

- VEST FIRST RESPONDER -

HELP FOR HEROES

WYOMING

Self-Defense Law Reference Guide

Stand Your Ground | Castle Doctrine (Dwelling & Vehicle) | Pre-Trial Immunity | Civil Immunity | First Responder Protections | Police Use of Force

CERTIFIED TRAINER SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENT

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

Wyoming's self-defense law is codified in Wyoming Statute S. 6-2-602, titled 'Use of force in self defense; no duty to retreat.' This statute combines Stand Your Ground (no duty to retreat at any lawful location), a Castle Doctrine presumption for the home, habitation, and occupied vehicle, a pre-trial immunity hearing process, and civil immunity with attorney's fee awards. Wyoming's framework is comprehensive and clearly written, with explicit no-retreat language and strong protections for persons who use justified defensive force. Wyoming also has one of the clearest statutory definitions of reasonable defensive force in the country.

STATUTE	SUBJECT MATTER
W.S. 6-2-602(a)	Use of Defensive Force - Core Standard; Reasonable Defensive Force Defined
W.S. 6-2-602(b)	Castle Doctrine - Presumption in Home/Habitation and Occupied Vehicle
W.S. 6-2-602(e)	No Duty to Retreat - Stand Your Ground at Any Lawful Location
W.S. 6-2-602(g)(i)	Pre-Trial Immunity Hearing - Preponderance of Evidence Standard
W.S. 6-2-602(h)-(j)	Civil Immunity; Attorney's Fee Award for Successful Civil Defense
W.S. 6-2-603	Use of Force in Defense of Others
Wyoming POST Standards	Police Use of Force - Neck Restraint Policy

PART I: THE WYOMING SELF-DEFENSE FRAMEWORK

W.S. 6-2-602(a) - Reasonable Defensive Force

"The use of defensive force whether actual or threatened, is reasonable when it is the defensive force that a reasonable person in like circumstances would judge necessary to prevent an injury or loss, and no more, including deadly force if necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury to the person employing the deadly force or to another person. As used in this subsection, necessary to prevent includes a necessity that arises from an honest belief that the danger exists whether the danger is real or apparent." - W.S. 6-2-602(a)

Wyoming's definition of reasonable defensive force includes an important provision: 'necessary to prevent includes a necessity that arises from an honest belief that the danger exists whether the danger is real or apparent.' This means that even if a provider later learns their perception of danger was mistaken, the defense remains available if the HONEST BELIEF was reasonable at the time. This protects first responders who act in good faith based on the circumstances as they appeared in the moment.

W.S. 6-2-602(b) - Castle Doctrine (Home/Habitation and Occupied Vehicle)

"A person is presumed to have held a reasonable fear of imminent peril of death or serious bodily injury to himself or another when using defensive force, including deadly force if: (i) The intruder against whom the defensive force was used was in the process of unlawfully and forcefully entering, or had unlawfully and forcibly entered, another's home or habitation or, if that intruder had removed or was attempting to remove another against his will from his home or habitation; and (ii) The person who uses defensive force knew or had reason to believe that an unlawful and forcible entry or unlawful and forcible act was occurring." - W.S. 6-2-602(b)

Wyoming's Castle Doctrine covers the home/habitation (including any residential structure or habitation) and occupied vehicles. The explicit occupied vehicle coverage - extended through S. 6-2-602's incorporation - means an ambulance or fire apparatus qualifies. The presumption shifts the burden to the prosecution to overcome the presumption of reasonable fear.

W.S. 6-2-602(e) - No Duty to Retreat (Stand Your Ground)

"A person who is attacked in any place where the person is lawfully present shall have no duty to retreat and has the right to stand his ground and meet force with force, including deadly force, if he reasonably believes it is necessary to do so to prevent death or serious bodily injury to himself or another." - W.S. 6-2-602(e)

Wyoming's no-duty-to-retreat provision is explicit, clear, and covers any lawful location. The 'honest belief' provision in S. 6-2-602(a) reinforces this: even if the defender's perception of necessity was honestly mistaken, the defense may still apply. This combination - honest belief + any lawful location + no retreat - gives Wyoming one of the clearest Stand Your Ground frameworks in the country.

W.S. 6-2-602(g) - Pre-Trial Immunity Hearing

Wyoming provides a pre-trial immunity hearing mechanism. A person who claims justified use of defensive force may move the court to hold a pre-trial hearing. At the hearing, the defendant proves by a preponderance of the evidence that force was justified. If the court grants the motion, the criminal charges are dismissed before trial. This process is comparable to Florida's pre-trial immunity hearing.

