POLICY AND PROCEDURE NO. 335

Firearms Licensing

Date Issued: November 14, 1996
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1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the procedures and standards governing the issuance, renewal, suspension, and revocation of Licenses to Carry Firearms (LTC) and Firearm Identification Cards (FID) by the Worcester Police Department, and to set guidelines for the collection and accounting of associated fees. The Chief of Police or designee serves as the licensing authority for the City of Worcester pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 140, as amended by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024 (An Act Modernizing Firearms Laws).

2. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Worcester Police Department to administer firearms licensing in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 140, §§ 121F, 129B, 131, and 131P, as amended by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024. The Department shall issue licenses and Firearm Identification Cards to all qualified applicants who are neither prohibited persons nor determined to be unsuitable, as defined by law. The Department will process all applications, maintain accurate licensing records, and ensure that the public safety interests of the City of Worcester are protected throughout the licensing process.

3. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all personnel assigned to or performing duties within the License Division of the Worcester Police Department. This policy governs the processing, issuance, renewal, suspension, and revocation of Licenses to Carry Firearms and Firearm Identification Cards, and the collection of associated fees. This policy supersedes and replaces Policy 335 (FID, 1996), Policy 340 (Endorsements on Firearm Applications, 1993), and Policy 405.2 (License to Carry Firearms, 2013).

4. DEFINITIONS:

A. Licensing Authority

The Chief of Police of the City of Worcester, or designee, who is authorized to issue, renew, suspend, and revoke firearms licenses, identification cards, and permits pursuant to MGL c. 140, §§ 121F, 129B, and 131.

B. License to Carry Firearms (LTC)

A license issued pursuant to MGL c. 140, § 131, entitling the holder to purchase, rent, lease, borrow, possess, and carry firearms, including large capacity firearms and ammunition therefor. An LTC does not entitle the holder to transfer, possess, or carry large capacity feeding devices or assault-style firearms unless permitted under MGL c. 140, § 131M.

C. Firearm Identification Card (FID)

A card issued pursuant to MGL c. 140, § 129B, entitling the holder to purchase, rent, lease, borrow, possess, and carry non-large-capacity rifles and shotguns and ammunition therefor.

D. Prohibited Person

A person who is disqualified from obtaining a firearms license, Firearm Identification Card, or permit based on the statutory criteria set forth in MGL c. 140, § 121F, including but not limited to persons convicted of certain felonies or misdemeanors, persons subject to active restraining orders, persons committed to a mental health facility, persons adjudicated as incompetent, fugitives from justice, persons subject to an active Extreme Risk Protection Order, and other categories as defined by state and federal law.

E. Unsuitable Person

A person who, while not a prohibited person, is determined by the licensing authority or by a court to be unsuitable to be issued a license based on reliable, articulable, and credible information that the person has exhibited or engaged in behavior suggesting that, if licensed, the person may create a risk to public safety or a risk of danger to self or others, as set forth in MGL c. 140, § 121F.

F. Firearm

As defined in MGL c. 140, § 121, as amended by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024: a weapon which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a shot or bullet, including the frame or receiver of any such weapon and the unfinished frame or receiver of any such weapon. This definition encompasses handguns, rifles, and shotguns. Permanently inoperable firearms are excluded.

5. LICENSE TO CARRY FIREARMS – PROCEDURES:

A. Eligibility

A lawful resident twenty-one (21) years of age or older residing within the City of Worcester, or any law enforcement officer employed by the City, or any person residing in an area of exclusive federal jurisdiction located within the City, may submit an application for an LTC or renewal thereof. The licensing authority shall issue the license pursuant to MGL c. 140, § 121F only if the applicant is neither a prohibited person nor determined to be unsuitable.

B. Application Requirements

All LTC applications shall be submitted on the form prescribed by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Each initial application shall include a basic firearms safety certificate meeting the requirements of MGL c. 140, § 131P. Upon an initial application, the licensing authority shall conduct a personal interview with the applicant.

C. Background Investigation

Upon receipt of a completed application, the License Division shall conduct the inquiries required by MGL c. 140, § 121F, including inquiries to: the Commissioner of the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services regarding any disqualifying condition, prior licensing information, records of restraint and hospitalization under MGL c. 123, § 12, and records of

firearms transactions; the Commissioner of Probation regarding any record in the Department of Probation or the Statewide Domestic Violence Record Keeping System; and the Commissioner of Mental Health regarding whether the applicant is a suitable person to possess firearms.

D. Issuance

Upon completion of the background investigation, the application shall be forwarded to the Firearms Records Bureau (FRB) for a final records review. No license shall be issued unless the Colonel of the State Police, through the FRB, certifies that available information does not indicate that issuance would violate state or federal law. Following FRB certification, the licensing authority shall either approve the application and authorize issuance of the LTC or FID, or deny the application and notify the applicant in writing of the reason for denial, in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 121F.

