

- VEST FIRST RESPONDER -

HELP FOR HEROES

ALASKA

Self-Defense Law Reference Guide

Stand Your Ground | Castle Doctrine | Workplace No-Retreat | First Responder Protections | Police Use of Force

CERTIFIED TRAINER SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENT

Intended exclusively for VEST Certified Trainers. Not a substitute for legal counsel.

Alaska's self-defense laws are codified in Title 11, Chapter 81 of the Alaska Statutes (AS). Alaska is a Stand Your Ground state under AS 11.81.335. Importantly, Alaska's Castle Doctrine explicitly extends to the workplace - a significant protection for first responders attacked on duty.

STATUTE	SUBJECT MATTER
AS 11.81.330	Non-Deadly Force in Defense of Self or Others
AS 11.81.335	Deadly Force - Stand Your Ground; Workplace & Dwelling Exceptions
AS 11.81.340	Defense of Another Person
AS 11.81.350	Defense of Premises (Castle Doctrine)
AS 11.41.220(a)(1)(B)	Assault 2nd Degree - Enhanced for EMS/Fire
AS 11.41.230	Assault 3rd Degree - Peace Officer/First Responder
Alaska POST Standards	Police Use of Force - Neck Restraint Policy

PART I: THE ALASKA SELF-DEFENSE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

AS 11.81.335 - Deadly Force in Defense of Self (Stand Your Ground)

"A person who is justified in using nondeadly force in self-defense under AS 11.81.330 may use deadly force in self-defense upon another person when and to the extent the person reasonably believes the use of deadly force is necessary for self-defense against death, serious physical injury, kidnapping, sexual assault in the first or second degree, sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, or robbery in any degree." - AS 11.81.335(a)

AS 11.81.335(b) - The No-Retreat Rule with Workplace Extension

"A person may not use deadly force under this section if the person knows that, with complete personal safety and with complete safety as to others being defended, the person can avoid the necessity of using deadly force by leaving the area of the encounter, except there is no duty to leave the area if the person is... (3) in a building where the person works in the ordinary course of the person's employment..." - AS 11.81.335(b)

Alaska uses 'complete personal safety' as the retreat threshold - if retreat cannot be done with complete safety, it is not required. Subsection (b)(3) explicitly exempts persons who are 'in a building where the person works in the ordinary course of their employment' from any duty to leave before using deadly force. A fire station, EMS base, or hospital EMS area may qualify.

WORKPLACE STAND YOUR GROUND - ALASKA'S CRITICAL PROVISION:

AS 11.81.335(b)(3) creates an explicit no-retreat rule for people in their workplace. An Alaska EMS provider attacked in their station or their designated work building has no duty to leave before using deadly force. Combined with the 'complete safety' standard that applies in public, Alaska's framework provides strong protections for on-duty first responders.

AS 11.81.340 - Defense of Another Person

A person is justified in using force to defend another when they reasonably believe the third person would be justified in using that same force, and the actor's intervention is necessary for the third person's protection. The same deadly force threshold applies.

AS 11.81.350 - Defense of Premises (Castle Doctrine)

Alaska's premises defense statute allows use of force to prevent or stop unlawful entry into premises the actor possesses or controls. Deadly force against an intruder is justified when the actor reasonably believes deadly force is necessary to prevent commission of arson, robbery, kidnapping, sexual assault, or murder on the premises.

PART II: DUTY TO RETREAT - ALASKA'S POSITION

Alaska has NO absolute duty to retreat, but uses 'complete personal safety' as the operative standard. If a person KNOWS they can avoid deadly force by leaving WITH COMPLETE PERSONAL SAFETY, they may not use deadly force.

- Complete safety threshold: if there is ANY risk to retreating, the duty does not apply.
- Speed of attack matters: a rapid or sudden attack that leaves no time for safe retreat satisfies the 'immediately necessary' standard.
- WORKPLACE EXCEPTION: No duty to leave when in a building where you work in the ordinary course of employment (AS 11.81.335(b)(3)).
- DWELLING EXCEPTION: No duty to leave when on premises you own or lease, provided you are not the initial aggressor.

