

**COVINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE**

**Subject: FIREARMS REGULATIONS / FIRING RANGE USE AND RULES**

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**I. Purpose**

To provide guidelines governing firearms issued to police personnel; to establish rules for carrying firearms on and off duty; and to provide criteria for the training of police personnel with department issued firearms.

**II. Scope**

This policy shall apply to all authorized firearms and ammunition carried by department personnel on or off duty and shall govern the training, authorization to carry, and inspection procedures.

**III. Authorization and Approval to Use Firearms**

- A. Officers must have written authorization for any firearm carried on-duty and must have written authorization for any firearm carried off-duty when acting under the color of law.

This subsection is not intended to limit the rights of an officer to carry firearms off-duty in the same manner as unrestricted citizens, but rather to define the authorization to carry a firearm under the color of law.

- B. To obtain authorization to carry a department issued firearm, an officer must successfully complete the Covington Police Department Firearm Training Program and meet the firearms qualification standards. Written authorization will be granted at the completion of the training program.

- C. To obtain authorization to carry any other firearms, officers must complete each of the following requirements.

1. The officer will submit form PD100 along with the firearm and fifty rounds of practice ammunition and fifty rounds of jacketed hollow point ammunition to the department armorer.
2. The department armorer will submit written findings and recommendation on the firearm.
3. The officer will demonstrate proficiency with the firearm and will participate in the live fire course designed for that firearm.
4. The weapon officers carry off-duty must be always loaded with approved ammunition.

5. The officer will present form PD100 for the Chief's approval to carry the firearm.
- D. All records regarding firearms, ammunition, authorization to carry, and training shall be maintained by the departmental armorer.

#### **IV. Authorized On-Duty Firearms and Ammunition**

- A. Issued firearms for all sworn police personnel will be a Glock, 9mm caliber semiautomatic pistol (model 17 or 19). All officers will also be issued a Glock model 43 subcompact as a backup weapon.
- B. Ammunition for department issued 9mm caliber firearms will be quality factory ammunition from a major manufacturer .124 grain jacketed hollow point bullets provided by the department rangemaster.
- C. Ammunition for department issued .38 caliber firearms will be quality factory ammunition from a major manufacturer 125 grain jacketed hollow point bullets provided by the department rangemaster.
- E. Ammunition for department issued .223 caliber rifles will be quality factory ammunition from a major manufacturer .55 grain ballistic tip, hollow point or comparable rounds provided by the department rangemaster.
- F. Any department issued on-duty ammunition which may become unavailable due to nationwide ammunition shortages will be replaced with available, similar ammunition which has been evaluated by the departmental rangemaster and approved by the Chief of Police.
- G. Authorization to carry any other firearm on duty may be made for personnel when the nature of their work dictates such (e.g., ESU, narcotics investigations, and Administration.) In such exceptions, officers must comply with Section III.C. Authorization will be granted only for that firearm and ammunition.

#### **V. Authorized Off-Duty Firearms and Ammunition**

- A. Police personnel are allowed to carry department issued firearms and approved ammunition while off-duty. To carry any other firearm and ammunition while off-duty and acting under the color of law, the officer must comply with Section III.C.
- B. Revolvers are limited to 38 special or 357 magnum and must be capable of holding five to six rounds and fire double action. Pistols are limited to 9mm, 40, 45, and 380, calibers and must be capable of holding six rounds and fire conventional double action or double action only. (No single action weapons).

#### **VI. Support Firearms**

- A. The department has available to sworn officers a Remington 870 12-gauge shotgun to be used as a support weapon. The shotguns are available on a checkout, check-in basis as approved by the officer's Lieutenant or Sergeant and must be checked back in at the end of the shift.
- B. Ammunition available for the shotgun will be quality factory ammunition from a major manufacturer 00 buckshot (8 pellets) law enforcement reduced recoil provided by the rangemaster.

- C. Officers are totally responsible for safe handling, storage, and return of the weapon when it is issued to them. Officers that are issued a shotgun must qualify with the issued shotgun during the annual shotgun qualification.

**VII. Firearms Restrictions**

- A. No department owned firearm will be subjected to any alteration without written permission of the department armorer, and written approval of the Chief of Police.
- B. No trigger shoes will be allowed on any authorized firearm.
- C. All authorized firearms will be maintained in a safe working condition.
- D. Officers are responsible for the safe storage of all authorized firearms and ammunition while on or off duty. Officers are expected to secure their weapons in a safe condition at home to prevent unauthorized access.
- E. Only authorized firearms and ammunition will be allowed in the performance of duty.

