	Matthews Police Department		
	General Order: Firearms – Issue, Carrying, Possession and Maintenance	Section .04: Equipment and Personal Appearance	Order #: 04-02
	Review: Annually in December by the Administrative Division Commander	Issue Date: 02/15/2022 (Supersedes G.O. dated 04/28/2021)	

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this General Order is to establish the policies and procedures to be used in the possession, use, and maintenance of police firearms.

II. CROSS-REF:

- NCLEA 1.09 Inventory for Agency Owned Capital Assets
- NCLEA 1.11 Agency Issued Property/Equipment
- NCLEA 5.04 Weapons and Ammunition
- NCLEA 5.05 Carrying and Use of Weapons, On and Off Duty
- NCGS 14-269 Carrying Concealed Weapons
- NCGS 15-401
- 18 USC 926B & 926C - HR 218 Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (LEOSA)
- CALEA STANDARDS 4.3.1
- NCLM II.1

III. DISCUSSION:


IV. POLICY:

Officers are authorized to use deadly force under NCGS 15-401. In order protect themselves, or others, at risk of imminent danger, officers will be issued department owned firearms. Officers will only carry with them department issued firearms or department approved firearms, whether on-duty or off-duty while acting as an officer of the Matthews Police Department.

V. DEFINITIONS:

VI. USE OF FIREARMS:

1. Officers will use their firearms only in authorized training sessions, any approved or licensed firearms range, or in accordance with the Department use of force procedure.
2. A written report is required of any officer drawing and pointing or discharging a weapon, even if no one was struck, prior to the end of the tour of duty during which the discharge or drawing and pointing the weapon occurred;
 - a. The shift supervisor shall be notified immediately upon the discharge of any weapon.
 - b. No changes or alterations should be made upon any weapon after discharge until the weapon is inspected and/or retrieved by a supervisor.
3. Officers will be subject to disciplinary action if the use of a weapon involves:
 - a. Any violation of law by the member;
 - b. Any violation of departmental rules;
 - c. Poor judgement involving the careless disregard of safety;
 - d. Misconduct on the officer's part;

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e. Accidental discharge through carelessness or recklessness.


VII. ISSUANCE OF SERVICE WEAPON:

1. All officers of the department will be issued a semi-automatic 9mm Glock pistol with holster, 2 spare magazines, magazine holder and gun lock.
2. Other weapons used by the department will be issued based on assignment, availability and need. Additional weapons will only be issued after weapons training requirements are by the assigned officer.
3. A record of all department owned weapons (pistol, shotgun, patrol rifle, etc.) and who they are issued to by serial number and type shall be maintained by the Police Armorer and a record kept online in the Quarter Master File and/or online in the individual officers Benchmark Analytics personnel file. Copies of State Form F9 indicating individual officer's qualifications scores by weapon type and serial number including dates of the qualification are kept in a paper folder within the Training Office for a period of three years and then placed into storage within the Police Department's Paper File Storage Locker.
4. The loss or theft of any departmental issued firearm shall be reported immediately in writing to the immediate supervisor. A local police report shall be made reporting the loss of theft including an entry into NCIC. This report shall then be forwarded to the Chief of Police.

VIII. PISTOL RED DOT SIGHTS:

Pistol Red Dot Sites (RDS) are authorized for issue and carry. The RDS will not improve shooting or qualification scores if the shooter's fundamentals are poor. The idea of the RDS is to allow for faster target acquisition and follow up shots (if required), allowing the officer to keep both eyes open and allow them to focus on target rather than focusing on the front sight. Officers are not required to transition to the RDS if they so choose.

1. Prior to the issue of a firearm with a mounted RDS, the transitioning officer will be required to attend a 12-hour training program instructed by a Department Firearms Instructor under the supervision of the Training Unit. Until such time, the officer will carry a standard issue Glock 17, 19, or 34 with night sights.
2. The 12-hour transition course will cover the function and operation of the RDS, familiarization training, and day/night time qualifications in accordance with G.O. 03-02, Firearms Training and Qualification.
3. It will be the officer's responsibility to ensure the function and operation of the site once issued. If a battery expires, the officer should contact their supervisor for a replacement battery. Batteries will be kept in an area available to supervisors for replacement. RDS batteries will also be replaced during annual firearms inspections by the armorer.
4. The RDS is an electronic device which can fail when a battery expires or the device becomes damaged. The issued pistol will be equipped with "Suppressor Height Sights" to allow the officer to engage targets with standard night sights should the RDS fail.
5. Only the department supplied Glock 17, 19, or 34 MOS and the Vortex Venom RDS are approved for on-duty carry.
 - a. The RDS will be mounted onto the firearm by a Department Armorer.