PRACTICAL IMPACT FOR FIRST RESPONDERS:

Alaska first responders in public spaces operate under the 'complete safety' standard - if retreat cannot be done with complete safety, force is justified. At their station or designated workplace, the subsection (b)(3) exception removes any duty entirely. VEST training's emphasis on situational awareness and threat recognition is legally foundational - establishing why safe retreat was not available at the moment force became necessary.

PART III: FIRST RESPONDER ASSAULT - ENHANCED CRIMINAL PROTECTIONS**AS 11.41.220 - Assault in the Second Degree (Enhanced for EMS/Fire)**

Alaska's assault statutes contain enhancements when the victim is a first responder. Assault in the Second Degree - normally a Class B felony (up to 10 years) - includes provisions for assaults directed at emergency

medical service providers and firefighters engaged in official duties. The enhancement applies when the attacker knows or should know the victim is a first responder in the performance of their duties.

AS 11.41.230 - Assault in the Third Degree

Third-degree assault is elevated from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class C felony when committed against a law enforcement officer or other designated official acting in an official capacity. Alaska's framework treats physical attacks on first responders as felony-level offenses.

TRAINER EMPHASIS POINT:

Alaska's felony enhancement for attacks on first responders provides meaningful deterrence. Wearing your uniform and operating a marked apparatus establishes the constructive knowledge that the attacker knew or should have known you were a first responder - the critical element for the enhancement to apply.

PART IV: POLICE USE OF FORCE & NECK RESTRAINT FRAMEWORK

Alaska does NOT have a statewide statutory ban on chokeholds or carotid restraints. Neck restraint policy is governed by Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) training standards and individual agency use-of-force policies.

- NO statewide statutory chokehold or carotid restraint ban as of 2024-2025.
- Neck restraints classified as high-risk techniques subject to the deadly force justification standard under AS 11.81.370.
- APSC training standards require officers to receive de-escalation training and proportionality instruction.
- Individual agency policies may restrict further; many larger Alaska departments have adopted administrative chokehold bans.

FIRST RESPONDERS VS. LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Alaska's law enforcement use-of-force standards do not apply to civilian first responders. An EMS provider or firefighter using a defensive physical technique in lawful self-defense is evaluated solely under the civilian AS 11.81.335 standard - not any law enforcement policy restriction. There is no statutory prohibition on civilian Alaska first responders using any defensive technique in genuine life-safety self-defense.

PART V: APPLYING VEST PRINCIPLES UNDER ALASKA LAW

1. Know the Complete Safety Standard

Alaska's 'complete safety' retreat threshold means any risk in retreating eliminates the obligation. VEST Level I threat recognition and situational awareness training prepares providers to document and articulate why safe retreat was not available at the moment force became necessary.

2. Your Station Is a No-Retreat Location

AS 11.81.335(b)(3) explicitly removes the duty to leave a workplace in the ordinary course of employment before using deadly force. A fire station or EMS base is that workplace. VEST station security protocols directly support

the factual record for this protection.

3. De-Escalation Is Legally and Professionally Essential

Because Alaska's public-space standard requires 'complete safety' for retreat, showing that retreat was not safely available is important. VEST Level I verbal de-escalation attempts, documented in your incident report, demonstrate both professional conduct and legal necessity.

4. Partner Defense Is Covered

AS 11.81.340 authorizes force to defend another person under the same standards as self-defense. VEST Level III partner defense training has direct statutory backing in Alaska. Document the specific threat to your partner that made intervention immediately necessary.

5. Document Thoroughly - Alaska Has No Explicit Civil Immunity Statute

Alaska does not have a standalone civil immunity statute. Documentation - PCR narratives, incident reports, body cam footage, partner statements - creates the evidentiary foundation for the AS 11.81.335 justification in any post-incident review or litigation.

6. Know When Force Ends

Alaska's justification applies to force 'necessary' to defend against the unlawful threat. Once the threat is neutralized, the justification ends. VEST's continuous threat reassessment curriculum is both operationally and legally necessary.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This document is produced by VEST First Responder LLC for educational and trainer development purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice. Alaska Statutes Title 11 statutes are subject to legislative amendment, and individual incidents are always fact-specific. VEST Certified Trainers and their agencies should consult with a licensed attorney, their medical director, and agency legal counsel before developing or delivering formal use-of-force or defensive tactics policies.

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