

Anchorage Police Department Regulations and Procedures Manual	Operational Procedures 3.05.035	
Policy and Procedure Title Firearms	Effective Date February 21, 2023	Page 1 of 12
Replaces Prior Policy: October 20, 2014	Approved by: Chief Michael Kerle	

This policy is for departmental use only and does not apply in any criminal or civil proceeding. This policy should not be construed as creation of a higher legal standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy will only form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.

3.05.035 Firearms

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures governing Anchorage Police Department issued and/or authorized firearms and ammunition including training, qualification, safety, carrying, care, and maintenance.

POLICY

The Anchorage Police Department is committed to the belief that increased training enhances professionalism and decreases the likelihood of injury to officers and citizens. Because of this commitment, officers are required to demonstrate annual proficiency in the use of firearms. Only officers who first receive training in the Department's Use of Force and Firearms policies, demonstrate proficiency in their application, and are currently qualified with the weapon system, are authorized to carry firearms. All Department qualifications and sponsored firearms training shall be administered by certified firearm instructors.

DEFINITIONS

Armorer: An employee, appointed by the Chief of Police, whose combination of education, training, and experience in firearms qualifies him or her to make recommendations on and enforce decisions about firearms, and who is authorized to repair line of duty firearms.

Assistant Chief Range Master: An employee appointed by the Chief of Police, responsible for assuming the duties of the Chief Range Master as needed.

Auxiliary Handgun: Any approved handgun which may be used as both a primary duty handgun and as a secondary handgun. The Auxiliary Handgun may be authorized as the sole firearm while off duty.

Chief Range Master: An employee appointed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, responsible for the continuity and standardization of firearms training for the Department.

Diagnostic Qualification: A Diagnostic Qualification is a series of exercises administered by a certified APD Firearms Instructor to determine a shooter's skill level. The General Officer Qualification Course may be used as a Diagnostic Qualification, however, may not be counted as a Record Qualification.

Firearms Instructor: Any employee appointed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee to instruct in the use of firearms after taking an approved, certified instructor course.

General Officer Qualification Course: Approved long and short qualifications to include malfunction and manipulation drills. The Chief Range Master and Training Commander approve these courses of fire.

Primary Duty Handgun: An approved handgun which, when worn on duty, can act as the officer's sole firearm.

Range Master: An employee, appointed by the Chief of Police or his/her designee, whose combination of education, training, and experience in firearms qualifies him or her to supervise firearms courses and make recommendations on, and enforce decisions about, Departmental firearms and firearms training.

Record Qualification: The General Officer Qualification Course administered by a certified APD Firearms Instructor for record. Prior to administering the qualification course, the shooter shall be advised by the instructor that it is for record.

Rifles: A 5.56 NATO, .308 or .50 BMG bolt action, semi-automatic, or select fire long gun issued or authorized for carry under color of authority by the Chief Range Master. Only SWAT personnel are to utilize .308 and .50 BMG rifles.

Second Only Handgun: A firearm approved by the Chief Range Master, to be carried as a secondary firearm only. (It cannot be carried as a primary handgun on duty.)

Shotguns: A 12-gauge pump action long gun approved by the Chief Range Master which is an optional firearm system for sworn officers to carry under color of authority.

Submachine Guns: A pistol caliber, shoulder mounted, select fire firearm.

Under Color of Authority: Any act performed, or privilege invoked as a peace officer, regardless of location or duty status. This includes events or situations that would reasonably contemplate the invoking of police powers or duty.

