ian McNeal, Josh Godaire, Mitch Darling, Brian Melde, Brionna Harris, Robert Wilson, Terrel Prude, Bruce Jackson, Robert Eufemia, Dwin Craig

Louisa Bowling Pin Shoot, May 4

Todd and Brandy Polanowski

Harrisonburg, May 4–5

Thom Verga, Robert Mortenson, Brian Weidman, Twyman Andes, Jim Kiser

*Indicates first-time volunteer

Situational Awareness (continued from page 1)

Play games! “I Spy” or “What If?” are wonderful to help build your child’s observational skills. You could challenge your kids with questions like “What if a stranger comes up to you wanting you to help them look for their lost puppy?” “I Spy with my little eye...” and follow it with subjects related to safety, like a police officer’s uniform or an exit sign. My favorite game to play with my seven-year-old son is my version of “Clue.” When out and about with my son, say at the grocery store, I encourage him to remember as much as possible about everything he sees while we are there. I tell him to pay attention to the people he passes, as well as anything that stands out most to him about the products on the shelves. Of course, I’m doing the same thing, because when we get finished, our drive home is usually discussing the things we saw with one another and comparing stories. He is also at the age where I can ask this question: what should we do to be safe out in public? My son can use previous lessons to answer this question. This “game” is a fantastic one to play with kids because it helps build their confidence. It also helps them when they give directions to others.

Pick a codeword. Sit down with your family and pick out or make up a word that is not commonly used in everyday talk and make that your family’s codeword. This word is only to be said in emergency situations as a “signal” to family members. Since the codeword is known only to family, it can be used without alerting strangers or a potential assailant.

Memorizing contact information. In today’s modern times, everyone has a cell phone, so everyone has a phone number. That means more numbers to memorize. We are so reliant on our smart technology to remember these numbers we forget these items can fail us—or we might need to dial a number from a strange phone. So memorizing important numbers should be a priority, especially for children.

Have a plan! Whether it is for vacationing away or even at home, have a safety plan in place for you and your family. Actually, have several! These plans can be for situations like home invasions, escaping a fire, flooding, injury, etc. These events may never happen in your lifetime, but as the saying goes, it’s better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.

These are only some of the ideas you can utilize for yourself and your family’s overall safety this summer and beyond. There are many more which you come up with on your own. The VCDL Academy’s goal is not just to educate on the Second Amendment, but also to educate Virginians on safety practices that they can apply almost immediately into their daily lives. I hope that you never have to use the tips I’ve listed above, but just remember, there’s nothing wrong with being prepared to protect.

Have a wonderful and safe summer!

From the Secretary's Desk

VCDL is busy fighting. Here are three ways you can help.

by Patricia Webb, Secretary/Treasurer

This is an exciting and somewhat scary time to be alive! On one hand, we have the 2020 *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association (NYSRPA) v. Bruen* decision from the U.S. Supreme Court changing the legal landscape all over the country. If you haven't heard of that landmark case, the ruling said that courts could not weigh your right to keep and bear arms against implied public safety. Instead, a court must first see if a case was covered by the Second Amendment—in other words, was the right to keep and bear arms involved? If the answer is yes, then the burden is on the government to prove the law in question had precedent in the text, history, and tradition of gun rights in America. The question must be answered: were there widespread laws of similar nature being enforced at the time the Bill of Rights was ratified? If the answer is no, the current law is unconstitutional and therefore invalid.



Because of the *Bruen* decision, as it is commonly called, many cases are being retried, and many long-standing laws depriving people of their rights are falling like dominoes. However, this does NOT mean that the war is won, nor is the battle over! In fact, the people who are pushing these unconstitutional laws are doubling down and even flagrantly thumbing their collective noses at the Supreme Court!

That is why we as a group must ramp up our efforts. We've got some momentum, but the hill is still steep. It is not insurmountable but will take a coordinated effort.

Currently, VCDL is actively pursuing several cases, both here in Virginia and on the national level. We are awaiting a decision in the case challenging private sale background checks. We are heading to court to argue against the one-handgun-a-month law. We're looking for a plaintiff to challenge the red flag laws, and we've joined in an amicus brief on the Rahimi case challenging the misdemeanor domestic violence prohibition. Make no mistake—we're not proposing that violent criminals should be armed, but that if a

crime is minor (the definition of misdemeanor), the offender should not lose his or her rights. Put succinctly, if a person is deemed safe enough to walk the streets among us, that person should not be deprived of basic human rights.

Other cases VCDL is fighting on your behalf include challenges to the bans in parks, community centers, and government buildings. We're currently fighting in two lawsuits on this front—one in Roanoke and another in Winchester. We've joined GOA and others in a suit against the recent ATF rule changing the requirements for who must get a federal firearms license (FFL) to sell even one gun! The list is long, and the barrage of assaults on our rights will likely never end.

