COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Subject: FIREARMS REGULATIONS / FIRING RANGE USE AND RULES

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I. Purpose

To provide guidelines governing firearms issued to police personnel; to establish rules for carrying firearms on and off duty; and to provide criteria for the training of police personnel with department issued firearms, personally owned firearms, and authorized firearm equipment.

II. Scope

This policy shall apply to all authorized firearms, ammunition, optics, and related equipment carried by department personnel on or off duty and shall govern the training, authorization to carry, inspection procedures, qualification requirements, and maintenance requirements.

III. Authorization and Approval to Use Firearms

A. Officers must have written authorization for any firearm carried on–duty and must have written authorization for any firearm carried off–duty when acting under the color of law.

This subsection is not intended to limit the rights of an officer to carry firearms off–duty in the same manner as unrestricted citizens, but rather to define the authorization to carry a firearm under the color of law.

B. To obtain authorization to carry a department issued firearm, an officer must successfully complete the Covington Police Department Firearm Training Program and meet the firearms qualification standards. Written authorization will be granted at the completion of the training program.

C. To obtain authorization to carry any other firearms, officers must complete each of the following requirements.

1. The officer will submit form PD100 along with the firearm and required ammunition to department firearms staff.

2. The department armorer will submit written findings and recommendation on the firearm.

3. The officer will demonstrate proficiency with the firearm and will participate in the live fire course designed for that firearm.

4. The officer will present the request for Chief of Police approval.

5. Authorization will only apply to the specific firearm, ammunition, and approved equipment configuration.

D. Personally owned pistol-mounted optics must be installed by, or under the direct supervision of, department firearms staff.

E. All pistol-mounted optics must be inspected and approved by department firearms staff prior to being carried for official duty use. Inspection shall verify proper installation, mounting security, function, and operational reliability.

F. Any replacement, adjustment, removal, or modification of an approved optic system requires re-inspection and approval prior to returning the firearm to service.

G. All records regarding firearms, ammunition, authorization to carry, training, inspections, and qualifications shall be maintained by department firearms staff.

IV. Authorized On–Duty Firearms and Ammunition

A. Issued firearms for all sworn police personnel will be a Glock, 9mm caliber semiautomatic pistol (model 45) with a Holosun red dot pistol mounted optic. All officers will also be issued a Glock model 43 subcompact as a backup weapon.

B. Personally owned Glock 9mm models may be authorized as the primary weapon for non-uniformed sworn employees, or secondary carry for uniformed sworn employees after completion of all department approval, inspection, and qualification requirements.

C. Personnel assigned to the Covington Police Department Emergency Services Unit (ESU) may carry approved Staccato HD 9mm models as their primary duty weapon. ESU firearms must be approved by department firearms staff and meet all ESU qualification and inspection requirements.

D. Police Snipers assigned to ESU may carry an approved personally owned rifle system chambered in 5.56 caliber or higher. The rifle system must be approved by the ESU Commander and inspected by department firearms staff prior to operational use. The approved ammunition will be indicated on the Authorization to Carry Form for that weapon system.

E. Ammunition for department issued 9mm caliber firearms will be Atlanta Arms Target/Defense 9mm 124 Grain JHP.

F. Ammunition for department issued/authorized .223/5.56 caliber rifles Atlanta Arms 55 grain Blitz King or VMAX.

G. Authorization to carry any other firearm on duty may be made for personnel when the nature of their work dictates such (e.g., ESU, narcotics investigations, and Administration). Authorization will be granted only for that firearm and ammunition.

V. Patrol Rifles

A. Definitions

1. **Patrol Rifle** shall mean any Department issued/authorized rifle, purchased, and owned by an individual officer as part of the patrol rifle purchase program, assigned to an individual officer, or issued on a daily basis**.**

2. **Personally Owned Patrol Rifle** shall mean any Department authorized rifle purchased and owned by an individual officer as part of the patrol rifle purchase program.

3. **Patrol Rifle Purchase Program** shall mean the Department program which allows officers to purchase patrol rifles from the City of Covington Police Department, for on duty use, either through payroll deduction or direct payment.

B. Personally Owned Patrol Rifles

1. Only patrol rifles purchased by officers through the patrol rifle purchase program are authorized to be carried while in the performance of duty, subject to all requirements of this policy.

    a. The rifle must be of the same make, model, caliber, and specifications as the Department patrol rifle.

    b. The rifle must be equipped with the same make/model accessories, installed in the same configuration as the Department issued patrol rifle.

2. Prior to carrying a personally owned patrol rifle in the performance of duty:

    a. The patrol rifle must be inspected and approved by a qualified weapons instructor or armorer assigned to the Weapons Training Unit.

    b. The officer must meet training and qualification requirements as set forth in SOP T035.

C. Carry Mode

1. The patrol rifle should be carried with a loaded magazine in the magazine well, bolt forward on an empty chamber, and the safety on when not in actual use; this is known as patrol ready.

2. When not in actual use, the rifle should be in an approved Department carry case and secured in the patrol car trunk, a vehicle vault, or in a vehicle electronic security rack.

3. Upon deployment, a round can be chambered with the safety on. The safety selector should remain in the safe position until the decision to fire the rifle has been determined.

4. Prior to the rifle being placed back in the patrol car after deployment, the chambered round should be removed, and the rifle should be returned to patrol ready.

5. Patrol rifles shall not be carried by officers on bicycles, etc. unless requested by a supervisor, and only when an emergency situation justifies the immediate need for the rifle.

