



MYRTLE BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT

ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Subject: *Weapons*

Number: *204-E*

Effective Date: *January 1, 2001*

Revised Date: *November 17, 2023*

Rescinds: *Police Department Policy, Section 600, No. 600 - 613*

204 Weapons

204-A Weapons

204-B Weapons

204-C Weapons

204-D Weapons

Dated: *1977*

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Approved By: _____

Approved By: _____

I. PURPOSE

To set guidelines to ensure safety of officers and the community and ensure that all weapons (on duty, off-duty and secondary) are properly controlled and regulated. Also, to insure that all officers are trained, qualified and can demonstrate a high level of proficiency to the satisfaction of the instructor to carry duty, off-duty, secondary and specialized weapons/devices as may be necessary to perform police functions. Additionally, this policy will emphasize weapon safety, maintenance and security measures required, related to all weapons, (on duty, off duty, secondary/specialized.)

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Service Weapons -- The semi-auto pistol, rifle, or revolver issued to an officer by the Department for duty and training purposes.
- B. Off-Duty Weapon -- A semi-auto pistol or revolver of a caliber and quality approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee for off-duty use.
- C. Secondary Weapon -- Shotgun, rifle or other specialized weapon issued by the Department and approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee.
- D. Specialized Weapons/Devices -- Weapons/Devices identified as requiring a heightened level of specialized training, subject to stringent federal

government oversight and are primarily assigned to the departments' tactical response teams, i.e. SWAT AND CERT TEAMS. These are weapons which have intended purposes and capabilities that exceed the performance of Service Weapons.

- E. Security – Measures to secure on duty, off duty, secondary and specialized weapons. Exemplified - locked vehicles, trunks, lock box/vehicle vaults, safes, secured desks and offices.
- F. Financial Re-Imbursement Responsibility – when the officer(s) are found to be negligent for the loss of a City owned weapon they shall be responsible to reimburse the City for the purchase of a replacement weapon.
- G. Certified Firearms Instructor – a person holding an active Firearms Instructor Certification from the SCCJA or a training organization approved by the SCCJA. Instructors must be trained in CPR and Basic First Aid.
- H. Range Officer – a competent officer who has been fully trained on the use and operation of the firearms range and its equipment. They are assigned to assist the Certified Firearms Instructor with computer operations and general safety during firearms training. Range Officers must be trained in CPR and Basic First Aid.
- I. Weapon Armorer – Person holding active certification to perform advanced maintenance, make specific mechanical changes and make improvements to correct malfunctions to ensure the weapon(s) functions properly to factory specifications.
- J. Catastrophic Malfunctions – Any mechanical malfunction that renders the weapon inoperable or unable to function to factory specification..

III. PROCEDURE

A. SAFETY/SECURITY

- 1) Safety/Security is of paramount concern to the Myrtle Beach Police Department.
- 2) Home Safety/Security- All department and approved off-duty weapons, while not being carried by an officer, are to be stored in the officer's home in a safe manner. Weapons should be stored either locked in a storage area (gun cabinet, lock box or similar secure area). Emphasis shall be placed on insuring, at all times, that all department and approved off-duty weapons are secured out of reach of children or guests at the officer's home or departmental work space.

- 3) Vehicle Safety/Security- Any departmental weapons (or approved off-duty carry weapons) being stored in a vehicle must be secured in the following fashion:
 - a. The vehicle must always be locked.
 - b. No weapon is to remain in plain view.
 - c. Weapon(s) must be in a locked compartment (glove box, center console or fastened, lockable box, truck or vehicle vault) when the vehicle is unoccupied.
 - d. While off duty, no departmentally issued weapon will be stored within a vehicle.
- 4) Specialized Weapons/Device – Possession, security, custody and care of all weapons identified as (Specialized Weapons), shall be paramount and when not in use will be secured in a safe/vault. Transportation to and from an active response location and during training requires the issued officers to be responsible for the possession, security, custody and care of the weapon(s). In any circumstance where the specialized weapon would need to be temporarily secured in an active response location, training, etc. the weapons(s) will be secured in a vehicle trunk or approved lockable box or vault. Any deviation from this shall be approved by the on scene supervisor or their designee.
- 5) Duty/Off-Duty Safety -- Service weapons shall be carried fully loaded at all times while on duty and carried in the issued duty holster (or an approved holster). Service weapons shall remain secured in the holster at all times unless deemed necessary to remove the weapon in the performance of an officer's duties or for inspection purposes by a supervisor. Inspections should be held only in a safe place such as the police department or firing range while out of view of the public. Off-duty weapons will be carried in an approved manner that promotes safety for both the officer and members of the community.
- 6) Accidental Discharges –Supervisors will insure that accidental discharges are investigated and reported in compliance with the Myrtle Beach Police Department Administrative Regulation/Procedure 263 – Accidental Weapon Discharge.

