



COTTAGE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER

SUBJECT: **RIFLE PROGRAM**

NEW REVISED RESCINDS

APPROVED: *CB*

C. BATENGA
ACTING CHIEF OF POLICE

Effective Date 12/1/2019

This General Order consists of the following numbered sections:

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Section I: Purpose

This General Order establishes guidelines and procedures for the carrying, deploying, storing, inspecting, and officer selection of Department issued and/or approved personally owned patrol rifles.

Section II: Policy

- A. Recognizing that patrol officers are not equipped to safely address threats from persons wearing body armor and/or who are at distances beyond the effective range of standard issue police pistols and shotguns, the Patrol Rifle Program has been implemented to address such threats and enhance police officer and public safety.
- B. To ensure that members of the Patrol Rifle Program maintain skill levels required by the Department, the Patrol Rifle Program members shall successfully complete a Maryland Police Training Commission approved training course, and any additional training directed by the Chief of Police prior to being approved to carry a patrol rifle on duty.

Section III: Patrol Rifles

- A. It is the responsibility of each officer to maintain his/her issued or personally owned and approved patrol rifle in a clean and serviceable condition.
- B. Officers will not modify or alter a Department issued patrol rifle, unless granted approval from the Chief of Police.
- C. An officer who has been certified with the patrol rifle may be issued a Department Patrol rifle for use during his/her tour of duty at the discretion of the supervisor. If the officer is not granted permission to store rifle at residence, the officer MUST:
 - 1. Be issued patrol rifle at roll call and surrendered at the end of the Officer's tour of duty.
 - 2. At no time will an officer who has not qualified with a Department authorized patrol rifle be issued or otherwise carry a patrol rifle.
 - 3. The Chief of Police shall supply all supervisors with a list of those officers qualified to carry a patrol rifle by January 31st of each year.
 - 4. It is the responsibility of supervisors to insure that patrol rifles are issued properly and that the appropriate forms are completed.
- D. Should an officer's issued or personally owned patrol rifle need repair, he/she shall submit written notification to his/her supervisor. The supervisor will arrange for the prompt repair of Department owned rifles by an approved armorer/gunsmith and shall, when necessary and available, issued the officer a replacement patrol rifle while his/her patrol

rifle is being repaired. Officers whose personally owned patrol rifle needs repair shall have the rifle repaired at their own expense. Personally owned rifles must be inspected by a Department approved armorer prior to being returned to service after repair.

E. Carrying issued or personally owned approved Patrol Rifles

1. Officers shall not be authorized to carry any firearm until such a time as they have been issued copies of and been instructed in the Department's use of force policies and guidelines as described in Department General Order 5-2.

2. Officers shall carry their issued and/or personally owned authorized patrol rifle, ammunition and issued or approved accessories at all times while on duty. Refer to Section III. D. 11, below, for accessories criteria.

3. The issued and or personally owned authorized patrol rifle for all officers shall be an AR-15 type Semi-Automatic Carbine, .223 caliber / 5.56 NATO or 9mm, with a 10.5" – 16" barrel (must be ATF compliant if personally owned.) Rifles in .223 / 5.56 NATO must have a barrel twist rate of 1/7 or 1/9. A barrel twist rate of 1/12 will not be authorized. All authorized rifles must be equipped with an iron sight system, sling, and a dedicated high quality white light (Surefire, Pentagon, Night-Ops, etc.). Only high quality AR-15 type rifles will be authorized. The following manufactures will be authorized: Bushmaster (no carbon fiber models), Lewis Machine and Tool (LMT), Colt, DPMS, Rock River Arms, and Smith and Wesson M & P 15. Any officer wishing to carry another manufacture shall submit a request in writing to the Chief of Police for approval.

4. The carrying of patrol rifles while on duty, outside of the State of Maryland, shall be governed by the laws of the individual jurisdiction and officers shall comply with those laws.

5. In the event that an officer is suspended from the Department or the officer's authorization to carry a Department firearm is temporarily or permanently suspended or revoked, the officer's authorization to carry a patrol rifle shall be automatically and concurrently rescinded.

6. All patrol rifles shall be inspected by an approved armorer before being approved for use. The armorer shall forward a written recommendation for approval/disapproval to the Chief of Police for his/her consideration.

7. Only one patrol rifle per officer shall be approved for carry unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police.

8. Officers shall exercise the utmost care and caution when handling firearms. Careless or irresponsible handling and/or use of a firearm will subject an officer to disciplinary action.

9. Weapons shall never be left unattended or in an unsecured place where they are accessible to other persons

10. The following modifications and or accessories are authorized for Patrol Rifles, front night sight post, flip up iron sights, vertical grip, CQB style optics (EOTech, Aimpoint, Trijicon ACOG, Trijicon Tripower, Trijicon Reflex) picatinny rail fore ends, additional magazines with a capacity of not more than 30 rounds, and a Mag Coupler.