VI. Authorized Off–Duty Firearms and Ammunition

A. Police personnel are allowed to carry department issued firearms and approved ammunition while off-duty. To carry any other firearm and ammunition while off-duty and acting under the color of law, the officer must comply with Section III.C.

VII. Support Firearms

A. The department has available support firearms for use by sworn personnel as approved.
B. Officers issued support firearms are responsible for safe handling, storage, return, and qualification requirements.

VIII. Firearms Restrictions

No department owned firearm will be subjected to any alteration without written permission of the department firearms staff, and written approval of the Chief of Police.

No trigger shoes will be allowed on any authorized firearm.

Authorized pistol-mounted red dot optics include:
1. Holosun models
2. Trijicon models
3. Aimpoint models

Any optic not specifically listed above must be approved by department firearms staff and the Chief of Police prior to use

All authorized firearms, optics, and equipment will be maintained in a safe working condition.

Officers are responsible for the safe storage of all authorized firearms and ammunition while on or off duty. Officers are expected to secure their weapons in a safe condition at home to prevent unauthorized access.

Only authorized firearms and ammunition will be allowed in the performance of duty.

IX. Firearms Maintenance and Inspection

A. All department-owned firearms shall be inspected annually by department firearms staff.

B. A All repairs and maintenance performed on department-owned weapons will be done by department firearms staff.

C. Officers that have a problem or malfunction with a department issued weapon will notify their supervisor and contact department firearms staff.

D. Personally owned firearms and optics authorized for duty use are subject to inspection at any time.

E. If a personally owned firearm requires repair, it will be repaired at the officer's expense and returned to department firearms staff for re-inspection prior to duty use.

F. **Revocation**

Authorization to carry a firearm may be revoked by the Chief of Police upon recommendation of department firearms staff or the chain of command. Upon recommendation for revocation, written notification to the Chief of Police will be made by the revoking authority.

X. Discharge of Firearm - Written Report Required

A. An officer who discharges a firearm either accidentally or on purpose other than in training or recreational purpose must submit a Police Response to Aggression/Resistance Report to his immediate supervisor before the end of their watch. (See D for exception).

B. The report should describe the circumstances surrounding the incident. Supervisor should forward a copy of all reports regarding the discharge of firearms to the firearms instructors for review.

C. If it is determined that the officer was negligent in firing of the weapon, disciplinary action may be taken, and the officer may be required to undergo remedial firearms training.

D. If an officer discharges his firearm to destroy a sick or injured animal, he must complete an incident report detailing the circumstances of the incident.

XI. Firing Range Use and Rules

A. The purpose of the range is for firearms and tactics training, firearms practice, and weapons qualifications. Use of the range must be approved by the Training Supervisor/Range Master. Covington Police officers who serve as range supervisors will complete General Instructor Training and Firearms Instructor Training as required by Georgia POST. The following range rules apply to all individuals authorized to use the firing range.

1. The departmental Rangemaster or other certified firearms instructor(s) will serve as the range supervisor during all times the range is in use by Covington Police Department personnel. The range supervisor will review the safety procedures and range rules prior to every training event. The range supervisor will be trained in first aid.

2. Personnel reporting to the range will be directed to unload and reload weapons under the direction of a range supervisor or other range officer assigned to the training event. Under no circumstances should anyone attempt to load or unload any weapon in the parking lot or in any vehicle.

3. Range Officers may inspect any weapon for safety, cleanliness, and proper operation, before allowing the weapon on the firing line.

4. All persons must check in and out with the Range Officer.

5. Ear and eye protection must be worn at all times while on the firing line.

6. Only shooters and instructors are allowed on the firing line.

7. No weapons will be stored at the range. The Training Supervisor may authorize the storage of ammunition at the range. If stored at the range, all ammunition will be stored and secured in areas designated for such storage.

8. Metal reactive targets are not to be shot any closer than 10 yards with handguns, 15 yards with shotguns. No targeting equipment or targets may be used unless approved by the Rangemaster.

9. Shotgun slugs and metal piercing ammunition are prohibited when using metal targets.

10. All courses and methods of fire must be approved by the Training Coordinator or Rangemaster.

11. Each shooter is responsible for clean-up of his firing position, surrounding area, and returning all range equipment to its proper storage area.

12. Dry firing will be allowed only at the direction of a Range Officer.

13. Loaded weapons will not be left unattended on the firing line.

14. Weapons will be kept in the holster at all times unless otherwise directed by a Range Officer.

15. Fingers will be kept out of the trigger guard of all weapons until the weapon is on target and the shooter is ready to fire.

16. No one will be allowed forward of the firing line or allowed to pick up items near the firing line until the line is declared safe by a Range Officer.

17. Firing at objects that are not designated as targets is prohibited.

18. Range Officers will check and clear all weapons before shooters move from the firing line.

19. Any questions regarding range safety procedures, range rules, operation of equipment, and general procedures should be directed toward a Range Officer.

20. All decisions and or orders given by the Rangemaster or range supervisor, while on the range, are final.

29. The Training Supervisor may allow other agencies to use the firearms facility. Before approval is granted, the Training Supervisor will ensure the requesting agency signs a memorandum of understanding that:

    a. The agency will follow the range guidelines.

    b. That a certified firearms instructor will be present while the agency is conducting firearms training.

    c. The requesting agency is responsible for cleaning up and securing the firearms facility when training is completed

    d. The agency is responsible for any damage done to the facility or any equipment within the facility, other than what might be done in the regular course of firearms training. The agreement, once signed by the agency representative, the Training Supervisor, and the Chief of Police, will remain in effect as long as the signing individual is employed at the requesting agency.

This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

Brent Fuesting

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Chief of Police