



# California University of Pennsylvania

## POLICY: HANDLING AND STORAGE OF FIREARMS

- A. Purpose & Scope:** The purpose of this policy is to direct California University Police Personnel on the proper storage and handling of departmental weapons and those weapons that are held by this department for safe storage from various campus entities, students, staff members, faculty and visitors to the campus. The most critical aspect of any firearms policy is to ensure the safety of the university community and the absolute understanding that each police officer willingly assumes the responsibility of wearing and carrying firearms in the performance of their duties, and strictly adheres to the precepts of safe handling.

This directive shall apply to all commissioned California University of Pennsylvania police officers and other departmental employees.

- B. Definition(s):** N/A

- C. Policy:** It shall be policy that every member shall exercise extreme caution and follow national best practices with regards to the handling of any firearm while on university property or under the cover of the California University Police Department uniform or the identification and badge of California University; whether immediately before, during, or after his/her tour of duty, as well as during authorized firearms qualification training.

- D. Procedure(s):**

### 1. General Information and Guidelines

#### A. General Information

1. Only *commissioned* police officers will carry firearms, while on-duty, after having qualified and successfully completed and maintained training as stipulated by the Chief of Police and industry standards.
2. Commissioned police officers of the department will carry those firearms and ammunition authorized by the Chief of Police or departmental directives.
3. Commissioned police officers while in uniform shall be armed at all times while on duty.
4. Officers shall use only department-issued or approved holsters as directed by the Chief. While on duty, members shall wear the authorized service firearm on their person and in the authorized holster.

5. Commissioned officers while on or off-duty shall only carry those firearms and ammunition with which they have demonstrated proficiency by completing an approved firearms qualification course, and only those firearms which have been authorized by the Chief of Police.
6. Only Department approved ammunition will be carried and/or used while on duty. Officers are responsible for damages incurred to their issued weapon while using ammunition other than that issued or approved by the department firearms instructor.
7. It shall be the duty of each officer to maintain his/her firearm, for both on and off duty use, in a good operating condition at all times. Firearms must be clean and oiled so as to ensure the proper working mechanism.
8. Any officer whose firearm shows evidence of unauthorized modification, neglect or abuse shall be subject to disciplinary action and may preclude the officer from carrying the firearm, either on or off-duty.
9. Firearms are obviously a tool used for the safety and security of the campus community and must be handled with extreme care and not mishandled nor drawn or pointed unless there is a clear danger to human life, or on a firing range. Weapons may be drawn for maintenance procedures and must be rendered safe immediately by unloading the magazine and emptying the chamber. Weapons may be drawn for the destruction of animals when reasonable means of care have been exhausted (see Directive #10 – Use of Force). Any careless, flippant or casual use or display of a firearm will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.
10. Carelessness, horseplay or disregard for the safety of others in the use, handling or storage of firearms is strictly prohibited and will subject offenders to disciplinary action. Each officer is responsible to properly secure their weapon when it is not in their direct physical control, in particular when storing the weapon at their residence. Department issued weapons may not be stored within an officer's personal vehicle at any time except for transportation to/from work.
11. Officers having occasion to draw or use a weapon will notify a supervisor as soon as possible and follow Directive # 10, Use of Force Policy. The Use of Deadly force policy will be reviewed annually at department qualifications (at minimum), and by the shift supervisor on a continual basis during roll-call training for officer development. **(PLEAC 1.3.10)(a)**
12. All officers will become familiar and remain current with federal and state legislation pertaining to use of force/deadly force and the departmental Directive on the Use of Force (Directive # 10).
13. The carrying of an unauthorized "back up firearm" while on duty is prohibited.
14. Firearms may not be modified by the officer. The department armorer, the manufacturer, manufacturer's service representative or a licensed gunsmith must repair any firearm needing repaired. All documented work must be forwarded to the department Firearms Instructor.
15. Police officers assigned to civilian clothing, commonly referred to as "plain-clothes assignment" will carry their firearms in a proper holster with the department issued badge visible or under a recognizable sign of authority.
16. Training officers will inspect officers' weapons, ammunition, and leather gear to assure it meets with Department standards. Weapons will be kept clean and serviceable at all times. Leather gear will be kept clean and serviceable.

17. No employees, except commissioned police officers, are authorized or permitted to have a firearm or edged weapon in his/her possession or under his/her control while performing university duties, regardless of whether that person has a valid permit to carry a weapon. No person except commissioned officers are permitted to bring a weapon onto University property in the course of their employment, unless the weapon is signed into and stored in the weapons locker as prescribed in the university code of conduct.

