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I. Purpose

This Directive establishes guidelines and procedures for Division-issued and approved personal firearms.

II. Policy

All certified police personnel will comply with all provisions of this Directive. This Directive does not preclude the Chief, Park Police Division, from approving other firearms for use by approved personnel. If the approval is for a specific, temporary task, it will be governed by a temporary operational memo. Permanent approval will result in an addendum to this Directive.

- A. The carrying of firearms on or off-duty, outside the State of Maryland is governed by federal, state and local statutes. Officers will comply with those laws and must familiarize themselves with all of them regarding out-of-state carrying of firearms.
- B. Officers on leave for more than 30 days for non-departmental reasons must return all Division-issued firearms to the Property Specialist for safekeeping.
- C. An officer will not carry a Division-issued or approved personal firearm while consuming any quantity of alcohol or while under the influence of alcohol, or any medicine or other substance that impairs mental or physical capabilities; nor will a Division-issued or approved personal firearm be carried for a period of four hours after the most recent consumption of alcohol or impairing substance.
- D. Officers will be armed when operating any Division owned, leased, or assigned police vehicles.
- E. Firearms will never be left unattended or in an unsecured manner where they could be accessible to other unauthorized persons. Personnel will not store any firearms in any Division-owned, leased, or assigned police vehicles when they are off-duty.
- F. Officers who are suspended or whose authorization to carry a firearm has been suspended/revoked, will have their personal firearm(s) carrying privileges rescinded until further notice.
- G. When a firearm is temporarily secured by a supervisor (i.e., accident, injury, suspension, extended leave, etc.) it will be turned into the Property Specialist as soon as practical.
- H. Officers will not make modifications to any Division-issued or approved personal firearm(s) without written authorization from the Division Range Master.

- I. Any unsafe firearm will be made safe by the assigned officer. If the officer cannot make it safe, then a certified armorer, firearms instructor, or supervisor will make it safe. The firearm will be removed, inspected, and repaired.
- J. Officers will utilize an “Armor Piercing Container “, a sand filled drum, or other approved devices to load and unload any firearm while at Saddlebrook HQ, Woodlawn or Black Hill Substations. If these devices are not readily available, the officer will point the firearm in a safe direction and follow loading and unloading procedures per annual in-service training.
- K. The Property Specialist will maintain and update an electronic database that will be utilized to track all issued weapons and maintain files by officer name with detailed and signed Uniform and Equipment Records.
- L. No officer will be allowed to have more than one duty weapon for the same use *except Investigative Services Personnel (ISS)*. For example, each officer will only be issued one handgun for on-duty use. If they desire another, they must first turn in the originally approved handgun to receive the replacement. The same applies to specialty on-duty weapons such as rifles.
- M. *Officers assigned to ISS can qualify and carry an additional department-issued handgun that offers extra concealment for plain clothes operations and investigative purposes.*

### III. Handguns

- A. All Division handgun(s) will be inspected by the Range Master or an armorer before issuance to certified personnel. Only certified armorers are authorized to repair, modify, or alter them.
- B. Permanent handgun(s) issuances, replacements, and exchanges are the responsibility of the Property Specialist with notification to the Division Range Master.
- C. Officers will maintain their issued and/or approved personal handgun(s) in a clean and serviceable condition. Officers will exercise the utmost care and caution when handling firearms.
- D. The Division Range Master will be notified in a timely manner when a handgun needs repairs and arrange for it. The Division Range Master via the Property Specialist will then assign the officer(s) a temporary handgun.
- E. Carrying Handguns
  - 1. Officers will not be authorized to carry any handgun until they have been issued and instructed in the policies described in the Division Directives on Use of Force, Firearms, Patrol Rifle, Deadly Force Investigation, and Firearms Training.
  - 2. The issued/approved handgun for personnel will be determined by Chief, Park Police Division.

NOTE: In specific instances, the Chief, Park Police Division, may approve a handgun and caliber, other than the Division issued handgun, for use by on-duty personnel as a primary handgun. This approval will be in writing.