E. Machine Gun Licenses

No person shall be issued a license to carry a machine gun, except that the licensing authority may issue a machine gun license to: a firearm instructor certified by the Municipal Police Training Committee for the sole purpose of firearm instruction to police personnel, or a bona fide collector of firearms as defined in MGL c. 140, § 121. This exception does not apply to automatic devices or automatic parts.

6. FIREARM IDENTIFICATION CARD – PROCEDURES:

A. Eligibility

A lawful resident eighteen (18) years of age or older residing within the City of Worcester may submit an application for an FID or renewal thereof. A person aged fifteen (15) years or older but under eighteen (18) years of age may apply for an FID only if the application includes a certificate from a parent or guardian granting the applicant permission to apply. The licensing authority shall issue the FID pursuant to MGL c. 140, § 121F if the applicant is neither a prohibited person nor determined to be unsuitable.

B. Application Requirements

All FID applications shall be submitted on the form prescribed by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Each initial application shall include a basic firearms safety certificate meeting the requirements of MGL c. 140, § 131P. A certificate issued by the Division of Law Enforcement in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement evidencing satisfactory completion of a hunter education course shall serve as a valid substitute for the basic firearms safety certificate.

7. FEES:

A. LTC Fees

The application fee for an LTC shall be as established by MGL c. 140, § 121F.

B. FID Fees

The application fee for an FID shall be as established by MGL c. 140, § 129B.

C. Fee Waivers

Fees shall be waived for law enforcement officers employed by the City of Worcester who are required to carry firearms as a condition of their employment, and for applicants seventy (70) years of age or older, as required by statute. Any fee waiver not required by statute shall require the express authorization of the Chief of Police.

D. Fee Accounting

All fees collected by the License Division shall be posted and forwarded to the City Treasurer in accordance with general accounting procedures established by the Department and the City of Worcester.

8. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION:

A. Mandatory Suspension or Revocation

A license or FID shall be suspended or revoked by the licensing authority upon the occurrence of any event that would have disqualified the holder from being issued the license or card, or from having it renewed. Upon suspension or revocation, the licensing authority shall take possession of the license or card, and the holder shall comply with MGL c. 140, § 129D regarding the surrender of firearms and ammunition.

B. Discretionary Suspension or Revocation

A license or FID may be suspended or revoked by the licensing authority if it appears that the holder is no longer suitable to possess such license or card, based on the criteria set forth in MGL c. 140, § 121F. Any suspension or revocation shall be in writing and shall state the specific reasons therefor.

C. Notification

Notices of suspension and revocation shall be forwarded to the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services and the Commissioner of Probation in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 121F.

9. APPEALS:

Any person denied, suspended, or revoked may appeal through the process established by MGL c. 140, § 121F, including petition to the Firearm Licensing Review Board or the appropriate court. License Division personnel shall provide applicants with written notice of denial or adverse action that includes information regarding the appeal process as required by statute.

10. EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS:

The License Division shall comply with all Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) provisions set forth in MGL c. 140, § 131R, as amended by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024. A person who has had their firearms license revoked pursuant to an ERPO shall not be eligible to obtain any new firearms license or identification card while the ERPO remains in effect. License Division personnel shall coordinate with the courts and the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services to ensure prompt processing of ERPO-related licensing actions.

11. REGISTRATION AND ADDRESS CHANGE:

A person issued a license under this policy shall report any change of address via the electronic firearms registration system administered by the Commissioner of the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services. Such notification shall be made within thirty (30) days of the address change. All firearms shall be registered in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 121B, as amended by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024.

12. OFFICER ENDORSEMENT PROHIBITION:

No member of the Worcester Police Department shall endorse, recommend, or provide a personal reference for any applicant for a License to Carry Firearms or Firearm Identification Card. Applicants who are not members of the Department shall be required to seek any references or endorsements from individuals outside the Department. This prohibition exists to prevent conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with subsequent licensing actions, including suspensions and revocations, and is in the best interests of both the officer and the City.

13. RECORD KEEPING:

The License Division shall maintain records of all licensing actions in accordance with MGL c. 140, § 121F, including all applications, receipts, fees, affidavits, training certificates, issued licenses, denials, revocations, suspensions, decisions of the Firearm Licensing Review Board, and firearm transfers. Records shall be maintained both in Department files and on the electronic firearms registration system created by the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services.

14. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

All License Division personnel assigned to process firearms licensing applications shall be familiar with the current provisions of MGL c. 140, §§ 121–131Q, including all amendments enacted by Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024, and with any guidance issued by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The License Division commander shall ensure that personnel receive updated training when statutory or regulatory changes take effect.

Per:

Paul B. Saucier
Chief of Police

Revisions:

April 24, 2026:

Replaced Policy 335 (FID, 1996), Policy 340 (Endorsements on Firearm Applications, 1993), and Policy 405.2 (License to Carry Firearms, 2013) with a single firearms licensing policy under Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024. Added the prohibited person and unsuitable person standards, the expanded firearm definition, DCJIS electronic registration, and Extreme Risk Protection Order procedures. Removed the former license restriction categories and the Airport Police fee waiver.

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