PROCEDURES

A. Authorized Use of Firearms/Ammunition

1. Scope: Any weapon used by sworn officers under color of authority shall be governed by this procedure and the Response the Resistance Policy 3.05.025.
2. Officers shall not carry a firearm under the color of authority if they have a medical condition / illness or are taking any drug / medication that may inhibit an officer's ability to perform their job duties. Officers shall notify their immediate supervisor of any such condition / illness prior to carrying a Department approved firearm under the color of authority and approval will be on a case-by-case basis.
3. Firearms
 - a) Deployment of Firearms: An officer's decision to deploy a firearm should be based on a reasonable belief that there is a potential risk that the situation may escalate to the point where deadly force may be justified. Officers shall not unnecessarily display; or at any time use a weapon as an intimidation device.
 - b) Discharge of a Weapon under the Color of Authority: After discharging a firearm outside of an approved training environment the Officer shall:
 - (1) Immediately notify Dispatch as well as an on-duty Supervisor. The Supervisor is responsible for notifying the Chain of Command and entering the discharge into Blue Team (Response to Resistance 3.05.025).
4. Alteration of Duty Firearms: No alterations or modifications shall be made to any firearm to be used under color of authority without inspection and approval by a Department Armorer. Anyone contemplating alterations should contact an Armorer for a list of approved firearm modifications, and an initial approval by an Armorer.
5. Handling of Firearms: Employees shall only handle firearms in a manner consistent with their training.
6. Reporting the Loss of a Firearm: Employees shall file a report with the Chief of Police or his designee immediately upon discovery in the case of a lost or stolen Department firearm. This report shall be submitted in writing and set forth all the facts surrounding the loss. An official numbered police report shall also be filed to document the loss or theft of a Department firearm and shall be entered into the NCIC/APSIN systems.

7. Firearm Instructor's Authority: All personnel will follow the orders and directives of any Firearms Instructor, regardless of respective rank, while in a firearms training environment.
8. Number and Display of Handguns: Only one handgun, in an approved holster, should be visible to the public while acting under the color of authority. Sworn personnel off duty, but under the color of authority, shall attempt to keep their handgun concealed. Any handgun covered by this procedure shall be secured to the officer's person (this may include a purse for female officers) in a holster approved by the Range Master, and with appropriate retention devices engaged.
9. Mechanical Deficiencies: Any weapons with known or suspected mechanical deficiencies shall be immediately removed from service and reported to a Department Armorer, who will take appropriate action. All weapons shall be re-inspected by a Department Armorer prior to being returned to use under color of authority.
10. Carrying Weapons Off-Duty: Employees traveling outside the Municipality shall obey all weapons laws of the jurisdiction in which they are visiting.
 - a) While acting under the color of authority, off-duty officers shall carry on their person a Department approved firearm, for which they are currently qualified, police badge, and identification, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
11. Carrying Weapons on Aircraft: Employees shall follow Federal Aviation Administration regulations concerning carrying of firearms on commercial aircraft and will seek proper authorization if a weapon is necessary to ensure the successful completion of a police assignment.
12. Carrying of Weapons in an Airport: Employees who carry a weapon in an airport will conform to all laws, procedures and regulations of that airport and will follow all instructions and commands of personnel that enforce those laws, regulations and procedures.
13. Correctional Institutions: Sworn Officers shall follow the regulations of Correctional Institutions regarding the carrying of their weapon into the facility.

14. Psychiatric Treatment Institutions: Sworn Officers will carry their firearms while conducting investigations and responding to a call for service into Psychiatric Treatment Institutions.

15. Weapons in Court: Sworn Officers appearing in court, while on official police matters, whether in uniform or civilian attire, shall carry a weapon, unless prohibited by the court in question.

16. Chief Range Master Can Revise List of Approved Weapons: The Chief Range Master, a designee of the Chief of Police, has authority for approving or rescinding approval on makes, models, and types of weapons allowed to be used by employees under color of authority. This approval can be specific to an individual or unit or may be Department-wide.

B. DEPARTMENT OWNED FIREARMS

1. Initial Receipt of Weapons: All weapons received by the Department will be received by the Armory. The Section or Officer to whom the weapons are addressed will be responsible for verifying the contents of the shipment.

a) Employees who wish to purchase their own weapons for official use may have the weapons shipped to the Department.