3. Officers will be armed at all times while on duty.
    - a. Officers are required to demonstrate proficiency to the Division Range Master with all approved retention capable holster(s) they will utilize while carrying any authorized handgun(s).
    - b. Officers, off-duty and not in uniform, wearing or carrying their handgun(s) must conceal it from public view at all times.
    - c. Officers, while on duty and not in uniform, must display their department police badge while wearing or carrying their handgun(s) unless they are functioning in a covert capacity.
  4. Personnel may be approved for a personal handgun as a secondary/backup/off-duty provided that:
    - a. The handgun must be a semi-automatic with double action and a minimum magazine capacity of at least (6) six rounds.
    - b. The handgun is inspected by a certified armorer/gunsmith prior to being approved for use. The inspection and request for approval will be sent to the Division Range Master for approval to the Chief, Park Police Division.
    - c. Officers must demonstrate proficiency and qualify as outlined in this directive.
    - d. The handgun is carried in an approved holster that the officer has demonstrated proficiency with to the Division Range Master.
    - e. Failure to comply with the provisions of this directive will result in having the affected officer's personal handgun privileges suspended.
- F. When personnel are off duty and not carrying an issued or approved personal handgun, it must be secured, i.e., in a safe, lockbox, weapon locking mechanism, etc. (Just having a secured residence but leaving the gun unattended and not in a secured container is considered careless and may be grounds for disciplinary action.)

NOTE: The Division issues all officers firearms locking mechanisms for departmental-issued handguns. The proper use of these devices can help control access to firearms by minors and other unauthorized persons, as required under State Law and the Montgomery County Code. Personnel who own personal firearms are encouraged to purchase these devices.

## IV. Shotguns

- A. Personnel must give consideration to the nature, location, and all relevant circumstances and safety concerns before deploying the shotgun. Personnel will not discharge a shotgun in a public place when the danger to innocent bystanders is greater than the threat which prompts the discharging of the weapon.
- B. Personnel who have qualified and demonstrated proficiency with a Division shotgun may be issued one.

- 1. The Division-issued shotgun is the Remington 870, 12-gauge model. Future models may be added as necessary.

NOTE: In specific instances, the Chief, Park Police Division, may approve a shotgun, other than the Division shotgun. Personnel must attend class, qualify, demonstrate proficiency, and have the shotgun inspected monthly and annually. Proper documentation must be sent to the Chief, Park Police Division via the Division Range Master to receive initial approval.

- 2. The Chief, Park Police Division, may authorize officers to be issued a shotgun and ammunition as part of their regular equipment. The request, via the individual's chain of command, must be in writing and submitted to the Division Range Master with a recommendation for approval to the Chief, Park Police Division. Due to the limited number of shotguns available, the Chief, Park Police Division, will have sole discretion as to which personnel will be issued a shotgun.
    - 3. At no time will personnel, who have NOT qualified and demonstrated an acceptable proficiency level with a shotgun, be issued or otherwise carry a shotgun.
  - C. Division shotguns, not issued, will be kept at Headquarters in a secured firearms cabinet. The Division Range Master is responsible for securing the firearms cabinet.
  - D. Whether in a secured locking mount in a Division police vehicle or in a gun case stored in the trunk, the shotgun will be in "Cruiser Ready Condition" (per shotgun annual in-service training).
  - E. While a shotgun is being carried in a police vehicle, personnel will not leave the vehicle unlocked or unsecured (K-9 exception).
  - F. Assigned personnel will be responsible for the cleanliness of their issued or personal shotgun.

## V. Rifles

- A. The Chief, Park Police Division, or designee will provide prior authorization for any deployment of Division Type 1/Type 2 rifles pertaining to the Deer Management program.

- B. Type 1/Type 2 rifles designated for Deer Management programs will be securely stored by the commander of such program.
- C. Authorized Users:
  - 1. Officers permitted to utilize Type 1/Type 2 rifle must have completed specialized long gun training, demonstrated proficiency, and qualify quarterly.
  - 2. If an officer fails to qualify with the Division Type 1/Type 2 rifle, they will not be considered an authorized user/handler of that firearm.
- D. While a Type 1/Type 2 rifle is being carried in a police vehicle, personnel will not leave the vehicle unlocked or unsecured (K-9 exception).
- E. Type 1/Type 2 rifles will be maintained in serviceable condition. All users will inspect and clean their firearms after each deployment.
- F. A certified armorer will inspect Division Type 1/Type 2 rifles annually.
- G. Type 3 - See Division Directive Patrol Rifles for Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission Type 3 Rifle regulations.

