

- VEST FIRST RESPONDER -

HELP FOR HEROES

OKLAHOMA

Self-Defense Law Reference Guide

*Stand Your Ground | Make My Day | Castle Doctrine (Home, Vehicle, Business, Place of Worship) |
Immunity | First Responder Protections | Police Use of Force*

CERTIFIED TRAINER SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENT

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

Oklahoma has one of the most comprehensive self-defense frameworks in the country, codified in Title 21, Section 1289.25 of the Oklahoma Statutes. Oklahoma combines Stand Your Ground (no duty to retreat at any lawful location), a Castle Doctrine with presumption (home, vehicle, place of business, AND place of worship), a 'Make My Day' provision that explicitly extends Castle Doctrine protections to lawful occupants who are guests or employees in a protected space, and explicit criminal and civil immunity with limits on law enforcement's arrest authority when self-defense is claimed. The combination of these protections makes Oklahoma among the most self-defense-protective states in this series.

STATUTE	SUBJECT MATTER
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(A)	Physical Force - Core Standard
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(B)	Castle Doctrine - Dwelling, Vehicle, Business, Place of Worship Presumption
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(C)	Make My Day - Extended to Lawful Occupants, Not Just Owners
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(D)	Stand Your Ground - No Duty to Retreat at Any Lawful Location
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(F)	Criminal and Civil Immunity for Justified Force
21 O.S. S. 1289.25(G)	Limits on Law Enforcement Arrest Authority for Self-Defense Claims
21 O.S. S. 650	Assault, Battery, or Assault and Battery on Firefighter or EMS - Felony
Oklahoma CLEET Standards	Police Use of Force - Neck Restraint Policy

PART I: THE OKLAHOMA SELF-DEFENSE STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(D) - Stand Your Ground (No Duty to Retreat)

"A person who is not engaged in an unlawful activity and who is attacked in any other place where he or she has a right to be has no duty to retreat and has the right to stand his or her ground and meet force with force, including deadly force, if he or she reasonably believes it is necessary to do so to prevent death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another or to prevent the commission of a forcible felony." - 21 O.S. S. 1289.25(D)

Oklahoma's Stand Your Ground provision is one of the clearest in the country. A person at any lawful location who is not engaged in unlawful activity has no duty to retreat and may meet force with force, including deadly force, when they reasonably believe it is necessary to prevent death, great bodily harm, or a forcible felony.

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(B) - Castle Doctrine (Four Protected Locations)

"A person or persons who are lawfully in a dwelling or place of business or in a motor vehicle or in a place of worship, and who are being confronted with an unlawful intrusive act by another person or persons is presumed to have held a reasonable fear of imminent peril of death or great bodily harm to himself or herself or another when using defensive force that is intended or likely to cause death or great bodily harm to another..." - 21 O.S. S. 1289.25(B)

Oklahoma's Castle Doctrine presumption covers FOUR locations: (1) dwelling, (2) place of business, (3) motor vehicle, and (4) place of worship. The place-of-worship extension is unique among states in this series. This presumption shifts the burden to the prosecution to disprove that the defender held a reasonable fear.

- Dwelling - home, apartment, or residential structure.
- Place of Business - fire station, EMS base, hospital, or any business setting.
- Motor Vehicle - ambulance, fire apparatus, or any occupied vehicle.
- Place of Worship - unique to Oklahoma; no other state in this series includes this location explicitly.

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(C) - Make My Day (Extended to All Lawful Occupants)

Oklahoma's Make My Day provision extends Castle Doctrine protections to ANY lawful occupant of the protected space - not just the owner. A firefighter, EMS provider, visitor, employee, or guest who is lawfully in a dwelling or place of business is entitled to the same Castle Doctrine presumption as the property owner. This extension is operationally significant: an EMS crew treating a patient inside a home, a firefighter inside a business, or any first responder lawfully in a protected space has the same Castle Doctrine rights as the property owner.

OKLAHOMA'S MAKE MY DAY EXTENSION - CRITICAL FOR FIRST RESPONDERS:

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(C)'s extension of the Castle Doctrine to ALL lawful occupants means that first responders who are lawfully in a home, business, or vehicle have the same statutory presumption of reasonable fear as the property owner. An EMS crew invited into a home to treat a patient is a lawful occupant - if a third party violently enters and threatens the crew, the Castle Doctrine presumption applies to the EMS providers as well as the homeowner. This is one of the most first-responder-friendly Castle Doctrine provisions in this series.

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(F) - Criminal and Civil Immunity

Oklahoma provides both criminal immunity and civil immunity for persons who use force justified under S. 1289.25. The statute also creates a pre-trial immunity hearing process. An immune person cannot be prosecuted criminally or sued civilly for the justified use of force.

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(G) - Limits on Law Enforcement Arrest Authority

Oklahoma limits law enforcement's authority to arrest persons claiming self-defense. When a person claims self-defense under S. 1289.25, law enforcement may not arrest them if the available evidence indicates the use of force was consistent with self-defense. This creates an early procedural protection that reduces the risk of arrest even before a formal immunity hearing.