**B. Shotguns**

1. The Department shotguns are considered auxiliary weapons. Department-issued or authorized ammunition will be used in these weapons. The Chief or firearms Supervisor may approve exceptions to this rule for the purpose of practice.
2. Carrying a department issued shotgun while on duty is permitted and encouraged; but only under the principles and edicts set forth in directive.
3. Any officer carrying a department issued shotgun in the course of their normal tour of duty must first successfully complete the shotgun qualification course.
4. Shotguns shall be “cruiser ready” and secured in the departmentally issued transporting case to and from the police vehicles. Shotguns must be secured and locked in the provided securing device, within the passenger compartment. Weapons may be stored in the trunk for transportation in the appropriate transportation case, as well, provided:
  - the magazine is loaded to full capacity – “Cruiser Ready” with 5 rounds of “00” buck in the magazine tube and 4 rounds of rifled slug in the speed feed stock
  - no shell is stored in the chamber, and
  - with the safety in the “on” position—“cruiser ready”
5. These vehicles have a quick-release feature easily accessible from within the vehicle. Storage locks for weapons are also easily defeatable and for this reason, officers are not permitted to let engines running while the vehicle is unattended or unoccupied, nor are officers permitted to let the keys remain in the ignition or in the vehicle when it is unattended.
6. If an officer’s patrol vehicle becomes disabled, the shotgun shall be returned to the shift supervisor for inspection and storage. If the departmentally issued shotgun is damaged in any manner through use or transport while in the vehicle, it shall be taken out of service, inspected and repaired if necessary.
7. At the conclusion of the shift, weapons may remain in the vehicle provided the interior storage lock is fully engaged and locked with the weapon secure. Officers must take precautions to ensure the vehicle is locked and secured when the vehicle is parked. The keys must be removed from the vehicle and not remain in the ignition. Weapons are not permitted to be stored in a vehicle during maintenance or repair and must be removed from the vehicle and returned to the station armory.
8. Removal of department issued shot guns from their secured area in the trunk or passenger compartment for other than authorized purposes such as tactical use, transportation in and out of the station, training and qualification, inspection or cleaning and maintenance is **unauthorized**.

9. When an officer deploys the shotgun from the vehicle, under circumstances where the weapon must be ready for immediate use, the officer will cycle the action to chamber a round.
10. The shotguns safety shall be kept engaged until the decision to fire is made.
11. When the shotgun is no longer needed to be ready for immediate use, weapon shall be unloaded, with all of the shotguns shells being removed, and once it is deemed clear, it shall again be “cruiser-ready” loaded with 5 rounds of 00 buck being placed into the tube, with no rounds be charged into the firing mechanism. This operation shall be performed in a safe location, with the safety engaged and the muzzle pointed in a safe direction

**C. Patrol Rifles:**

1. The Department patrol rifles are considered auxiliary weapons. Department-issued or authorized ammunition will be used in these weapons. The Chief or firearms instructor may approve exceptions to this rule for the purpose of practice.
2. Carrying a department issued rifle while on duty is permitted and encouraged; but only under the principles and edicts set forth in directive.
3. Any officer carrying a department issued rifle in the course of their normal tour of duty must first successfully complete the shotgun qualification course.
4. Rifles shall be “cruiser ready” and secured in the departmentally issued transporting case to and from the police vehicles. Rifles must be secured and locked in the provided securing device, within the passenger compartment of the vehicle, while on patrol. Weapons may be stored in the trunk for transportation in the appropriate transportation case, as well, provided:
  - the magazine is loaded to a **28 round** capacity
  - no shell is stored in the chamber, and
  - with the safety in the “on” position—“cruiser ready”
5. These vehicles have a quick-release feature that is easily accessible from within the vehicle. Storage locks for weapons are also easily defeatable and for these reasons, officers are not permitted to let engines running while the vehicle is unattended or unoccupied.
6. If an officer’s vehicle becomes disabled, the rifle shall be returned to the shift supervisor for inspection and storage. If the departmentally issued rifle is damaged in any manner through use or transport while in the vehicle, it shall be taken out of service, inspected and repaired if necessary. A report documenting the circumstance of damage must also be submitted.
7. At the conclusion of the shift, all weapons may remain in the vehicle provided the interior storage lock is fully engaged, locked and the weapon is secure. Officers must take precautions to ensure the vehicle is locked and secured when the vehicle is parked at the station. The keys must be removed from the vehicle and are not permitted to remain in the ignition. Weapons are not permitted to be stored in a vehicle during maintenance or repair and must be removed from the vehicle and returned to the station armory.
8. Removal of department issued rifles from their secured area in the trunk or passenger compartment for other than authorized purposes such as tactical use, transportation in and out of the station, training and qualification, inspection or cleaning and maintenance is **unauthorized**.

9. When an officer deploys the patrol rifle from the vehicle under circumstances where the patrol rifle must be ready for immediate use, the officer will cycle the action to chamber a round.
10. The patrol rifle safety shall be kept engaged until the decision to fire is made.
11. When the patrol rifle is no longer needed to be ready for immediate use, the magazine shall be removed from the chamber and replaced into the magazine, and the patrol rifle returned to a “cruiser ready” condition. This shall be performed in a safe location, with the safety engaged and the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.