2. Issue of Department-owned Weapons: The Department Armorer is the only person authorized to issue Department-owned weapons.

a) Any Department owned weapon issued to an employee will be assigned by serial number in the database approved by the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee.

b) Weapons assigned to one officer may not be transferred to the possession of another officer unless:

(1) Such transfer has first been approved by the Department Armorer; and

(2) each officer's inventory has been updated in the approved database; or

(3) circumstances warrant immediate use by another officer, until such time as a replacement weapon can be issued.

3. Maintenance of Department-owned Weapons: Officers shall perform routine cleaning of their weapons. Should any repair become necessary, this work must be performed by, or at the direction of a Department Armorer. Should a weapon become inoperable for any reason, officers should:

- a) Notify their Supervisor;
 - b) Contact a Department Armorer or other appropriate person as soon as possible to obtain a replacement weapon; and
 - c) Upon returning a weapon to the Armory and/or receiving a replacement weapon, the employee's inventory will be updated in the approved database.
4. Modification of Department-owned Weapons:
- a) Sight replacement or alteration is authorized if approved and performed by an Armorer, at the expense of the officer assigned the weapon. If permanently affixed, or if removal would make the weapon non-functional, the sights shall become the property of the Department upon surrender of the weapon.
 - b) No other alterations or modifications are authorized for Department-owned weapons unless otherwise approved by a Department Armorer.
5. Return of Department-owned Weapons: All Department-owned weapons shall be returned directly to the Department Armory upon separation or as directed by the Armorer. The Armorer shall verify the serial number and update the employee's inventory in the database.
6. Absence of Range Master, Armorer or other Authorized person: Whenever the Department Armorer or similarly authorized employee is unavailable, the requirements of this procedure shall be met through the Chain of Command. The Chain of Command will properly document their actions and forward that documentation to the Department Armorer.
7. Weapons Issued to Special Units: The Supervisor of any special unit which has been issued weapons shall maintain a separate inventory of those weapons and will be responsible for providing the Department Armorer with all required information necessary to maintain the master inventory.
8. Conversion upon Retirement: Sworn Officers, upon retirement may purchase their Department-owned weapons with the approval of the Chief of Police. The term of service will be at least fifteen years.

C. PERSONALLY OWNED FIREARMS

1. Sworn personnel may use their own firearms in place of Department-issued equipment. Personal firearms shall conform to the specifications listed in this procedure. Officers must qualify with their personally owned firearms prior to their use under color of authority.

a) Employees using their personally owned weapons under the color of authority, in lieu of Department issued weapons, shall be personally responsible for the weapon's maintenance, Armorer's inspections, magazines, leather-gear and other requirements outlined in this procedure.

D. HANDGUNS

1. Specifications:

a) Officers are restricted to a maximum of one primary duty handgun and two auxiliary handguns. Any changes to the status of the three qualified and approved handguns must be approved by a Commander within the employee's chain of command and must be communicated to the Department's Chief Range Master or their designee.

b) Primary handguns: The primary duty handgun carried by officers shall be a semi-automatic pistol of .45 ACP, 10mm, .40S&W, .357 Sig, or 9mm caliber, the make and model of which shall be approved by the Chief Range Master. No handguns chambered in 10mm or .357 Sig that weren't in use prior to 12/31/21 will be approved for duty use. The Chief Range Master shall maintain a list of authorized models which will be posted in the Department Armory.

c) Auxiliary handguns: The Department Chief Range Master shall maintain a list of handguns authorized for use as auxiliary firearms. Officers wishing to carry auxiliary handguns will be responsible for their purchase and the approved holsters.

2. Ammunition: The Department shall issue ammunition for authorized primary duty weapons and approved supplementary handguns. Officers may purchase their own supplemental ammunition, providing it is consistent with and conforms to Department issue ammunition specifications.