	Matthews Police Department		
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- b. Zeroing of the RDS will be conducted by Department Firearms Instructors. Officers being issued a pistol with and attached RDS will verify the zero and make adjustments with the assistance of a firearms instructor.
- c. Damaged or inoperable optics will be serviced by a Department Armorer only.

6. Off-duty carry pistols with an attached RDS must be approved by the Department Firearms Instructor staff. The Matthews Police Department reserves the right to deny certain firearms and optics from approved off-duty carry out of safety concerns. Qualification with the off-duty pistol with attached RDS is required in accordance with G.O. 03-02, Firearms Training and Qualification.

a. The following RDS list indicate recommended RDS optics for off-duty pistol options based on cost and product quality:


- I. Vortex
- II. Holosun
- III. Trijicon
- IV. Sig Sauer
- V. Steiner
- VI. Aimpoint
- VII. Leupold
- VIII. U.S. Optics
- IX. Swampfox Optics

Other market options may be purchased by the Officer; however, the Matthews Police Department is not responsible for the officer’s use of any personally owned products.

b. Officers may ask a Department Armorer to assist with mounting MRDS optics on an off-duty firearm. Department Armorers are not responsible for damages to the optic or firearm. Officers may choose to mount their own MRDS. If an MRDS is attached by an officer or other person, armorers should at a minimum inspect the off-duty weapon to ensure proper mounting and torque of screws.

IX. FIREARMS, CARRYING OF FIREARMS:

- 1. The Chief of Police may authorize an on-duty officer to possess weapons or ammunition other than or in addition to those issued by the department.
- 2. Any officer that has qualified with an approved personal weapon shall only carry that weapon while off-duty and not on-duty as a back up weapon. Back up weapons are strictly prohibited.
- 3. Service weapons are not to be carried into classroom training situations at community colleges or upon the training premises of another police agency unless required for that training or unless the officer is in uniform during the training. Weapons are to be secured in the officer’s vehicle or in proper weapon storage facilities made available at those locations.

	Matthews Police Department		
	General Order: Firearms – Issue, Carrying, Possession and Maintenance	Section .04: Equipment and Personal Appearance	Order #: 04-02
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4. An officer shall not carry or possess any firearm off-duty while consuming any alcoholic beverage in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 14-269.


X. OFF-DUTY POSSESSION OF FIREARMS:

1. Full time officers may possess and carry concealed their department-issued service weapon:
 - a. While within the jurisdiction of the Town of Matthews and in accordance with the restrictions of this policy;
 - b. While within the radio response area of this department if
 - i. The officer is available for emergency call-back response, and
 - ii. The officer is carrying his/her department-issued radio
2. Sworn law enforcement officers may carry, in accordance with N.C.G.S. 14-269, concealed upon their person a personal weapon while off-duty throughout the State of North Carolina, provided that carrying of such weapon conforms to the provisions set forth in this order and is in accordance with state law.
3. Sworn law enforcement officers may carry concealed throughout the United States in accordance with House Bill HR 218;
4. Shoulder holsters unless concealed beneath outer clothing and in conformance with General Statutes and the provisions set forth by this policy, are forbidden;
5. Authorized Weapons
 - a. Fulltime officers are not required to carry a weapon while off-duty but may do so at their own option;
 - b. Full time officers exercising the option to carry a weapon while off-duty are authorized to carry either their issued weapon and ammunition or a personal weapon and ammunition as provided in Section X and XI;

XI. AUTHORIZATION CONDITIONAL:

1. Authorization for full time officers to carry weapons concealed while off-duty, as provided by the provisions of this order, shall be subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Full time officers who elect to carry their service weapon or personal weapon while off-duty are required to have in their possession their department-issued badge and identification;
 - b. No officer shall be authorized to carry a weapon concealed while on suspension from the department;
 - c. Certain Administrative Leave designations may restrict the carry or possessions or carry of weapons.
 - d. No officer will be permitted to possess or carry a concealed weapon at any time while the officer is consuming alcoholic beverages or is impaired by an impairing substance.


XII. QUALIFICATION REQUIRED FOR PERSONAL WEAPONS:

	Matthews Police Department		
	General Order: Firearms – Issue, Carrying, Possession and Maintenance	Section .04: Equipment and Personal Appearance	Order #: 04-02
	Review: Annually in December by the Administrative Division Commander	Issue Date: 02/15/2022 (Supersedes G.O. dated 04/28/2021)	

1. No officer will, whether on-duty or off-duty, be allowed to carry a personal weapon unless the officer is qualified with that particular weapon and the weapon is approved by the Chief of Police or his designee.
2. Qualifications with personal weapons will be done on an as needed basis. Officers wishing to qualify with an off-duty weapon shall schedule a time with a departmental firearms instructor based upon that instructor's availability.
3. Ammunition and holster for qualifying with a personal weapon must be provided by the individual officer, and is subject to inspection by the firearms instructor.
4. The course of fire for qualifying with a personal weapon will be the same required for a service weapon of the same or similar type.
5. An officer failing to qualify with a personal weapon will be given the opportunity for future attempts but will not be authorized to carry that weapon on-duty nor concealed while off-duty until qualified with it.