W.S. 6-2-602(h)-(j) - Civil Immunity and Attorney's Fee Award

Wyoming's civil immunity (S. 6-2-602(h)) provides that a person who uses justified defensive force is immune from any civil action by the intruder or attacker. Additionally, if the defendant prevails in a civil action by establishing self-defense justification, the court SHALL award attorney's fees, court costs, loss of income, and all other expenses (S. 6-2-602(j)). This mandatory attorney's fee award is among the strongest civil protections in this entire series.

PART II: DUTY TO RETREAT - WYOMING'S POSITION

Wyoming has NO duty to retreat. W.S. 6-2-602(e) explicitly provides no duty to retreat at any lawful location.

- No duty to retreat anywhere a person is lawfully present.
- Castle Doctrine presumption for home/habitation and occupied vehicle.
- Pre-trial immunity hearing available to dismiss charges before trial.
- Complete civil immunity with mandatory attorney's fee award if defense prevails.
- Honest belief standard - applies even if the perception of danger was reasonably mistaken.

- Exception: Must be lawfully present; must not have provoked the confrontation.

PART III: FIRST RESPONDER ASSAULT - ENHANCED CRIMINAL PROTECTIONS

Wyoming First Responder Assault Framework

Wyoming's assault statutes provide enhanced penalties when the victim is a law enforcement officer or emergency services provider engaged in official duties. Battery of a peace officer or emergency services provider is elevated to an aggravated assault classification with enhanced penalties. Wyoming's relatively small population and strong law enforcement culture have produced firm legislative support for protecting public safety officers, including EMS and fire personnel.

- Battery against peace officer or emergency services provider on duty: elevated felony classification.
- 'Performing official duties' element satisfied by uniform, marked vehicle, or active response.
- Enhanced penalties reflect Wyoming's strong public safety protection culture.

TRAINER EMPHASIS:

Wyoming's assault enhancement for attacks on emergency services providers creates felony consequences for any physical assault on an on-duty Wyoming first responder. VEST trainers should ensure participants understand this protection. Operating in uniform and in a marked vehicle satisfies the knowledge element.

PART IV: POLICE USE OF FORCE & NECK RESTRAINT FRAMEWORK

Wyoming does not have a statewide statutory chokehold ban. Police neck restraint policy is governed by the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy (WLEA) and individual agency use-of-force policies.

- NO statewide statutory chokehold ban as of 2024-2025.
- WLEA training standards address high-risk force techniques.
- Individual agencies may adopt more restrictive policies.
- Wyoming's strong individual rights culture has not produced standalone chokehold legislation.

FIRST RESPONDERS VS. LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Wyoming's law enforcement use-of-force standards do not apply to civilian EMS and fire personnel in personal self-defense. A Wyoming EMS provider or firefighter defending their life is evaluated under W.S. 6-2-602. There is no statutory restriction on civilian Wyoming first responders using any defensive technique in genuine life-safety self-defense.

PART V: APPLYING VEST PRINCIPLES UNDER WYOMING LAW

1. Honest Belief Standard Protects Good-Faith Actors

W.S. 6-2-602(a)'s 'honest belief that the danger exists whether the danger is real or apparent' provision is an important protection for first responders who act in good faith based on threat indicators that later prove inaccurate. VEST Level I threat recognition and situational awareness training prepares providers to make and

document good-faith threat assessments.

2. Pre-Trial Immunity Hearing Can Dismiss Charges Before Trial

Wyoming's pre-trial immunity hearing (S. 6-2-602(g)) allows a defendant to seek dismissal before trial by proving justification by a preponderance of the evidence. Documentation is the foundation of any successful immunity motion. VEST documentation training is legally essential in Wyoming.

3. Mandatory Attorney's Fee Award If Civil Defense Prevails

W.S. 6-2-602(j)'s mandatory attorney's fee award when civil defense succeeds is among the strongest civil protection provisions in this series. A Wyoming first responder who uses justified force and is sued - and prevails - is entitled to have all legal costs paid by the attacker. This is a powerful deterrent against frivolous civil litigation.

4. Ambulance and Habitation Both Carry the Castle Doctrine Presumption

Wyoming's Castle Doctrine covers the home/habitation and occupied vehicles. VEST compartment security and station security protocols support the factual record for these protections in Wyoming.

5. De-Escalation Documents Reasonableness and Good Faith

Even with Wyoming's 'honest belief' standard and no-retreat rule, force must still be 'reasonable.' VEST Level I de-escalation curriculum creates the record that force was a last resort and that the defender's belief in necessity was both honest and reasonable.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This document is produced by VEST First Responder LLC for educational and trainer development purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice. Wyoming Statutes S. 6-2-602; S. 6-2-603 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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