3. Storage: Firearms shall be secured when stored for any duration. It is specifically prohibited for a firearm to be stored in unlocked areas of vehicles (even if the vehicle itself is locked) and desks for any period of time.

E. SHOTGUNS

1. Specifications: The Remington Model 870 is the only Department-authorized shotgun.
 - a) Authorized Sights: Only the following sighting systems are authorized:
 - (1) Rifle sights
 - (2) "Ghost Ring" peep sights
 - (3) Other sights inspected and approved by an Armorer.
 - b) Sighting Standards: All sights will be adjusted consistent with the current APD training doctrine and will be re-zeroed with any change in brand of ammunition, weight of projectile or when otherwise required due to operational requirements.
2. Ammunition: Only Department authorized Factory New Ammunition for on-duty use is approved.
3. Shotgun Storage: Shotguns shall not be stored in the passenger compartment of an unattended police vehicle unless secured in the police vehicle's electric lock mechanism. Shotguns may be stored in a padded gun case in the trunk.
4. Shotgun Slugs:
 - a) Usage: Slugs may be used instead of buckshot when:
 - (1) Selective accuracy is required
 - (2) Penetration is required to engage a target
 - (3) Dispatching a large animal
 - (4) The target distance is beyond the effective range of buckshot
 - (5) Officers decide that the use of slugs would add to their safety, or to the safety of the public.
 - b) Loading Configuration: Shotgun magazines shall be loaded in a manner consistent with the Department's training and qualifications.

F. RIFLES

1. Specifications: Patrol rifles shall be chambered in 5.56 NATO only. Rifles shall be direct gas impingement, semi-automatic, detachable box-magazine fed, with fixed or folding sights approved by the Range Master. Non-magnifying optical sights approved by the Range Master, as authorized by the Chief of Police are permitted but must be supplemented with backup sights. The Range Master or Armorer shall approve rifles. Additionally, rifles

shall be equipped with a sling approved by the Range Master or Armorer.

The make and model of rifles and sights shall be approved by the Chief Range Master. The Chief Range Master shall maintain a list of authorized models which will be posted in the Department Armory. The prohibition on magnified optics does not apply to the APD SWAT Unit.

2. Issuance: Approved rifles shall be issued to sworn personnel who complete the Department's Urban Rifle Course. Approved rifles may also be purchased by the individual officer for duty use.

3. Rifle Storage: Rifles shall not be stored in the passenger compartment of an unattended police vehicle unless secured in the police vehicle's electric lock mechanism. Urban Rifles may be stored in a padded gun case in the trunk.

4. Additional Requirements: Officers shall carry at least one additional rifle magazine either attached to the weapon or on their person when deploying with a rifle.

G. FIREARM INSPECTIONS

1. Rotational Firearms inspection

At least once a rotation a supervisor shall inspect their officers on-duty firearm to ensure the officer is carrying a fully loaded weapon, fully loaded magazines, department approved ammunition, and to ensure the weapon is clean.

2. Annual Inspections

a) In addition to the above inspections, all officers will have their department issued or approved firearms inspected annually by a Department Armorer.

b) The inspecting armorer will fill out a firearm inspection log and keep a copy at the Training Center.

H. Firearms Training

1. Shotgun Qualification: The utilization of a shotgun under color of authority is optional. Sworn members desiring to exercise this option shall qualify annually with an approved shotgun by serial number. Officers qualifying shall be authorized to carry a shotgun, with buckshot ammunition only, under color of authority. Officers failing to qualify shall not carry a shotgun under the color of authority.

a) Slug Qualification: Carrying slug ammunition with an approved shotgun under color of authority is optional. Sworn members desiring to exercise this option shall initially and annually qualify with slug ammunition in an approved shotgun.

