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## Firearms

### I. Policy statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide officers with guidelines to ensure the safe handling and use of authorized firearms and the qualification requirements related to them. The Chief of Police may grant exemptions to any firearms standard.

### II. Definitions

Authorized Firearm – Any make, model or caliber of firearm that has been formally approved by the Personnel and Training Section for use by police officers. This includes primary service and backup firearms, shotguns and rifles used for law enforcement purposes in an official capacity.

Primary Firearm – A firearm authorized to be carried by officers in uniform or plainclothes, while on-duty or in an official capacity.

Backup Firearm – Any authorized firearm other than the primary firearm that is carried in an authorized concealed manner.

Firearms Qualification – Periodic testing required of officers to determine their competency to carry authorized firearms.

Modifications – Any changes or alterations made to a firearm including, but not limited to: laser sights, optics, custom grips, adjusted trigger mechanisms, engraving, etc.

Off-Duty – For purposes of this chapter, off-duty shall refer to a time when the officer is not on-duty for the city or any private employer and not working in any official law enforcement capacity.

### III. Firearm Issuance and Registration

#### A. Firearms Authorized

1. Officers are responsible for the selection of their primary firearm from an [approved list](#) maintained by the Personnel and Training Section. The metal finish shall be black, blued or stainless in appearance and the polymer shall be black.

#### B. Department-owned duty firearm

1. The department will offer to issue each newly appointed officer a Glock 9mm duty pistol as the officer's primary duty weapon, along with an approved duty holster.
  - a. All issued firearms and holsters remain the property of the department.

#### C. Personally-owned duty firearms

1. Officers may elect to carry a personally-owned firearm in lieu of the department-issued firearm, provided the firearm is:
    - a. Listed on the department's current approved firearms list.
    - b. Submitted to the Personnel and Training Section for inspection, registration, and approval.
    - c. Successfully qualified on an approved course of fire prior to being carried in an official capacity.
  2. Officers are responsible for the purchase of a personally-owned primary or backup firearm.
    - a. Upon initial hire, the department will issue a duty holster for the officer's primary duty firearm.
      - (1) Officers who subsequently replace or transition to a different firearm are responsible for purchasing an approved duty holster compatible with that firearm.
  3. Officers participating in the department's rifle program may choose to purchase their own approved rifle, or may request a department issued rifle, subject to availability and assignment.
- D. Transition between issued and personally-owned firearms
1. An officer transitioning from a department-issued firearm to a personally-owned firearm shall:
    - a. Return the previously issued firearm and holster (if applicable) to the Personnel and Training Section.
    - b. Complete inspection, registration, qualification, and any required transition training prior to carrying the personally-owned firearm on duty.
  2. An officer who carries a personally-owned primary firearm may request issuance of a department-owned duty firearm, subject to approval and availability, when the personally-owned firearm no longer meets department specifications or approved standards.
  3. Transition between firearms shall not occur until the officer has successfully qualified with the newly authorized firearm in accordance with this policy.
  4. All firearm issuances, returns, and exchanges shall be documented to ensure property inventory control and accountability.
- E. Registration
1. Firearms used in an official capacity shall be submitted to the Personnel and Training Section for registration and approval. In addition, the officer must qualify on an approved course of fire before the firearm can be carried in any official capacity.
    - a. Officers shall be allowed no more than five firearms, not including rifles, registered with the department for official use. The Personnel and Training Section will establish a procedure for adding and removing firearms registered with the department and will maintain a record for each firearm that contains the following:
      - (1) The date the firearm was authorized for use in an official capacity.
      - (2) A log of all maintenance, repairs, or alterations completed on the firearm, excluding routine cleaning.

#### **IV. Authorization to carry firearms**

##### **A. Personnel**

1. The authorization to carry firearms in an official capacity is limited to sworn and reserve officers who have successfully passed the firearms qualification and use of force training course.
  - a. Officers working in an official capacity may only carry authorized firearms, accessories and ammunition.
  - b. Officers are required to carry an authorized primary firearm:
    - (1) While on-duty or employed in any official capacity.
    - (2) When operating a marked patrol vehicle.
  - c. When on-duty, officers may use discretion to carry an authorized primary firearm:

- (1) While attending training outside the city of Des Moines.
    - (2) During a physical workout or other similar environment.
  2. Civilian employees shall abide by [City of Des Moines Administrative Manual Policy 1.12](#), which states the possession of firearms, or other weapons generally considered lethal, on city property or in city vehicles is prohibited.
- B. Off-duty
1. While in Iowa, off-duty officers may, but are not required to, carry a firearm in compliance with state law.
    - a. Officers who carry a firearm while off-duty are required to carry their department issued identification card.
    - b. Officers are prohibited from possessing any firearm while intoxicated as directed and defined under Iowa Code Chapter [724.4C](#) and [321J.2](#).
  2. Officers carrying a firearm outside of Iowa are responsible for complying with other individual state firearm laws and knowing how those laws relate to the federal Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 (LEOSA), [Title 18 USC § 926B](#).
  3. Officers carrying a firearm internationally are governed exclusively by that nation's laws.
- C. Identification
1. Officers armed with any firearm while on-duty shall carry their department badge:
    - a. While in uniform.
    - b. Along with their issued identification card while in plainclothes.
  2. Exceptions may apply when approved by a supervisor.