B. DUTY WEAPON

- 1) While on duty, officers will only carry department-issued firearm(s) and shall carry fully loaded extra magazine(s) as specified by division standard operating procedures. The service weapon is to be fully loaded with only ammunition issued by the Department.
- 2) Absolutely no modifications or alterations to factory specifications are permitted on the police service weapon, unless approved by the Chief of Police or their designee. Any service weapon that appears

to be malfunctioning shall be submitted to the Training Section immediately for repair or replacement.

- 3) An officer shall not remove the service weapon from the holster while on duty or in uniform except for supervised firearms training, equipment inspection or when otherwise justified. Officers are reminded that any weapon used is a use of force and must be in accordance with the Use of Force Policy.
- 4) Department-issued weapons may be carried while off-duty in accordance with paragraph 3.
- 5) Officers are responsible for the cleaning and general maintenance of their issued weapons. This is a duty requirement and should be completed on duty time unless approved by supervisor.
- 6) All department weapons issued to an officer shall be inspected for general cleanness by a member of their immediate chain of command on a quarterly basis at a minimum. Random and surprise inspections are strongly encouraged. Any issues noted at this time shall be addressed by the inspecting officers to include insuring that issues are rectified no later than the officer next scheduled shift for duty.
- 7) Only firearms, weapons, and ammunition meeting agency-authorized specifications may be used by agency personnel in law enforcement responsibilities both on and off duty. The Training Sergeant shall maintain a list of all weapons and ammunition approved by the Chief of Police. The list will contain applicable information regarding the manufacturer, model, and caliber.

C. OFF-DUTY WEAPONS

- 1) Officers are authorized to carry an off-duty weapon within the following guidelines:
 - a. When carried, off-duty weapons shall be accompanied by proper police identification.
 - b. Off-duty officers cannot carry a weapon while under the influence of any alcoholic beverages or prescription drug, which would prohibit officers from performing full duty.
 - c. Off-duty officers are to follow the same guidelines set for duty weapons regarding when an officer may discharge a weapon.
 - d. Off-duty officers should be mindful of the danger to themselves as well as the public when they take enforcement action.
 - e. Off-duty weapons shall be approved by the Chief of Police. Officers must also qualify with the weapon to department standards. Off-duty weapons may be semi-auto pistols or

revolvers. Weapons should be no smaller than a 9 millimeter nor larger than .45 caliber.

- f. Off duty weapons and holsters will be inspected by the training staff for functionality and safety issues at the time of qualification.
- g. Officers shall insure that (on duty, off duty and secondary weapons) are properly secured when not actively being carried while on or off duty.

D. SPECIALIZED WEAPONS

- 1) Officers are authorized to carry specialized weapons within the following guidelines:
 - a. Assigned in good standing to the departments SWAT TEAM, CERT TEAM
 - b. Must ensure that officer(s) are current on qualifying with specialized weapon.
 - c. Officers issued specialized weapons that have take home cars are permitted to keep weapons secured inside their locked vault of their locked vehicle during their assigned shifts.

E. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION

- 1) All employees authorized to carry weapons shall be delivered copies of and be instructed in the agency procedures before being authorized to carry a weapon. The delivery and instruction shall be documented.
- 2) Duty Weapon -- Officers are required to qualify on an approved range under the direction of a certified instructor on an annual basis. Officers must also show proficiency in the use of the weapon and understand range and home safety.
- 3) Off-Duty Weapons -- Officers are required to qualify with their approved off-duty weapon on an approved range under the direction of a certified instructor on an annual basis. Officers must show proficiency in the use of the weapon and understand range and home safety. Officer must be able to demonstrate proficiency with both weapon and means of carry. If an officer chooses to change his/her mode of carry, example: ankle to pancake holster, the officer must re-qualify utilizing the new carry method.
- 4) Officers issued department secondary weapons are required to qualify and demonstrate proficiency on an annual basis. Qualification standards will be based upon the type of secondary weapon.
- 5) Qualification for duty and off-duty weapons will be on a pass/fail basis. Courses of instruction for qualification purposes will be from

a lesson plan approved by the Chief of Police. Officers should also participate in decision-making exercises (shoot/don't shoot) and low light exercises as often as practical.

- 6) Failure of Qualification Course -- Officers who fail the qualification course will receive remedial instruction by a certified firearms instructor. The officer will be given one additional opportunity to qualify. If an officer fails to pass after two attempts, he/she will be reassigned to administrative duty.
 - a. Within seven (7) calendar days of the original qualification failure, the officer will receive remedial training consisting of at least four (4) hours of training with a certified firearms instructor and at least two (2) opportunities to qualify. If the officer passes any of the qualification opportunities, then the officer will be restored to regular duty.
 - b. Upon completion of remedial training, the officer will be given one additional opportunity to qualify. A subsequent failure to qualify will result in reassignment to an administrative, non-sworn position pending further action that could include loss of certification and/or separation from employment.
- 7) All firearm qualifications shall be documented by recording the following:
 - a. Date
 - b. Name of the instructor(s)
 - c. Name and employee number of the officer completing the qualification
 - d. The make, model, and serial number of the firearm used
 - e. Number of rounds on the course of fire
 - f. Pass or fail
- 8) The qualification information will be entered into the officer's training record in the Records Management System.