**VIII. Firearms Maintenance and Inspection**

- A. All department-owned firearms shall be inspected for safe and proper operation annually by the department armorer. Any weapon found in a condition contrary to the above shall be removed from duty and repaired immediately. A replacement weapon may be used in the event repairs may be delayed. A complete armorer's breakdown and inspection will be done as needed.
- B. All repairs and maintenance performed on department owned weapons will be done by the department armorer.
- C. Officers that have a problem or malfunction with a department issued weapon will notify their supervisor and contact the department armorer.

**IX. Discharge of Firearm - Written Report Required**

- A. An officer who discharges a firearm either accidentally or on purpose other than in training or recreational purpose must submit a Police Response to Aggression/Resistance Report to his immediate supervisor before the end of their watch. (See D for exception).
- B. The report should describe the circumstances surrounding the incident. Supervisor should forward a copy of all reports regarding the discharge of firearms to the firearms instructors for review.

- C. If it is determined that the officer was negligent in firing of the weapon, disciplinary action may be taken, and the officer may be required to undergo remedial firearms training.
- D. If an officer discharges his firearm to destroy a sick or injured animal, he must complete an incident report detailing the circumstances of the incident.

**X. Firing Range Use and Rules**

**A.** The purpose of the range is for firearms and tactics training, firearms practice, and weapons qualifications. Use of the range must be approved by the Training Supervisor/Range Master. Covington Police officers who serve as range supervisors will complete General Instructor Training and Firearms Instructor Training as required by Georgia POST. The following range rules apply to all individuals authorized to use the firing range.

1. The departmental Rangemaster or other certified firearms instructor(s) will serve as the range supervisor during all times the range is in use by Covington Police Department personnel. The range supervisor will review the safety procedures and range rules prior to every training event. The range supervisor will be trained in first aid.
2. Personnel reporting to the range will be directed to unload and reload weapons under the direction of a range supervisor or other range officer assigned to the training event. Under no circumstances should anyone attempt to load or unload any weapon in the parking lot or in any vehicle.
3. Range Officers may inspect any weapon for safety, cleanliness, and proper operation, before allowing the weapon on the firing line.
4. All persons must check in and out with the Range Officer.
5. Ear and eye protection must be worn at all times while on the firing line.
6. Only shooters and instructors are allowed on the firing line.
7. No weapons will be stored at the range. The Training Supervisor may authorize the storage of ammunition at the range. If stored at the range, all ammunition will be stored and secured in areas designated for such storage.
8. Metal reactive targets are not to be shot any closer than 10 yards with handguns, 15 yards with shotguns. No targeting equipment or targets may be used unless approved by the Rangemaster.
9. Shotgun slugs and metal piercing ammunition are prohibited when using metal targets.
10. All courses and methods of fire must be approved by the Training Coordinator or Rangemaster.
11. Each shooter is responsible for clean-up of his firing position, surrounding area, and returning all range equipment to its proper storage area.
12. Dry firing will be allowed only at the direction of a Range Officer.
13. Loaded weapons will not be left unattended on the firing line.

14. Weapons will be always kept in the holster unless otherwise directed by a Range Officer.
15. Fingers will be kept out of the trigger guard of all weapons until the weapon is on target and the shooter is ready to fire.
16. No one will be allowed forward of the firing line or allowed to pick up items near the firing line until the line is declared safe by a Range Officer.
17. Firing at objects that are not designated as targets is prohibited.
18. Range Officers will check and clear all weapons before shooters move from the firing line.
19. Any questions regarding range safety procedures, range rules, operation of equipment, and general procedures should be directed toward a Range Officer.
20. All decisions and or orders given by the Rangemaster or range supervisor, while on the range, are final.
21. The Training Supervisor may allow other agencies to use the firearms facility. Before approval is granted, the Training Supervisor will ensure the requesting agency signs a memorandum of understanding that:
  - a. The agency will follow the range guidelines.
  - b. That a certified firearms instructor will be present while the agency is conducting firearms training.
  - c. The requesting agency is responsible for cleaning up and securing the firearms facility when training is completed
  - d. The agency is responsible for any damage done to the facility or any equipment within the facility, other than what might be done in the regular course of firearms training. The agreement, once signed by the agency representative, the Training Supervisor, and the Chief of Police, will remain in effect as long as the signing individual is employed at the requesting agency.

***This SOP supersedes any SOP previously issued.***

BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

**Stacey L. Cotton**  
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Chief of Police