## **V. Shotgun and rifle program**

- A. Shotguns
1. Only shotguns provided by the department are authorized for use in an official capacity. Shotguns shall be carried in the secure rack provided in the patrol vehicle, with the magazine loaded to full capacity and with no shell in the chamber.
- B. Rifles
1. Only those officers selected to participate in the rifle program or the Metro STAR Unit, who have successfully completed the approved rifle course, and have maintained an annual passing qualification score are authorized to carry a rifle in an official capacity.

## **VI. Ammunition for firearms**

- A. Authorized
1. When a firearm is carried in official capacity, only authorized ammunition shall be used.
  2. The Personnel and Training Section & Metro STAR will:
    - a. Maintain and publish authorized ammunition lists for their respective areas of responsibility.
    - b. Ensure sufficient quantities of authorized ammunition are available for all approved firearms carried in an official capacity.
- B. Department supplied
1. Duty and training ammunition are supplied to officers for all firearms carried in an official capacity.
    - a. Officers will be issued fresh duty ammunition on a regular basis with additional ammunition issued as needed.

## **VII. Firearms safety and manner of carry**

- A. Safety

1. Officers shall not unnecessarily display firearms. Dry firing or quick draw of firearms is not permitted, except during supervised firearms training. Unsafe acts with firearms are prohibited.
2. When an officer, while working in an official capacity, accidentally discharges a firearm, it shall be reported immediately to a supervisor. The discharge will be investigated in a manner consistent with the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident.

**B. Storage**

1. Employees shall be responsible for the security and proper storage of their personal firearms.
  - a. Any loss of a firearm shall be reported immediately by the individual to a supervisor and a Case Investigation Report completed.
2. Firearms shall not be stored in any city owned vehicle except for temporary storage or unless the vehicle has a secure storage capability (shotgun/rifle rack, vault, etc.).
3. Any officer entering a secure area or facility with a prisoner, such as the DMPD OWI room or Polk County Jail, shall secure their firearm in the provided gun locker.
4. Spare firearms and firearms designated for specialized or emergency deployment (e.g. rifles, shotguns, or other authorized platforms) stored within department facilities or other department-controlled locations shall be secured in a department-approved, access-controlled storage area (such as locked racks, safes, vaults, etc.). Access shall be restricted to authorized personnel.

**C. Manner of Carry**

1. For uniformed officers, the primary firearm will be worn in an approved holster on the duty belt. The specifications for approved uniform holsters shall be maintained by the Personnel and Training Section.
2. Plainclothes officers shall carry their primary firearm in an approved holster.
3. Backup firearm
  - a. Officers may choose to carry a backup firearm in official capacity. The backup firearm must be carried in conjunction with the primary firearm and concealed from view. Officers shall carry their backup firearm in a holster that is securely attached to the person with features that secure the firearm and prevent unauthorized access.

**VIII. Carrying firearms on commercial aircraft**

**A. Regulations**

1. Officers are governed by strict federal regulations for carrying firearms on commercial aircraft.

**B. Requirements**

1. If an officer chooses to travel with their firearm when conducting official business that requires commercial airline travel, they shall store the firearm in checked baggage if it is not needed while in flight to guard a prisoner or for other purposes. In these cases, officers are required by federal regulations to certify to the airline that a firearm is secured properly in a checked bag and that it is unloaded.
2. When officers need to carry and have immediate access to a firearm aboard a commercial airline flight for purposes of prisoner transportation or other reasons, officers shall contact the Airport Section Commander for the proper procedure to follow.

**IX. Use of firearms pertaining to animals**

**A. Protection**

1. When objectively reasonable, an officer should consider the use of less-lethal force to protect the officer or others from immediate physical harm. However, officers may use an authorized firearm toward any animal to protect the officer or others from what is reasonably believed to be an immediate threat of death or serious injury.

B. Euthanasia

1. Officers may use an authorized firearm to humanely euthanize non-domesticated animals that are seriously injured, suffering or dangerous when other means of disposition are inhumane or impractical.
  - a. Prior to euthanizing an animal, the officer shall request supervisory approval.
    - (1) In exigent circumstances, where an immediate threat exists or delay would prolong unnecessary suffering, the officer may proceed without prior supervisory approval. The exigency shall be documented in the required report.
  - b. Before discharging a firearm at an animal, officers shall assess their surroundings and take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the public, other officers, and property.

C. Reporting

1. Officers shall notify a supervisor and make the required reports anytime a firearm is discharged towards an animal while in official capacity.

