



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

DIVISION OF RISK REDUCTION SERVICES
DIRECTIVE

DATE: June 27, 2013

NUMBER: 13-01

TO: All Fire and Explosive Investigations Section Personnel

FROM: Division Chief David Steckel *DL Steckel*
Fire Marshal

SUBJECT: Firearms

I. Goal

The goal of the Fire and Explosive Investigations (FEI) Section is to provide all investigators with quality firearms, ammunition, and professional training to ensure that firearm proficiency and safety is acquired and maintained.

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 set forth 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 shall serve as the FEI armorer.

IV. Investigator Responsibilities

- A. On-duty investigators will be armed only with the department issued handgun which will be carried on their person whenever they leave the FEI facility. When in plainclothes, investigators will conceal their weapons from view except when

inside a police or FEI facility/area. Investigators will carry a total of fifteen (15) rounds (14 in the magazine and 1 in the chamber) of ammunition in their handgun. Each additional magazine will carry fifteen (15) rounds. The FEI Section Chief may make exception for investigators on special details or assignments.

- B. Off-duty investigators may carry the department issued handgun or any approved handgun (listed in Section V., B.1) if the investigator has met the qualification requirements for the model weapon.
- C. Investigators will have each off-duty or back-up weapon they carry approved by the FEI armorer and the FEI Section Chief.
- D. Investigator will keep all authorized weapons clean, free of rust, and in good working condition.
- E. While in a police or FEI facility, investigators will use clearing barrels each time they load and unload their weapons, including during inspections.
- F. Only one department approved handgun, in addition to the department issued handgun, will be authorized for use off-duty.

V. Handguns

- A. Department issued weapons will only be used for law enforcement purposes and related activities, private range practice, and department approved firearms competition. Investigators will not use their department issued weapons for hunting or any other activity without first having received written permission from the FEI Section Chief.
- B. Non-department issued handguns authorized for off duty or back-up use must meet the criteria found in Attachment A of the Police Department's Joint Health and Safety Committee's July 13, 2007, Memorandum to the Montgomery County Police Chief, attached hereto.

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 that they have purchased at their own expense. Any 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, provided that the pouch was originally designed to conceal a handgun and that it has a secure Velcro or zippered method of retaining the weapon. All "fanny pack" style pouches must have this method of securing a weapon.

- C. Any 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 who are authorized to carry personally owned handguns for off-duty and back-up weapon use must supply their own holsters for those handguns.
- E. With the exception of MCFRS Bomb Squad operations, investigators are not authorized to use ankle holsters or thigh holsters.
- F. Shoulder holsters may be used but will not be issued by the department. Shoulder holsters must meet or exceed the security standard of the department issued holsters and must be concealed.

VII. Shotguns

- A. All shotguns will only be utilized by investigators who have received training and have qualified with those shotguns
- B. Investigators are strictly prohibited from making any modifications or adding any accessories to any department authorized shotgun without the 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 whatsoever to the issued shotgun is prohibited.
- C. The following guidelines will apply to those investigators who transport and handle shotguns:
 - 1. Shotguns will be locked in the trunk or caged cargo area of the investigator’s vehicle and will be secured in a department issued hard case.
 - 2. While transporting the shotgun, the chamber will be empty, the magazine will be loaded with four rounds, and the safety will be off. The investigator will refrain from chambering a shotgun round until the weapon is to be employed in a situation.
 - 3. When storing the weapon at the residence or FEI facility locker, investigators are encouraged to use a department issued trigger lock in accordance with established training procedures.
 - 4. Only those investigators who have successfully completed shotgun training and maintain their shotgun qualification are authorized to carry

and use a shotgun. These investigators are restricted to using only those shotguns and ammunition approved for use by the department.

VIII. Qualification

- A. Each FEI investigator will qualify with the department issued handgun in accordance with the qualification requirements set forth by MCP and the Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission (MPCTC).
- B. Each FEI investigator who carries an authorized off-duty or back-up handgun will qualify with that handgun in accordance with the qualification requirements set forth by MCP and MPCTC.
- C. Each FEI investigator may qualify with the department issued shotgun in accordance with the qualification requirements set forth by MCP and 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 will qualify with that handgun, within 30 calendar days of receipt and in accordance with the qualification requirements set forth by the MCP and 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 shotgun. The FEI Section Chief will ensure that the investigator receives remedial training and qualifies within 30 calendar days.

IX. Ammunition

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

X. Firearm Inspection

- A. The FEI Safety Officer or his 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 investigator may inspect each weapon prior to investigators qualifying. Any defect will be reported to the FEI Section Chief.

XI. Firearm Repair

- A. No person, with the exception of a designated FEI armorer or his designee, will repair department-issued firearms. When a firearm is in need of repair, the investigator must take it to the FEI armorer. If the firearm cannot be repaired immediately, it will be replaced by the department.
- 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 relating to their personally owned off-duty or back-up handgun.

XII. Firearm Security

When not being worn on their person or in immediate control of the Investigator, all department issued or authorized firearms will be secured by means of a trigger lock or barrel lock and stored in such a manner as to deter unauthorized use or theft.