

General Order 1.3

USE OF FORCE – EQUIPMENT AND PROFICIENCY

Last Revised: 02-01-2017

SUBJECT: USE OF FORCE – EQUIPMENT AND PROFICIENCY

This order consists of the following numbered sections:

- 1.3.1 Use of force: equipment and proficiency policy
- 1.3.2 Definitions
- 1.3.3 General requirements
- 1.3.4 Authorized force tools and ammunition
- 1.3.5 Weapons qualification and proficiency

1.3.1 Use of force: equipment and proficiency policy

Commissioned police and corrections officers are required to carry firearms and other force tools to carry out their assigned duties. Each officer is required to complete familiarization training and operator training before being authorized to carry Department firearms and force tools. Only weapons, ammunition, and force tools meeting Department-authorized specifications shall be used by Department personnel in law enforcement responsibilities while on duty.

1.3.2 Definitions

I. Proficiency means attainment of a level of familiarization and skill that meets or exceeds a professional standard.

II. Qualified means to have attained a minimum passing marksmanship standard on a prescribed qualification course.

III. A firearms instructor is an employee who has been certified by the Washington Criminal Justice Training Center (or equivalent certifying body) as a firearms instructor, and who has been designated to provide such instruction by the Command Staff. Firearms instructors shall conduct instructions only on those weapons for which they have been certified.

1.3.3 General requirements

I. Every commissioned police officer and corrections officer, when assigned as uniformed first responders, shall carry a primary or equivalent firearm and two less-lethal tools during hours of duty. The primary or equivalent firearms shall be in service-ready condition with at least two extra, fully loaded magazines.

II. Every plain-clothes police officer assigned to enforcement and/or investigative activities shall carry a primary or equivalent firearm on his/her person during hours of duty and at least one fully loaded magazine.

III. Plain-clothes personnel assigned exclusively to administrative, school, or command activities may be exempted by the Chief of Police from carrying a primary or equivalent firearm and other force tools on their persons while on duty, provided they maintain swift access to such weapons should they be called upon to assist with enforcement activities.

IV. Authorized force tools will be carried and used by employees only after successful completion of an initial proficiency training program. Continued carrying of authorized force tools is contingent upon successful completion of periodic refresher training, in accordance with Department policy.

V. It is the responsibility of the employee to whom each weapon is assigned to maintain that weapon in a safe, clean, and service-ready condition. Unsafe weapons shall be removed from service and reported immediately to the employee's supervisor. Unsafe weapons are sent to the armorer for repair, replacement, or disposal.

VI. No person shall modify any Department-owned or Department-authorized weapon from factory specifications. The sole exception to this regulation is that the Department armorer may authorize weapon modifications that are necessary to ensure that weapon reliability and safety are maintained. The Deputy Chief may authorize optional weapon modifications that officers may elect to employ to enhance weapon safety, usability, or effectiveness. Any modifications will be noted by the Firearms Team and Department armorer in the appropriate weapon history.

VII. A complete record of each lethal and less-lethal weapon approved for use by Department employees shall be maintained by the Department. Each record shall include:

- A. The weapon type, description, model, and serial number.
- B. The identity of the weapon's owner and/or assignee.
- C. The name of the person approving use and date of approval.
- D. Approved optional weapon modifications.

VIII. Civilian, non-commissioned employees shall not carry firearms while on duty or bring firearms into the workplace even if permitted to do so by virtue of having a valid Concealed Pistol License.

1.3.4 Authorized force tools and ammunition

Authorized firearms include side arms, rifles, and less-lethal weapons.