XIII. MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY OF POLICE SHOTGUNS:

1. 12 gauge .00 buck shotgun ammunition shall be the standard issue for sworn personnel although other various rounds may be authorized by the Chief of Police for specialty weapons and/or personnel.
2. The shotgun will be loaded in accordance with current loading procedures as demonstrated and practiced during departmental firearms training session.
3. The shotgun will be stored in the police vehicle with the maximum number of shells in the magazine and the weapon in the safety position.
4. No shell will be carried or loaded in the firing chamber of a shotgun until such time as the use of the weapon is apparently imminent.
5. The shotgun will be carried in the "safety on" position until the weapon is to be fired.
6. Maintenance of shotguns and ammunition
 - a. A shotgun assigned to an officer will be routinely cleaned by that officer;
 - b. A light film of oil will be used to protect metal parts from rust and corrosion;
 - c. In the event a shotgun becomes damp or wet, the weapon should be wiped dry and lubricated as soon as possible;
 - d. In no instance will penetrating-type oil (WD-40) be used on a police weapon.
7. Shotgun ammunition assigned to the officer will be periodically inspected by the issued officer and their supervisor.
 - a. Damaged ammunition will be presented to the shift supervisor for replacement;
 - b. Unauthorized ammunition will be removed from the police vehicle;
 - c. Missing ammunition will be reported and investigated through normal channels.
8. Each Sergeant is responsible to ensure compliance with the shotgun procedure and security

	Matthews Police Department		
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of the shotgun.

9. When a shotgun is being transported outside the police vehicle, it must be carried in the “port-arms” position (BARRELL ALWAYS POINTING UP) and the weapon should be in the “safety on” position.
10. All shotguns are to be removed from the police vehicle and stored in the department’s armory when a vehicle is sent in for service.

XIV.MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY OF AR-15 PATROL RIFLE/SUB-MACHINE GUNS:


1. Rifles/Sub-machine guns will be issued to departmental officers that wish to carry such weapon once training and successful qualification has been completed.
2. Rifle/Sub-machine guns will be loaded with current approved ammunition.
3. Rifles/Sub-machine guns will be kept in the designated safe location within the police vehicle in a safe and unloaded condition.
4. Shotguns/Rifles and sub-machine guns will be removed from an officer’s vehicle when an officer is going out of town without the departmental vehicle, when the car is taken for service, or if the vehicle is going to be out of service for an extended time for any reason. These weapons may be kept in the department’s armory located within the department.

XV.MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY OF HANDGUNS:

1. Handguns guns will be issued to departmental officers upon hiring and once training and successful qualification has been completed.
2. Handguns will be loaded only with current approved ammunition.
3. Handguns will be kept in a safe location when not carried to include while at home and off-duty. No weapon shall be stored in a manner so as to be exposed to readily accessible to the public, children in the home, or prisoners.
4. Maintenance of handguns and ammunition will be as follows:
 - a. A handgun assigned to an officer will be routinely cleaned by that officer;
 - b. A light film of oil will be used to protect metal parts from rust and corrosion;
 - c. In the event a handgun becomes damp or wet, the weapon should be wiped dry and lubricated as soon as possible;
 - d. In no instance will penetrating-type oil (WD-40) be used on a police weapon.
5. The issued service weapon shall not be modified or altered in any manner. Any desired modifications must be approved and installed or applied by a Department armorer.

XVI.WEAPON INSPECTION:

1. All department officers shall be mindful of the necessity of frequent firearms inspections and safety checks. Individual officers are charged with the responsibility of maintaining a clean and fully functional weapon at all times.

	Matthews Police Department		
	General Order: Firearms – Issue, Carrying, Possession and Maintenance	Section .04: Equipment and Personal Appearance	Order #: 04-02
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2. Officers are responsible for general maintenance of their issued weapons with regards to cleaning. No officer shall fully disassemble a weapon for any reason.
3. Supervisors are required to ensure personnel under their command maintain clean, functional weapons. Periodic inspections of side arms, shotguns and AR 15 rifles are authorized and encouraged. Officer found to be in possession of uncleaned weapons can be subject to disciplinary actions.
4. Any problem associated with any weapon or its ammunition will be brought to the immediate attention of a departmental firearms technician or the employee's Division Commander. Weapons found to be unsafe shall be removed from service until the weapon is repaired and made safe. During times of extended maintenance, a replacement weapon may be issued.