You may be wondering how you can help. **First, encourage other gun owners to join VCDL.** These lawsuits cost money. Membership dues and contributions are how we fund them. We know the economy is not great, but if you can contribute, even just a little, we greatly appreciate it.

Next, teach someone to shoot! Take them to the range and introduce them to firearms in a safe, structured environment. If you're not comfortable teaching, take a class with them. This goes double for our youth, who are the stewards of our future.

Finally, talk to people about the importance of protecting our rights—ALL of our rights! Many think the right to keep and bear arms is outdated. But we know that evil will always exist; therefore we must have the means to combat it.

I want to thank each and every one of you for your part in this fight. VCDL is nothing without its members. That is what grassroots means: from the ground up. YOU are the lifeblood of VCDL, and we will always keep fighting on your behalf, and with your help.

Are Sights Really Necessary?

by William Moore

A recent VCDL email included a link to a Lucky Gunner video on the use of sights in an actual gunfight. I found the video interesting. Host Chris Baker made a few good points, like the term “point shooting” being highly elastic. Let’s take a critical look at some of the salient observations.

Not touched on in the video is a nicely alliterative adage that the average gunfight is three rounds in three seconds at three yards. A wide variety of authoritative stats show that’s male bovine excrement. Several documented sources show the average gunfight distance is around **five to seven yards**. The 2022 NYPD Firearms Discharge Report shows 68% of theirs were five yards or more for that year.

Three yards is an interesting figure for another reason because for decades, FBI stats have shown that from zero to three yards the good guys lose 90% of the time. Why? Because at very close range **whoever is first to act effectively wins**. The victims didn’t know there was going to be a gunfight. The bad guys did. The Force Science Institute tells us that the reaction time to an unexpected action is about three times that for an expected action. Situational awareness, a questioning attitude, and distance are your friends.

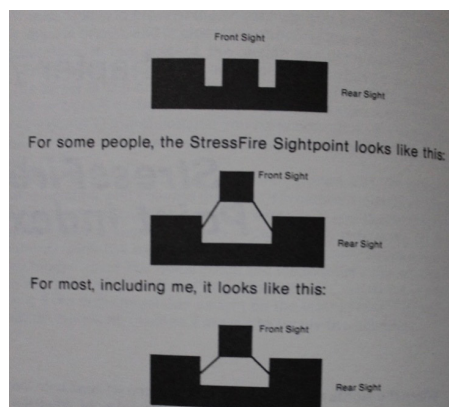
Frankly, the vast majority of defensive gun uses don’t involve gunfire. Few people want to get shot. A substantial number of aggressors back off if you come to an aggressive ready position in a smooth, confident manner that convinces them you’ll shoot. That said, there are some highly motivated individuals who aren’t going to be discouraged by either the sight of the gun or wounds that don’t incapacitate them. If you have to shoot, that makes where you put the bullet(s) very, very important. Also, you are responsible for the final resting place of every bullet you fire. You must KNOW where that bullet is going and that the background is safe. **You must therefore have some visual reference of where the gun is pointed.**

There was mention that some folks remember using the sights and others don’t. We know that stress affects both perception and memory. This is established fact. Just because someone doesn’t recall using the sights doesn’t mean they didn’t. However, some time back, LAPD did research on their gunfights and discovered that those who remember using their sights (at least their front sight—see below), had much better results than those who didn’t.

Now let’s talk about those sights. Your ideal handgun sight alignment is the top of the front sight level with the top of the rear sight and in the middle of the rear sight notch. The sight picture is where on the target the sights are when the gun fires. Your trigger press has a major effect upon where the bullet actually hits—often much more than slight differences in sight alignment. I noted in an earlier piece that the difference between good shot placement and poor shot placement is about 1/10 of a second. Take the 1/10 of a second.

Mr. Baker is correct that the quality of the sight picture can depend upon range. Assuming a smooth trigger press, at three yards the silhouette of the gun against the threat can be enough.

At fifteen yards, proper sight alignment and picture are necessary as is a good trigger press. If the gun’s up to or near eye level and also parallel to the ground, the front sight alone is generally sufficient out to 7-10 yards with practice. The bullets need to go where they’re most effective. A renowned trainer has recently noted that close range may also require precise shot placement. You’ll see this again.