F. INDOOR FIREARMS RANGE

- 1) The purpose of the range is to provide a safe environment to conduct firearms training for Police and Detention personnel.
- 2) Range safety rules to be followed by all persons entering the range:
 - a. A certified firearms instructor will be assigned as the lead instructor and must be present any time the range is occupied. The Instructor may select range officers to assist with the training sessions.
 - b. All occupants will follow all directions given by the instructor and/or range officer(s).
 - c. The Range Ventilation System must be activated any time shooting is taking place.
 - d. Weapons will remain in the holster at all times when not on the firing line, except as directed by a range officer, firearms instructor or armorer.

- e. Un-holstered weapons will be pointed in a safe direction at all times.
 - f. Shooters will not touch the trigger until they have acquired a target and are ready to fire.
 - g. Any officer witnessing an unsafe condition will call out "Cease Fire" three times and immediately notify the instructor.
 - h. If a firearm malfunction occurs, shooters will point their weapon downrange and clear the malfunction. If this fails, then the shooter will raise their non-shooting hand to get the attention of a range officer or instructor.
 - i. Shooters will not cross the firing line to retrieve magazines or other items until instructed to do so by an instructor.
 - j. First aid equipment and fire extinguishers are located at the front of the range. The Training Unit will conduct monthly inspections to ensure functionality.
- 3) Required Personnel Safety Equipment
- a. Shooters and spectators must properly wear approved eye and ear protection.
 - b. All personnel forward of the control booth must wear body armor.
 - c. Handgun shooters must properly wear a holster.
 - d. Rifles and shotguns must have a sling properly attached to the weapon.
- 4) Permitted range equipment
- a. Targets typically consist of paper targets on a target backer provided by the Training Section. A member of the Training Unit must approve any deviation to the target or backer.
 - b. No steel targets are permitted.
- 5) Authorized weapons
- a. Department issued handguns, rifles, and shotguns.
 - b. Off-duty handguns with a caliber no smaller than a 9 millimeter nor larger than a .45 caliber.
 - c. Rifles with a caliber no larger than a 5.56 / .223.
 - d. Unassigned weapons are stored in the Armory located behind the control booth. Only Training Unit personnel, certified firearms instructors and armorers may enter the Armory.
- 6) Ammunition
- a. A member of the Training Unit must approve all ammunition before it is used on the range.
 - b. Department-owned ammunition is stored in the ammunition room beside the control booth. Only Training Unit

personnel, certified firearms instructors, and armorers may enter the ammunition room.

- c. Forbidden ammunition types
 - i. Steel core
 - ii. Tracer or any other incendiary type
 - iii. Armor piercing
 - iv. Re-loaded ammunition
 - v. Explosives of any type (i.e. Tannerite)

G. FINANCIAL RE-IMBURSEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- 1) Reimbursement responsibility – when an officer is found to be negligent for the loss of a City owned weapon(s), by their Chain of Command, they shall be responsible to reimburse the City for the purchase price of a replacement weapon(s).

H. CATASTOPHIC WEAPON MALFUNCTIONS PROTOCOL

- 1) In the event that a weapon malfunctions to the degree that the operator resorts to trained techniques to correct the problem and these techniques fail, or the weapon is inadvertently damaged rendering it unsafe. The operator shall initiate the following protocol;
 - a. Render the weapon safe by clearing the weapon of any live ammunition in a safe manner and holster the weapon (remove magazine and clear the chamber of any ammunition).
 - b. Make immediate notification to a supervisor or if training on the range a firearms instructor.
 - c. The supervisor shall arrange for the weapon to be temporarily or permanently replaced by coordination with the training section.
 - d. The training section shall take possession of the weapon and arrange for a certified armorer to evaluate the extent of the damage and make repairs as necessary.
 - e. After all work has been completed on the weapon a basic functions check and live fire test must be completed to ensure the weapon performs to factory specification before the weapon can be issued for service.

I. ARMORERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) All persons designated as an armorer for our department must successfully attain factory certification specific to the manufacture of the weapon to be worked on, or approved type of weapon platform to be worked on prior to making any corrections to a

weapon to maintain factory specification or approved alterations and modifications. This certification WILL be maintained and WILL NOT be allowed to expire unless authorized by the Chief of Police.

- 2) All department armorers must document all work, alteration or modifications completed by them on a weapon. This documentation is the responsibility of the armorer and will be done in the following manner;
 - a. The armorer will complete a designated form specific to these categories.
 - i. Weapon Type,
 - ii. Manufacture,
 - iii. Weapon Serial Number,
 - iv. Date Work Was Completed,
 - v. Details of reported problem(s) and what was done to correct them,
 - vi. Name of armorer completing the work,
 - vii. Name of officer issued the weapon,
 - viii. Name of firearms Instructor certifying the weapon works to factory specification.
 - b. This documentation will then be input into the training section data base by the armorer or designated training staff member.
 - c. If the department doesn't have a certified armorer to make repairs to a malfunctioning weapon. The work needing to be done can be completed by an approved outside vendor that holds accredited certification for the specific weapon type