



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION SERVICES

DIRECTIVE

NUMBER: 09-02

January 26, 2009

TO: All Fire and Explosive Investigations Section Personnel

FROM: Division Chief Michael T. Love, Fire Marshal

SUBJECT: Firearms

I. Goal. A goal of the Fire and Explosive Investigations (FEI) Section is to provide all investigators with quality firearms, ammunition, and professional training to ensure that they acquire and maintain firearm proficiency and safety.

II. Authorization to Carry a Firearm.

A. All Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission (MPCTC)-certified FEI investigators are authorized to carry a firearm, and must comply with all requirements established in this Directive.

B. The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) Fire Chief may authorize other FEI personnel to carry a firearm. Those personnel must:

1. apply for and receive a Permit to carry a handgun from the State of Maryland before they can carry a firearm as an FEI representative; and
2. comply with all sections of this Directive.

III. Armorer. The Montgomery County Police (MCP) Armorer will also serve as the MCFRS FEI Armorer.

IV. Investigator Responsibilities.

A. On-duty investigators are armed with the Department-issued handgun, which they will carry on their person whenever they leave the FEI facility. When in plainclothes, investigators must conceal their weapons from view except when inside a police or FEI facility/area. Investigators must carry a total of fifteen rounds of ammunition in their handgun - fourteen in the magazine, and one in the chamber. Each additional magazine will carry fifteen rounds. The FEI

Section Chief may make an exception for investigators on special details or assignments.

- A. Off-duty investigators may carry the Department-issued handgun, or any approved handgun listed in Section V., B.1 of this Directive if the investigator has met the qualification requirements for that model weapon.
- B. An investigators must obtain the prior written approval of the FEI Armorer and the FEI Section Chief for each off-duty or back-up weapon the investigator carries.
- C. Investigators must keep all authorized weapons clean, free of rust, and in good working condition.
- D. While in a police or FEI facility, investigators must use clearing barrels each time they load and unload their weapons, including during inspections.
- E. In addition to the Department-issued handgun, only one Department-approved handgun will be authorized for off-duty use.

V. Handguns

- A. Department-issued weapons will be used only for law enforcement purposes and related activities, private range practice, and Department-approved firearms competition. Investigators must not use their Department-issued weapons for hunting or any other activity unless they have obtained prior written permission from the FEI Section Chief.
- B. Non-Department issued handguns authorized for off-duty or back-up use must meet the criteria below.
 - 1. Make and Model: Must be a .40 caliber Glock
 - 2. Specifications:
 - a. Semi-automatic handgun.
 - b. Double-action only.
 - c. No external safety or decocking lever.
 - d. Minimum 8lb. trigger pull.
 - e. A non-shiny finish.
 - f. Three magazines are required for training and qualifying purposes.

- g. Extended magazines are not permitted. Magazines must be standard/factory issue, and must be specified for that particular weapon. While on duty, investigators are authorized to carry a total of two spare magazines in addition to the one in the issued handgun. All spare magazines must be carried in a pouch designed to protect the open end of the magazine from damage, lint, etc. Additional magazines for Department-issued or back-up handguns must be stored in a secure area of an FEI vehicle.
 - h. Fixed, adjustable, or night sights are authorized if they do not interfere with holstering or drawing the weapon.
- C. Investigators are prohibited from modifying or adding any accessories to a Department-authorized handgun without the prior written approval of the FEI Section Chief and the FEI Armorer.

VI. Holsters.

- A. When carrying their Department-issued handgun on duty, investigators may wear and use either the Department-issued holster or an alternate holster purchased at their own expense. An alternate holster must meet or exceed the security standard of the Department-issued holster.
- B. While on duty, plainclothes investigators may use a Department-approved “fanny pack” style pouch to carry their Department-issued handgun, if that pouch is designed to conceal the handgun, and has a Velcro or zippered fastener to secure the weapon.
- C. An investigator who carries the Department-issued handgun off-duty, or a personally-owned and approved handgun off-duty or as a back-up, must use a holster that meets or exceeds the security standard of the Department-issued holster. Department-approved “fanny pack” style pouches are also authorized for off-duty use.
- D. Investigators authorized to carry personally-owned handguns for off-duty and back-up weapon use must supply their own holsters for those handguns.
- E. Except for MCFRS Bomb Squad operations, investigators are not authorized to use ankle holsters or thigh holsters.
- F. Shoulder holsters may be used, but the Department will not issue them. When used, they must be concealed, and must meet or exceed the security standard of other Department-issued holsters.