PART II: DUTY TO RETREAT - OKLAHOMA'S POSITION

Oklahoma has NO duty to retreat. 21 O.S. S. 1289.25(D) explicitly provides no duty to retreat at any lawful location for persons not engaged in unlawful activity.

- No retreat required anywhere a person is lawfully present and not engaged in unlawful activity.
- Castle Doctrine presumption covers four locations - dwelling, business, vehicle, and place of worship.
- Make My Day extension covers all lawful occupants, not just owners.
- Criminal and civil immunity for justified force.
- Limits on law enforcement arrest authority when self-defense is claimed.

- Exception: Persons engaged in unlawful activity or who provoked the confrontation without clearly withdrawing.
- Exception in domestic cases: Oklahoma requires retreat before using force against a person with lawful custody rights in the dwelling.

PART III: FIRST RESPONDER ASSAULT - ENHANCED CRIMINAL PROTECTIONS

21 O.S. S. 650 - Assault, Battery, or Assault and Battery on Firefighter or EMS Worker

Oklahoma creates a specific felony offense for assault, battery, or assault and battery on a firefighter or emergency medical service worker engaged in their official duties. The offense is a felony (up to 2 years imprisonment and/or \$5,000 fine for assault; up to 5 years and/or \$10,000 fine for battery; up to 5 years and/or \$10,000 fine for assault and battery). The statute requires that the attacker know the victim is a firefighter or EMS worker - satisfied by uniform, marked vehicle, or visible identification.

- Assault on firefighter/EMS on duty: up to 2 years, \$5,000 fine.
- Battery on firefighter/EMS on duty: up to 5 years, \$10,000 fine.
- Assault and battery on firefighter/EMS: up to 5 years, \$10,000 fine.
- Must know the victim is a firefighter or EMS worker - satisfied by uniform or marked apparatus.

TRAINER EMPHASIS:

Oklahoma's S. 650 creates standalone felony offenses specifically naming firefighters and EMS workers. Even the lowest tier - assault (threat of imminent harm without contact) - is a felony when directed at an on-duty Oklahoma firefighter or EMS provider. VEST trainers should communicate that any threatening gesture, not just physical contact, can constitute a felony assault in Oklahoma when directed at on-duty first responders.

PART IV: POLICE USE OF FORCE & NECK RESTRAINT FRAMEWORK

Oklahoma does not have a statewide statutory chokehold ban. Police neck restraint policy in Oklahoma is governed by the Council on Law Enforcement Education and Training (CLEET) and individual agency use-of-force policies.

- NO statewide statutory chokehold or carotid restraint ban as of 2024-2025.
- CLEET training standards address high-risk force techniques.
- Individual agencies may adopt more restrictive policies.
- Oklahoma's strong self-defense culture has historically resisted broad police restriction legislation.

FIRST RESPONDERS VS. LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Oklahoma's law enforcement use-of-force standards do not apply to civilian EMS and fire personnel in personal self-defense. A Oklahoma paramedic or firefighter defending their life is evaluated under 21 O.S. S. 1289.25. There is no statutory restriction on civilian Oklahoma first responders using any defensive technique in genuine life-safety self-defense.

PART V: APPLYING VEST PRINCIPLES UNDER OKLAHOMA LAW

1. Oklahoma Provides Among the Most Comprehensive Protections in This Series

Oklahoma's combination of Stand Your Ground, four-location Castle Doctrine, Make My Day extension to all lawful occupants, and criminal and civil immunity with arrest-authority limits creates one of the most complete self-defense protection packages in the country. VEST training reinforces these rights through professional restraint, situational awareness, and thorough documentation.

2. You Are a Lawful Occupant Wherever You Are Invited - Make My Day Applies

21 O.S. S. 1289.25(C)'s extension of Castle Doctrine to all lawful occupants means that a first responder invited into any protected space - home, business, or vehicle - has the same statutory presumption as the property owner. VEST indoor scene safety training prepares providers to recognize and respond to threats in the spaces where they are lawful occupants.

3. Even Assault Threats Are a Felony When Directed at You

Oklahoma's S. 650 creates a felony offense for assault on first responders - even without physical contact. Any threatening gesture or verbal threat of imminent harm directed at an on-duty firefighter or EMS provider is a felony in Oklahoma. VEST trainers should communicate this to participants.

4. Arrest-Authority Limits Protect Self-Defense Claims Early

Oklahoma's S. 1289.25(G) limits law enforcement's ability to arrest persons claiming self-defense when available evidence supports the claim. This early procedural protection reduces the risk of arrest even before a formal immunity hearing. Documentation immediately following an incident is critical to invoking this protection.

5. De-Escalation Is Professionally Essential Even Without a Retreat Requirement

Oklahoma's 'reasonably believes necessary' standard requires genuine proportionality. VEST Level I de-escalation curriculum creates the record that force was a last resort - supporting both the S. 1289.25 justification and the immunity claim.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This document is produced by VEST First Responder LLC for educational and trainer development purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice. Oklahoma Statutes Title 21, S. 1289.25 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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