#### VI. Ammunition

- A. The approved agency calibers are:
  - 1. .40 caliber
  - 2. 9mm
  - 3. .223 or 5.56mm – Type 1/Type 2 and Type 3 rifles
  - 4. 12-gauge slug and 00 buckshot – Shotgun.
- B. A list that specifies and approves any new ammunition manufacturer is maintained by the Division Range Master.

#### VII. Inspections

- A. *All department-issued and approved firearms used as a primary or secondary weapon while on duty will be inspected monthly.*
- B. *Responsibilities*
  - 1. *Supervisors will ensure that an armorer or a Division Firearms Instructor conducts monthly inspections of department-issued firearms.*
  - 2. *An approved armorer or gunsmith will semi-annually inspect personal weapons used solely off duty. Each officer is responsible for maintaining their personal weapon in a clean and serviceable condition.*

3. The Division Range Master *will ensure that all department-issued or approved secondary firearms worn while on duty* are inspected yearly by an approved armorer or gunsmith.
4. The Division Range Master will maintain records of all weapons inspections.
5. *The electronic firearm inspection form will be completed and saved in the Park Police Dashboard and be readily available to the Division Range Master.* Failure to do so will result in the automatic suspension of the individual's authority to carry the firearm.
6. Internal Affairs will verify that monthly inspections are conducted on firearms by an armorer or a Division Firearms Instructor.
7. The Internal Affairs section will audit weapons inspections **quarterly** to ensure compliance with this directive.

C. All routine monthly firearms inspections will be made in the following manner:

1. The inspection process will be delegated as follows, in descending order:
  - a. Certified armorer
  - b. Certified firearms instructor
2. At the time of the inspection, personnel will administratively unload (per Division training) the firearm utilizing an approved weapon clearing container. These containers can be an "Armor Piercing Container", a sand filled drum, or other approved devices provided for this purpose, located at any facility. After inspections, firearm reassembly will take place in a safe and secure area. Officers will safely and administratively reload the weapon by pointing the weapon into an available approved weapon-clearing container or in a safe direction.

D. The Range Officer in Charge (R.O.I.C.) will ensure that all firearms are inspected prior to firing at the range.

VIII. Damage to Division Firearms

- A. All personnel will follow the procedures set forth in the Division Directive "Uniforms and Equipment" that apply to Repair and Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Uniforms and Equipment as they apply to firearms.
- B. Personnel who damage issued firearms through abuse, neglect, carelessness, misuse, or failure to properly maintain an issued firearm will be reported, in writing, to the Chief, Park Police Division, via the Commander, Internal Affairs through that individual's chain of command.

- C. Personnel will be required to replace, at their own expense, any Division firearm lost, stolen, or damaged through negligence, in accordance with the provisions of Division Directive “Uniforms and Equipment.”

IX. Firearms Training and Certification

A. Training

1. The Division’s firearms training programs will include instruction in the use of deadly force, the legal and moral responsibilities of carrying a firearm, safety, proficiency, de-escalation, and threat identification.
2. Firearms proficiency training will reflect, as closely as possible, those conditions and circumstances personnel are most likely to confront in actual deadly force situations.
3. Annual firearms proficiency training will include, when applicable, all approved issued and personally owned handguns, shotguns, and patrol rifles (bi-annually).
4. The Division Range Master will develop Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC) approved lesson plans and Qualification Courses of fire.
5. Certified firearms instructors will oversee all firearms training.