Section IV: Storage

- A. Unless given permission from the Chief of Police, the patrol rifle may be granted to take home at residence. If the patrol officer is not given permission to take the weapon home, they are to store the weapon back into the gun locker. In the event unable to grant access into the gun locker, a permission may be granted to lock weapon inside officer's secured locker.
 - 1. Whenever a patrol rifle is stored at an officer's residence, the weapon shall be secured and inaccessible. No loaded weapon shall be stored or left in any location where it may reasonably be expected that another person may gain access to it.
- B. While on duty, the patrol officer must store patrol rifle in a secured approved vehicle mounted lockbox or trunk of patrol sedan.
- C. At no time, the patrol rifle will be stored inside of vehicles when the officer is out of service and returned to their residency.
- D. No patrol rifles, will be left inside of vehicles whenever vehicles are placed out of service for repairs or maintenance.
- E. Patrol rifles, when not being utilized, shall be kept in the firearms cabinet or personally assigned departmental locker.

1. The firearms cabinet shall remain locked except while issuing or returning firearms for use.
2. The supervisor issuing or receiving firearms from his/her personnel is responsible for securing the firearms cabinet.
3. Officers without take home cruisers are responsible to secure their patrol rifle in their assigned locker, and lock it, or remove from their assigned vehicle and secure it in their residence.

SECTION V: Deployment

- A. An officer who carries a Patrol Rifle during his/her tour of duty must, at all times, be cognizant of the extreme power this firearm possesses. An officer who discharges a patrol rifle in a public place must first and foremost consider the safety of innocent bystanders. An officer may not discharge a Patrol Rifle in a public place when the danger to innocent bystanders is greater than the threat that prompts the officer to shoot.
- B. If an officer is justified in discharging a firearm, and is in compliance with the provisions of Department General Orders, his/her use of a patrol rifle rather than his/her issued or approved handgun shall not be considered a violation of this General Order.
- C. Officers carrying a departmentally issued patrol rifle, who has not been granted to take patrol rifle to their residence, will receive appropriate issued ammunition from the gun locker at the beginning of their tour of duty. All issued patrol rifle ammunition shall be returned to the gun locker at the end of the tour. At no time will an officer return a loaded patrol rifle to the firearms cabinet. A patrol rifle will also be considered loaded if a magazine remains in the magazine well.
- D. Officers shall not load or unload any patrol rifle within the confines of any City facility. Patrol rifles shall be loaded and unloaded with the muzzle pointed into a sand filled 55-gallon drum at the rear of the police station.
- E. A patrol rifle, while in a Department police vehicle equipped with a locking mount, shall:
 1. Be secured in the locking mount.
 2. Have the safety on.

3. Have the rifle bolt forward on an empty chamber.
 4. Have a loaded magazine locked in place with no more than 29 rounds.
 5. Have the dust cover closed.
- F. A patrol rifle, while in a Department police vehicle that does not have a locking mount, shall:
1. Be secured in a gun case (hard or soft) in the trunk.
 2. Have the safety on.
 3. Have the rifle bolt forward on an empty chamber.
 4. Have a loaded magazine locked in place with no more than 29 rounds.
 5. Have the dust cover closed.
- G. While a patrol rifle is being carried in a cruiser, an officer shall not leave the vehicle unlocked or unattended.
- H. Because of the extreme destructive power the patrol rifle possesses, safe handling and use of the rifle must be a constant consideration for the officer carrying one. Officers must consider the following criteria before removing the patrol rifle from his/her police vehicle when arriving at the scene of a call:
- Nature and location of the call.
 - The possibility of a subject presenting an armed threat to the officer.
 - Safety of innocent bystanders.
 - Previous problems in the same area or with same type of call.
- K. The following situations are some examples of authorized patrol rifle deployment:
- The subject is known to possess or is suspected of possessing a deadly weapon or firearm, or
 - The distance to the threat is beyond the effective range of departmental pistols/shotguns, or
 - The subject is known to wear or is suspected of wearing body armor, or
 - An active-shooter incident, or
 - Barricade and hostage incidents.

- L. An officer shall not carry a patrol rifle when:
- Conducting routine building checks (Signal 18)
 - Engaged in the foot pursuit of a subject.
 - Making a non-felony traffic stop.
 - Engaged in bicycle or Segway patrol
 - Engaged in routine foot patrol
- M. When an officer deploys a patrol rifle, he/she shall, as soon as practical, notify the on-duty supervisor and advise Communications of the following:
- The safest route for responding officers to approach the scene.
 - The location of the officer with the patrol rifle and the location of the suspect.
 - Any crossfire considerations.
- N. Any officer who fires a Department issued patrol rifle at the range shall thoroughly clean the rifle prior to returning it to the firearms cabinet.
- O. Whenever a patrol rifle is stored at an officer's residence, the weapon shall be secured and inaccessible. No loaded weapon shall be stored or left in any location where it may reasonably be expected that children and/or untrained and unauthorized adults may gain access to it.