2. Rifle Qualification: The utilization of an Urban Rifle under color of authority for other sworn personnel is optional. Sworn members desiring and approved to exercise this option shall qualify annually with an approved Urban Rifle by serial number. Officers failing to qualify shall not carry an Urban Rifle under the color of authority. Officers with the option of deploying with a rifle under the color of authority shall:

- a) Initially and successfully complete the Department's Urban Rifle Course (or approved equivalent).
- b) Should attend periodic in-service training throughout the year, as available. Officers qualifying at the approved standard shall be authorized to carry an Urban Patrol Rifle under color of authority. Officers failing to qualify shall not carry an Urban Patrol Rifle under the color of authority.

3. Sworn officers shall qualify annually with at least one approved primary duty handgun by make/model. Officers failing to qualify shall not utilize a handgun under color of authority and shall attend remedial Departmental training. Utilizing a handgun under color of authority is an employment requirement, and officers failing to qualify subsequent to remedial training shall be subject to separation.

- a) Recruit officers who fail to qualify at the basic level with a primary duty handgun during their Recruit Academy training are subject to separation.
- b) Performance Standard:

(1) Proficiency with a Primary Duty Handgun: Proficiency with a Primary Duty Handgun is considered a condition of employment for sworn personnel. This proficiency is evaluated in several ways:

- (a) General Officer Qualification Course
- (b) Standardized malfunction clearance drills
- (c) Reloads and other required manipulations
- (d) Safety

(2) Employees are required to pass the General Officer Handgun Qualification Course at least once a year with their primary duty handgun using factory new ammunition. This qualification will be conducted

by a current Firearms Instructor. Officers will qualify in “range attire”, wearing their ballistic vest. Detectives shall wear their outerwear with daily use holster and magazine pouches. All firearms and related equipment are to be in compliance with the Department firearms policy.

(3) These qualification attempts will be referred to as “Recorded? Qualifications” and are different than “Diagnostic Qualifications” or other training tools Firearms Instructors may employ during the course of training. Employees will be granted two attempts to pass the annual Record Qualifications. A second session of two attempts will be offered on the next workday for any employee who fails to pass the first session. As a reminder, the current firearms manual allows for two attempts at qualification per day – this policy will be applied to this training directive as well, therefore allowing the employee four (4) attempts to pass the Record Qualification over two days.

(4) Additionally, officers should attend periodic firearms training, which may or may not include diagnostic qualification courses.

4. Failure to Qualify

a) Officers failing to qualify with their primary duty weapon after four attempts shall be placed on administrative remedial status. This status includes the following:

(1) The officer will not be allowed to carry a department issued or approved firearm under the color of authority.

(2) The officer will be placed in an administrative assignment.

(3) The officer will lose home car privileges.

(4) The officer will attend mandatory firearms training as follows:

(a) 20 hours of firearms training conducted by a shift or unit firearms instructor.

(b) The 20 hours of training shall be conducted in five-hour increments during a 40 hour work period.

- (c) Officers can attempt Record Qualifications at the end of each five-hour block.
- (d) Officers may qualify out of the remedial status after 10 hours of training.

(5) Officers failing to qualify with their primary duty weapon after 20 hours of remedial shift / unit training shall attend an additional 40 hours of remedial training while being assigned to the Training Center.

Training Center Staff will ensure the following:

- (a) The performance expectations will be expressed to the employee verbally and in writing.
 - (b) A Department memo to the Chain of Command will be generated communicating the officer's status and expectations of the employee and the instructor.
 - (c) Each officer receives an individualized training plan originating from the instructor, which communicates the items to be covered in the training plan, including;
 - (i) The diagnosis of the issue(s)
 - (ii) The planned exercises to be performed
 - (iii) Any additional testing, if deemed necessary
 - (iv) The grading criteria
 - (v) The timeline for completion.
- b) Officers failing to qualify after 60 hours of remedial training may be recommended for separation of employment.
- c) It is important to note that Firearms Instructors, Supervisors, or Commanders may recommend that employees be placed in a Remedial status based on observed shortcomings in any one of the four evaluated proficiency standards. These observations may be made either during training or in the field.

*****END OF DOCUMENT*****