This is going to take a wee bit of experimenting on your part. The method goes by various names: *flash sight picture* is the most commonly used one. In this method, the handgun is generally slightly below the level of the eye. The front sight is visible above the rear sight and either centered in the rear notch or the frame/slide of the handgun. This affects the vertical point of the bullet impact. In practice, a slight forward tilt of the head should bring the front sight down into the notch and you can see just how high the shot will be. When I do this, the front sight is only slightly higher than the top of the rear sight, but that can vary, especially according to range. You need to learn where the bullets land for you and allow for it.

Mr. Baker noted that at five yards the elapsed times for both using the sights (method above implied) and using the slide as a sight were only hundredths of a second different—not a real world difference. Shot placement was definitely better and that really matters. At least at that range, you do have time to use your sights and you should. With training and practice, you can reduce the time needed to get the full sight picture to a negligible amount.

Now then, we’ve mentioned both shot placement and grouping. Mr. Baker’s shot placement was several inches below the base of the neck and well-centered. Back in the 1980s the National Institute of Justice funded a study on how to improve incapacitation of aggressors who were a threat to life and limb. The product was NIJ report 100-83. The first recommendation by medical personnel was that the point of aim be changed to a spot centered on the upper body at the top of the armpit level. This is about 4 inches below the base of the neck if the threat is facing you squarely, this is where you want to be aiming.

Why the big deal? Simply this: you don’t have to be the reincarnation of Wild Bill Hickok or Wyatt Earp to hit a man sized target somewhere at five to seven yards. Also, the most common reaction to being shot is no reaction at all. The idea is to prevent the other person(s) from shooting at you.

VCDL Membership Application

Recruiter last name/member # _____
 _____ **New** _____ **Renewal** (Member # _____)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

_____ 1 **VCDL** membership: \$ **25.00**

_____ Family members @\$15/each: \$ _____

_____ Donation to **VCDL**: \$ _____

_____ Donation to **VCDL-PAC**: \$ _____

VCDL-PAC donations also require the following information:

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Employer's principle city/state: _____

This information is not made public unless your annual contributions total more than \$100.00.

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

(Note: Membership processing can take 4-6 weeks)

Method of payment

_____ Cash (Do not send cash through the mail.)

_____ Check (Make checks payable to **VCDL**)

_____ Charge

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVV _____

 Name as it appears on the card

 Signature of Card Holder Billing Zip Code

Mail to:

VCDL Membership Processing Center

P.O. Box 77

Willis, VA 24380

Save time and postage! Use a credit card or eCheck at vcdl.org/join.

***For family memberships, the primary member is \$25 annually and each additional member \$15 annually.** List primary member on application and family members on separate sheet. We need the full info for all family members. Full details on VCDL.org.

VCDL and VCDL-PAC contributions, gifts, or membership dues are not deductible for Federal income tax purposes.

2024 Limited Edition Coin Available

VCDL issued coin commemorates Governor Youngkin's Veto of 32 Gun-Control Bills in 2024

The 2024 legislative session saw an historic amount of unconstitutional legislation rammed through, including over 40 anti-safety bills. Governor Youngkin vetoed 32 of those bills and altered seven, sending them back to the Virginia Legislature. The alterations made by the governor changed the bills so that they no longer negatively affect the rights of Virginians.

To commemorate this record-breaking assault on our freedom, and the preservation of liberty by Governor Youngkin, VCDL has issued a **LIMITED EDITION challenge coin**. Only 320 coins will be produced, ten for each of the defeated assaults on our freedom. When they're gone, they're gone, just like the so-called "assault weapon" bans.

There is much more to do, and many more battles ahead of us. Funds raised from the proceeds of this sale will help us stay in the fight.

These solid brass coins are 40mm across and 3mm thick. They come enclosed in a clear hard plastic case. Each coin is \$50.00 plus a flat-rate shipping fee of \$10.00. Or you can pick up your coins at Gadsden Guns, or at select VCDL meetings.

Order at vcdl.org/store.





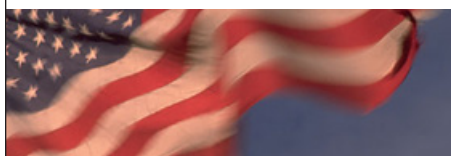
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Our moderators keep that
document updated to show
changing circumstances.

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Please feel free to contact any of the Officers or
Directors should you have any questions or if you
would like to volunteer your services in VCDL.

CHP RENEWALS

Virginia law provides that you can get the full five years of your Concealed Handgun Permit if you apply for renewal at least 90, but no more than 180, days prior to expiration of your current permit (Section 18.2-308.010). Members can add their permit expiration date to their member profile for email reminders during the 90-180 day window.

EXPIRES

RENEW IN

January	August–October
February	September–November
March	October–December
April	November–January
May	December–February
June	January–March
July	February–April
August	March–May
September	April–June
October	May–July
November	June–August
December	July–September