VII. Shotguns.

- A. Authorization to carry and use a shotgun is based on successful completion of shotgun training and on-going qualification.

- B. Investigators are prohibited from modifying or adding any accessories to a Department-authorized shotgun without the prior written approval of the FEI Section Chief and FEI Armorer. The addition of slings - other than those issued by the Department - ammunition carriers, magazine extenders, or any other modification or accessory of any type to the issued shotgun is prohibited.
- C. The guideline below apply to investigators who transport and handle shotguns.
 - 1. Shotguns must be locked in the trunk or caged cargo area of the investigator's vehicle and must be secured in a Department-issued hard case.
 - 2. While transporting the shotgun, the chamber must be empty, the magazine loaded with four rounds, and the safety will be off. The investigator must not chamber a shotgun round until the weapon is to be used in a situation.
 - 3. When storing the weapon at the residence or FEI facility locker, investigators must use a Department-issued trigger lock compliant with established training procedures.
 - 4. Investigators must use only Department-approved shotguns and ammunition.

VIII. Qualifying.

- A. Each FEI investigator must qualify using the Department-issued handgun, in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the MCP and the MPCTC.
- B. Each FEI investigator who carries an authorized off-duty or back-up handgun must qualify with that handgun, in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the MCP and the MPCTC.
- C. Each FEI investigator may qualify with the Department-issued shotgun, in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the MCP and the MPCTC. The method used to determine "qualified" will be a course established by the Director, MCP Training Academy, and approved by the MPCTC.
- D. When an FEI investigator is issued a replacement handgun, the investigator must qualify with that handgun within 30 calendar days of its receipt, and in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the MCP and the MPCTC. The method used to determine "qualified" will be a course established by the Director, MCP Training Academy, and approved by the MPCTC.
- E. The Director of the MCP Training Academy will notify the FEI Section Chief if any investigator fails to qualify with the Department-issued handgun, authorized off-duty handgun, or Department-issued shotgun. If the investigator fails to qualify, the FEI Section Chief will ensure that the investigator receives remedial training and qualifies within 30 calendar days.

IX. Ammunition.

- A. Investigators will use only factory ammunition that is identical to the type issued by the Department. Using reloaded ammunition is strictly forbidden.
- B. Investigators who carry a personally-owned and approved off-duty or back-up handgun must provide, at their own cost, ammunition that meets the requirements indicated above.

X. Firearms Inspection.

- A. The FEI Safety Officer or designee will conduct and document on FEI Form #604, *Quarterly Handgun Inspection Form*, a quarterly inspection of all weapons carried on-duty by investigators. The FEI Form # 604 will be retained in the section safety files retained by the FEI Safety Officer. It is the FEI Safety Officer's responsibility to ensure that any deficiencies in appearance or working condition found during the quarterly inspections are corrected as soon as possible.
- B. The MCP range instructor may inspect each weapon before investigators qualify. Any defect will be reported to the FEI Section Chief.

XI. Firearms Repair.

- A. Only the FEI Armorer or designee will repair Department-issued firearms. When a firearm needs repair, the investigator to whom it is assigned must take it to the FEI Armorer. If the firearm cannot be repaired immediately, the Department will replace it.
- B. The FEI Armorer will not repair an investigator's personally-owned off-duty or back-up handgun. The investigator is responsible for all maintenance and repair costs of their personally-owned off-duty or back-up handgun.

XII. Firearms Security. When not being worn by the investigator or in their immediate control, all Department-issued or -authorized firearms must be secured by a trigger lock or barrel lock, and stored in a manner that will deter unauthorized use or theft.

XIII. Directive Revision. When a new MCP Department Directive or Headquarters Memorandum is issued that affects MCP Function Code 305.A, Weapon, Handguns, and Holsters, January 15, 1995, the FEI Section Chief will determine its applicability and will amend this Directive as required, subject to the Collective Bargaining Law and to the negotiated Agreement.