**X. Firearms maintenance and modifications**

A. Maintenance, armoring and modifications

1. Firearms shall be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.
2. Prior to carrying a firearm in any official capacity, it shall be inspected and armored by a qualified department armorer.
3. After initial inspection and armoring, the firearm shall be submitted annually during in-service training or at a minimum within the previous 12 months if the firearm is carried in any official capacity.
  - a. Any firearm determined to be unserviceable or not in proper working order shall be:
    - (1) Repaired by a qualified armorer, when possible.
    - (2) Sent to an authorized service provider or manufacturer, if necessary.
    - (3) Replaced if the firearm is deemed not repairable.
      - (a) Replacement of a personally-owned firearm, or any required replacement parts, shall be at the employee's expense.
        - 1) The department may cover the cost of minor armorer-level repairs that can be completed by a qualified armorer to maintain the firearm in a serviceable condition.
4. The Personnel & Training Section shall maintain, at a minimum, one spare firearm for each type of primary on-duty firearm to ensure operational continuity in the event a replacement or temporary exchange is necessary.
5. Modifications or alterations to any authorized firearm shall be completed at the employee's expense and must be coordinated and authorized through the Personnel and Training Section.

B. Miniature Red Dot Sight or related systems

1. Authorization
  - a. Prior to installation or modification, officers shall inform the department firearms coordinator or designee of their intent to use an approved system from a list maintained by the Personnel and Training Section.
2. Requirements
  - a. Officers are responsible for:
    - (1) All costs associated with the initial purchase and installation of the system, including the purchase of a compatible approved duty holster
    - (2) Ensuring the firearm is armored annually, at which time a firearms instructor will:
      - (a) Replace the battery (department will provide)
      - (b) Confirm proper system operation

3. Training and qualification
  - a. Prior to using the system in official capacity, officers are required to participate in eight hours of additional training with a department firearms instructor and shoot a qualifying score.
  - b. At the time of annual qualification, officers using a system will be required to shoot an additional proficiency course of fire, approved by the Personnel and Training Section, using the iron sights of the firearm.

## **XI. Firearms training and ranges**

### **A. Training**

1. Qualifications and firearms proficiency trainings are scheduled, coordinated and disseminated to the department by the Personnel and Training Section.
  - a. Supervisors will ensure that all officers under their command attend the mandatory firearms qualifications and practical/proficiency courses of fire.
  - b. Officers should notify the Personnel and Training Section if they are pregnant and educate themselves of the potential risks associated with lead and noise toxicity during firearms qualification or training. If the officer chooses to qualify or train, the department should take precautionary measures reasonably possible to reduce potential contamination from these sources.
2. All firearm trainings are conducted by state certified firearms instructors.
  - a. Officers will strictly adhere to the rules, orders and instructions of firearms instructors without regard to rank.
3. All officers authorized to carry firearms shall receive periodic training to refresh their understanding of the law, department policy, and procedures relating to the use of force.
4. Officers preparing for and wishing to conceal carry in retirement should contact the Personnel and Training Section to ensure they comply with the federal Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 (LEOSA), [Title 18 USC § 926C](#).

### **B. Firing ranges**

1. Range use and procedures will be in accordance with the Personnel and Training Section SOP.

### **C. Qualification and proficiency trainings**

1. At a minimum, officers must qualify annually with all authorized firearms they intend to carry in any official capacity. The qualification will be on a course of fire using targets approved by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy and must successfully fire a minimum score (80%) as established by the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.
2. Officers shall be required to qualify with all authorized firearms they intend to carry in any official capacity as soon as reasonably possible following a return to duty after an approved absence (i.e. FMLA, military, injury, etc.) if they have missed the qualification period or when it reasonably appears necessary.
3. In addition to the qualification course, all officers are required to shoot practical/proficiency course(s), designed and administered by the Personnel and Training Section. These courses include, but are not limited to, proficiency at night and in reduced light situations, in combat simulation, and when using both weak and strong hands. These courses are held at separate times from the annual qualification course, including during in-service training as time allows.

### **D. Remedial training**

1. Officers who fail to pass after three attempts during the annual qualification period will be issued a “[notice of failure to qualify](#)” before leaving the range, are immediately placed on restricted (light duty) status and their division commander notified.

- a. The notice, which will serve as reinstruction, will be signed by the officer and filed with the Personnel and Training Section. The officer will be enrolled in mandatory remedial training and advised of the training date.
  - b. While subject to a notice of failure to qualify, an officer may not carry their duty weapon in any official capacity.
2. The Personnel and Training Section will establish a remedial training program designed to raise the firearms proficiency level of any officer who fails to qualify. Each session will be a maximum of four hours. The Personnel and Training Section will keep the officer's commander informed of the progress and report any failure to participate in mandatory sessions.
3. The following disciplinary action will occur for those officers who fail to meet the minimum qualification score following remedial training sessions:
  - a. First session: counseling
  - b. Second session: oral reprimand
  - c. Third session: written reprimand
  - d. Fourth and subsequent session: suspension up to and including termination
4. Officers subject to remedial firearms training are required to attend quarterly firearms training, in addition to any other firearms training, until the next annual qualification period.