#### **D. Firearms Qualification**

1. Courses of fire used for qualification will be designed in an attempt to best prepare officers for objective situations at California University. These courses will use the MPOTEC Annual Firearm Qualification Program Manual as a guideline.
2. Members of the department must successfully qualify with department weapons prior to being commissioned.
3. Commissioned officers must qualify or familiarize with department weapons three (3) times a year and **must** adhere to MPOETC standards. One (1) familiarization will be during low-light conditions.
4. Ammunition for qualification will be department issued or approved and of the same type as to be carried by the officer while on duty.
5. Officers will be introduced to the range master and range officers. *The range master is in charge.* Each officer will receive instructions on the safe handling of weapons and range safety each time an instruction session is conducted and/or qualifications are held. If range master identifies an unsafe condition, the remedy will be the decision of said master. This can be, up to and including, removal of condition or shooter from the range.
6. A qualification period will be designated. (The qualification period will begin on the first scheduled date of fire to the last scheduled date, plus two days of “refire”, inclusive, or until all officers have passed qualification, whichever comes first). Officers will be given a maximum of two (2) attempts per scheduled date. If refire dates are required the officer(s) will be permitted a maximum of two (2) attempts per date(s).
7. Officers will be scheduled according to the efficient operations of the department.
8. The trainer and shooter shall receive compensation at the appropriate rate. Officers failing to qualify within the qualifying period will be assigned by the Chief to alternative duty, until they have passed the required qualification. Remedial training will include but is not limited to use of force, safety, and basic shooting skills. The shooter must re-shoot the portion of the course that was failed. As soon as the shooter qualifies, as certified by a department trainer, restoration to regular duties will be implemented. Failure to qualify after two re-fire attempts may subject an officer to permanent removal from the department, for failure to meet minimum industry standards as required by MPOETC. **(PLEAC 1.3.10)(c)**
9. The Department Firearms Instructor will maintain copies of all officer qualifications. These results may be reflected in the Officer’s annual performance evaluation. **(PLEAC 1.3.10)(d)**

10. A review will be conducted, upon the completion of each qualification, with recommendations supplied to the Chief, by the trainers, as to training requirements and or improvements

**E. The Department will provide:**

1. Officers *may* receive ammunition for the purpose of firearms practice. This will be accomplished within budgetary limitations. Said ammunition may be factory or factory reloads. It must meet with department requirements as to shot placement, recoil, etc. Officers receiving practice ammunition must turn in empty casings after practice sessions.
2. Officers experiencing problems qualifying may also receive written instruction by a training officer, indicating problems to work on.
3. The department will provide each officer with ear and eye protection. (Officers may substitute, at their own expense, this equipment with equipment meeting or exceeding safety standards.)

**2. STORAGE OF DEPARTMENT ISSUED FIREARMS**

- A. All closets, gun lockers, and any location firearms are kept should be locked and secured at *ALL TIMES*.
- B. Department issued weapons left on University property must be stored in a secure area that is provided.
- C. Officers are authorized to carry their approved duty weapon while off-duty, but must do so in conformance with the applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures of this department, as well as existing Pennsylvania and Federal Law. The follow guidelines will be met:
  1. Members carrying weapons off-duty should have in their possession their badge and Commission identification card.
  2. Members will not leave their departmental issue firearm in an unattended vehicle.
  3. Firearms must be secured in a responsible place and manner while away from campus.
  4. Members off university duty shall not use the department issued weapon for other employment.
  5. Anytime a departmental owned and issued firearm is lost, taken, or stolen in a burglary or theft, a police report shall be filed immediately in the jurisdiction where the incident occurred immediately upon discovery that it has been compromised. The member will also contact the on duty supervisor and inform him or her of the situation. The on duty supervisor will complete an incident report and forward it up the chain of command. The on duty supervisor will also notify the Chief of Police of the incident.

**3. STORAGE OF NON-DEPARTMENT ISSUED FIREARMS**

- A. All closets, gun lockers, and any location where firearms are kept should be locked and secured at *ALL TIMES*.
- B. Weapons stored and secured at the department will be logged in and out. Weapons are to be handled and stored in a safe/unloaded condition at all times. Photo

Identification will be required before weapons are returned to owner. Students, staff and visitors must complete a firearms identification sheet and all information must be kept current.

1. Student's hunting rifles, shotguns, and other hunting style weapons will be stored and secured at the department.
2. Other weapons may be temporarily stored in a secured fashion for visitors coming to campus, who may not have been aware of University Policy on deadly weapons.

**Sources:**

ACPD, CMU, SRUPD, RFD, Berks County Sheriff's Dept

**E. Effective date:** February 12, 2013

**Amended Date:**