B. Qualification

1. All MPCTC certified police personnel will qualify annually with the Division issued and/or personal handguns or shotguns on both a day and reduced light course of fire. All patrol rifle certified personnel will qualify semi-annually with their division issued rifle on both a day and reduced light course of fire, showing proficiency with optics and iron sights. Certified personnel will be required to fire a minimum score as set by the corresponding course requirements. Personnel will attend one tactical training day per year.
2. If an officer fails to shoot a minimum qualifying score of 75% with their issued handgun by the end of the day, the officer has failed to qualify and the Range OIC will secure the officer’s handgun, shotgun and rifle. The Division Range Master will immediately make notification to the officer’s supervisor and section commander. As soon as possible, written notification of firearms failure to qualify will be made to the Internal Affairs Commander with a copy to the Special Assistant to the Chief of Police and the individual’s chain of command. The officer will be scheduled for the next available range date.

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3. If an officer fails to shoot a minimum qualifying score of 90% with the patrol rifle by the end of the day, the officer has failed to qualify and the Range OIC will secure the officer's patrol rifle. The Division Range Master will immediately make notification to the officer's supervisor and section commander. As soon as possible, written notification of patrol rifle failure to qualify will be made to the Special Assistant to the Chief of Police and the individual's chain of command. The officer will be scheduled for the next available patrol rifle range date.
  4. The officer will not be permitted to wear or carry any firearm until the officer passes the appropriate qualification course. If the officer has failed to qualify with their issued handgun, that officer will not be permitted to operate a division vehicle.
  5. Officers will report to the Internal Affairs Commander for temporary duty assignments until firearms qualification is achieved.
  6. Any officer who fails to shoot a qualifying score on the first relay will be required to attend remedial training as determined by the Division Range Master.
  7. Officers must be able to demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the Division Range Master, with issued and/or personal firearms.
  8. Minimum scores on day and reduced light courses of fire for issued and/or personal handguns, type 3 patrol rifles, and shotguns are:
    - a. Officers issued handgun = 75%
    - b. Officers off-duty handgun = 75%
    - c. Officers shotgun = 75%
    - d. Officers issued Type 3 patrol rifle = 90%
    - e. Firearms instructors = 90% (on all firearms issued and/or intend to instruct on).
  9. Personnel will qualify with division issued or approved personal holsters.
  10. Personnel wishing to qualify with their off-duty weapon must have four magazines with them at the time of qualification.
  11. The Division Range Master will keep records of all qualification scores, verify the weapon used, and obtain the signatures of each participant. **Prior to leaving the range, officers will review their recorded qualification scores and provide their signatures in the applicable area on the score sheet.**



## C. Failure to Qualify/Demonstrate Proficiency

1. The Division Range Master may require any officer who fails to demonstrate proficiency with any firearm to attend remedial training. The Division Range Master will be responsible for scheduling remedial range time and making supervisory notifications.
2. Upon completion of the appropriate remedial training, the individual must qualify to return to their regular assignment.
3. The Division Range Master will notify the Training Coordinator if an officer fails to qualify within 30 days of failure. The Training Coordinator will notify MPCTC of firearms failure to qualify. The suspension of an MPCTC certified individual's police powers and removal of their firearm, for failure to qualify, will not be construed as an emergency suspension or disciplinary action.
4. Personnel unable to qualify with their issued firearm after all avenues of retraining have been exhausted will continue in the temporary assignment until appropriate administrative steps can be taken.
5. If, at any time during the re-qualification process, the inability to qualify is determined to be the result of a physical impairment, the individual will have to complete a physical examination to determine the duration of the impairment. If the impairment is temporary, alternative assignments will be utilized until the impairment is corrected and the individual is able to qualify. If the impairment is permanent, the appropriate administrative steps will be taken.

## D. Records

1. The Training Coordinator and Division Range Master will maintain a permanent firearms qualification record for all MPCTC certified police personnel. This record will contain the following information: individual's name and ID number, serial number, qualification date, and scores for each handgun, shotgun, and patrol rifle.
2. The Division Range Master will provide Internal Affairs with a monthly report of personnel who failed to get their weapons inspected and /or failed to qualify.

**Issuing Authority:**



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**Chief Darryl W. McSwain**  
**Maryland-National Capital Park Police**  
**Montgomery County Division**

**End of Directive**