Section VI: Ammunition

- A. The only approved duty ammunition's for issued/authorized .223 / 5.56 NATO patrol rifles shall be the 62 grain Bonded soft point cartridge manufactured by the Federal Cartridge Company (LE223T3); or the Hornandy 75 grain T.A.P. round. The only authorized 9mm duty ammunition is the 147 grain Federal HST (P9HST2).
- B. Only 20 or 30 round magazines are permitted. 20 round magazines are to be loaded with 18 rounds of ammunition, and 30 round magazines are to be loaded with 27 rounds of ammunition.

- C. Reloaded and/or remanufactured ammunition shall not be used in any Department issued patrol rifle.
- D. Reloaded and/or remanufactured ammunition may be used in approved training purposes only.

Section VII: Inspection

- A. All supervisors shall conduct monthly inspections of issued and/or personally owned authorized Patrol Rifles. Supervisors will ensure that the firearms coordinator conducts quarterly inspections of issued/authorized patrol rifles. The firearms coordinator shall complete a Firearms Inspection Form for each weapon inspected and forward the completed form(s) to the training coordinator.
 - 1. Only the following persons are authorized to conduct patrol rifle inspections: an approved Smith and Wesson armorer or other department authorized armorer, certified range officer or supervisors holding the rank of Sergeant or above the rank of Sergeant.
- B. All routine patrol rifle inspections shall be made in the following manner:
 - 1. The supervisor holding the inspections should notify the affected personnel at least one working day in advance, of the time and location of the inspection. The actual inspection process may be delegated to a person listed in section VII. A.1.
 - 2. At the time of the inspection, affected officers shall unload and remove the magazine, and lock the bolt open of all weapons to be inspected outside of the building in the area provided and utilizing the sand barrel. No further field stripping is necessary. After the inspection, weapon reloading and reassembly shall also take place outside of the building in the area provided.
 - 3. Officers shall only enter the building or inspection area with the weapon's magazine removed from the receiver, and the chamber and magazine well empty.
- C. A Firearms Inspection Form shall be completed for each inspection and forwarded to the

training coordinator.

- D. Firearms instructors/armorer shall inspect all weapons prior to firing on the range. These inspections shall focus on the general condition and proper functioning of each weapon.
- E. The firearms coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all Department owned weapons are inspected yearly by an approved armorer or gunsmith. All annual patrol rifle inspections shall be documented on a Firearms Inspection Form. All other weapons inspections shall be documented in a manner approved by the armorer. The armorer shall maintain a file of all yearly inspections.
- F. If any Department owned weapon is found to be malfunctioning, damaged or otherwise unserviceable, that weapon shall be removed from service immediately and a replacement issued (if available).

Section VIII: Training

- A. All officers will receive at least biannual recertification on these weapons. Training is conducted by an MPCTC certified instructor and is monitored by the senior firearms instructor who is designated as Range Master.
- B. While training will be conducted in accordance with the standards of the MPCTC, nothing in this section prohibits the Department from establishing or requiring higher standards.
- C. Biannual qualifications will consist of 2 hours of classroom instruction. Discussion on this General Order and related topics, as well as, several hours of shooting according to COMAR. Each sworn officer will qualify biannually with any firearm which they are authorized to use. Specialized weapons will require a qualifying range score of 80%, in accordance with MPCTC regulations.

Section IX: Damage to Department Firearms

- A. All officers shall follow the procedures specified in General Order 5-2a as they apply to weapons.

- B. Any officer who damages an issued firearm through abuse, carelessness or misuse, or who fails to properly maintain an issued firearm shall be reported, in writing, to the Chief of Police through the officer's chain of command.
- C. Officers shall be required to replace, at their own expense, any Department firearm lost, stolen or damaged through the officer's negligence.

Section X: Patrol Rifle Officer Selection

- A. The following criteria are *minimum* qualifications for authorization to carry a patrol rifle:
 - 1. Full time sworn-member (non-probationary), with a minimum of one year of patrol duty experience, and completion of the Department's Field Training Program, unless specifically exempted from this requirement by the Chief of Police.
 - 2. Exhibit the ability to work independently and with minimal supervision.
 - 3. Exhibit the ability to maintain a calm, professional demeanor during stressful situations.
 - 4. Exhibit the ability to communicate professionally with the public.
 - 5. Exhibit the ability to render effective testimony in court.
 - 6. Exhibit proficiency in report writing.
 - 7. Successfully complete annual handgun (GLOCK) qualification with a score of 70 % or higher.
 - 8. Successfully complete a Maryland Police Training Commission approved patrol rifle training course.