I. Firearms:

A. Side arms:

1. The primary firearm for all commissioned personnel is a firearm of the type(s), make(s), and caliber(s) authorized by the Chief of Police and issued as standard equipment by the Department.
2. Officers may elect to carry a personal weapon as an equivalent primary firearm. To use such a weapon on duty requires prior authorization, in writing, from the officer's chain of command and the Chief of Police. When authorization to use an equivalent primary firearm is granted, it is subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Authorization to carry an equivalent primary firearm on duty is a privilege that may be revoked by the Chief of Police (or designee) with or without notice or cause.
 - b. Officers use equivalent primary firearms entirely at their own risk. The Department does not replace weapons or reimburse officers for equivalent primary firearms that are damaged, lost, or otherwise rendered unserviceable.
 - c. The equivalent primary firearm is of a manufacture at least equal in quality (as determined by the Firearms Team) to the Department-issued primary firearm and is not mechanically modified from factory specifications.
 - d. The equivalent primary firearm is safety inspected and certified as service-ready.
 - e. The employee carrying an equivalent primary firearm maintains the weapon in service-ready condition at all times, at his/her own expense.
 - f. Officers provide holsters and magazine carriers for equivalent primary firearms at their expense, unless standard Department-issued equipment is designed for use with the equivalent weapon.
 - g. If an equivalent primary firearm is removed from service or held for evidence by the Department, the officer may be issued a primary firearm as a replacement until the equivalent weapon is returned, or the officer may replace the equivalent primary firearm at his/her expense.

- h. Authorization to carry an equivalent primary firearm is maintained in the officer's personnel file
3. An officer who wishes to carry a secondary firearm must receive prior authorization, in writing, from the Firearms Team and the Chief of Police (or designee). Authorization is subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The weapon is a semi-automatic pistol or double-action revolver with a minimum five-round capacity.
 - b. The authorization is filed in the officer's personnel file.
 - c. The secondary firearm is safety inspected and verified as service-ready, in writing, by a firearms instructor.
 - d. A secondary firearm shall not replace the primary or equivalent firearm while on duty.
 - e. Related expenses are the responsibility of the employee.

B. Rifles

1. The official rifle(s) of the Department is (are) of the type(s), make(s), and caliber(s) authorized by the Chief of Police and issued by the Department. Other makes and models of rifles are not authorized for duty use.
2. The Department conducts familiarization and operator training on the rifle annually.

C. Other force tools

1. Other force tools may be used only if they are Department-approved.
2. Less-lethal weapons maintained by the less-lethal weapons instructors with oversight from the Department armorer.
3. Conductive Energy Weapons (CEWs) shall be carried on the officer's off-hand side in an approved holster or in an appropriate leg or vest pocket.

D. Munitions

The Department provides practice and duty ammunition for primary and equivalent primary firearms.

1. The ammunition carried in the primary or equivalent firearm and magazines is only that which has been authorized for Department use by the Chief of Police and issued by the Department.
2. Only the ammunition most recently issued by the Department shall be carried or used in any primary or equivalent firearm.
3. Approved ammunition for secondary firearms shall be limited to unmodified factory-loaded, commercially available ammunition.
4. Ammunition used in rifles is only that which has been authorized for Department use by the Chief of Police and issued by the Department.
5. No person shall modify or attempt to modify less-lethal munitions in the Department's arsenal.
6. The Training Office will maintain the list of Kinetic Energy Impact Munitions approved by the Chief of Police.

1.3.5 Weapons qualifications and proficiency

The Firearms Team will develop the qualification course that is to be approved by the Chief of Police.

- I. Officers shall qualify with the primary or equivalent firearm twice per year, according to the training schedule.
- II. Police officers who are assigned a rifle shall qualify with the rifle twice per year.
- III. Officers having secondary firearms shall qualify once each year.
- IV. Qualification with authorized weapons includes:
 - A. Achieving a minimum qualifying standard on a prescribed marksmanship course that includes stress factors.
 - B. Demonstrating recognized safe-handling procedures (including loading and unloading) for the use of the approved weapons.
 - C. Demonstrating knowledge of the four firearms safety principles.
 - D. Demonstrating ability to properly disassemble, clean, and reassemble the authorized weapon(s).
 - E. Demonstrating knowledge of the laws governing the use and transportation of the authorized weapons(s).
 - F. Demonstrating familiarity of Department policy on use of force.
- V. Qualified instructors shall ensure officers assigned other force tools receive initial training and demonstrate proficiency annually.
- VI. Demonstrated proficiency is not required for an on-duty officer to carry a folding blade knife that is designed purely for utility purposes.