

Fennimore Police Department Firearms Regulation and Proficiency		
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish a policy to regulate firearms training, firearms proficiency testing, and the use of firearms and ammunition by sworn personnel of the Fennimore Police Department.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Fennimore Police Department that on duty officers shall only utilize firearms that have been approved for use by the department, are mechanically sound and are properly maintained. Only firearms that have been approved by the Chief of Police and with which an officer has demonstrated proficiency may be used on duty.

The Fennimore Police Department will establish handgun and rifle training and qualification programs for the department, maintain records of such training and qualification and provide adequate supplies and resources to support this program. Training programs shall include instruction pertaining to the appropriate use of deadly force as well as the actual use of firearms.

DISCUSSION

Firearms are a necessary piece of equipment for all police officers. Proper training and demonstrated proficiency in the use of firearms and deadly force decision making skills are necessary to ensure the safety of officers and the public should an officer be forced to use a firearm. De-escalation and Officer Intervention procedures are covered in the police department Use of Force policy

DEFINITIONS

- **Duty Ammunition:** The ammunition approved by the Chief of Police for use in both departmentally owned weapons and personally owned weapons while on duty. Duty

ammunition for personally owned firearms must be approved by the Chief of Police and will be the responsibility of the officer to supply.

- **Duty Firearm:** An officer's primary firearm. The duty firearm may be owned and issued by the Fennimore Police Department or a personally owned firearm approved for use by the officer while on duty. The firearm must be authorized for use by the Chief of Police and the officer must be currently qualified with the firearm.
- **Firearms Coordinator:** Designated by the Chief of Police, this position is responsible for overseeing departmental firearms training, firearms proficiency testing, firearms issuance and maintenance along with record management related to all aspects of firearms training and use.
- **Patrol Rifle:** A semi-automatic, magazine fed firearm with a 16-inch or longer barrel in a caliber approved by the Chief of Police. This weapon may be owned and issued by the department or may be personally owned by an officer.
- **Personally Owned Firearm:** A firearm owned by an officer of the Fennimore Police Department that has been approved for use for duty functions.
- **Precision Rifle:** A bolt-action or semi-automatic magazine fed firearm in a caliber approved by the Chief of Police mounting a telescopic sight and a 20 inch or longer barrel. The weapon may be owned and issued by the department or may be personally owned by an officer.
- **Secondary Firearm:** A handgun which is owned by the officer and carried on-duty, in addition to his/her duty firearm. The weapon must have a caliber approved by the Chief of Police.
- **Specialized Firearms:** Specialized firearms authorized by the department include shotguns or other weapons designated for the deployment of less-lethal force options and chemical munitions.
- **Shotgun:** 12-gauge pump or semi-automatic firearm with either an 18- or 20-inch barrel. This weapon may be owned and issued by the department or may be personally owned by an officer.

PROCEDURE

Firearms Coordinator: The Chief of Police will designate one officer who will act as the Firearms Coordinator for the department.

The Firearms Coordinator shall be responsible for:

- Instructing and testing officer's knowledge of the lawful use of deadly force.
- The documentation and physical inspection of all firearms utilized by department personnel while on duty.
- Establishing a firearms training program, in addition to the annual qualification program, for officers.
- Establishing a qualification course of fire which will be an accurate and comprehensive test of an officer's skill in the safe handling and proficient use of agency authorized firearms. The qualification course of fire for all firearms shall be completed once per year and approved by the Chief of Police.
- Maintaining records of firearms training and qualification for all sworn personnel with any firearms authorized for on-duty use.
- Maintaining adequate supplies for department firearms training and qualification programs.

Ammunition

The Chief of Police will select duty ammunition to be issued or authorized by the department. Only ammunition issued or authorized by the department shall be utilized by on-duty officers. If a personally owned firearm is of the same caliber as issued by the department, the officer will be permitted to use department ammunition for firearm training and qualification.

Each officer will be provided with a sufficient quantity of ammunition for training and qualification. If an officer is using an authorized personally owned firearm that has been approved for department use, and that firearm is of a different caliber than the department's issued firearms, the officer will be responsible for providing all required ammunition for training events and qualifications.

Firearms Qualification

The Firearms Coordinator shall conduct annual firearms qualifications for all officers. All officers shall demonstrate proficiency with firearms by qualifying with each firearm they are required or elect to use on-duty.

Officers having primary employment elsewhere as classified by the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Training and Standards Bureau law enforcement certification records are exempt from training and qualifying with the Fennimore Police Department provided the training and qualification program at the officer's primary department meets the approval of the Chief of Police. Copies of records regarding outside training will be made available to the Firearms Coordinator to ensure qualification with each firearm carried on duty.

All officers will qualify with their designated duty firearm. Officers, who fail to qualify with their duty firearm, shall immediately receive remedial training and shall re-fire the qualification course the same day. Disciplinary action may be taken for failure to attain minimum firearms qualification standards with an officers' duty firearm.

Officers must currently be qualified with their duty firearm before being permitted to qualify with any other firearms. Officers shall not carry or utilize the patrol rifle unless they have successfully completed department training. Any officer who fails to qualify with the patrol rifle will no longer be authorized to carry the patrol rifle

Officers who do not qualify due to scheduling conflicts or cannot qualify due to a weapon's malfunction shall continue in their present duty assignment. Arrangements shall be made with the Firearms Coordinator to meet annual qualification requirements.

Except in an emergency situation or at the direction of a supervisor, whenever an officer acquires a new or different firearm, including personally owned firearms, and the officer wishes to carry that firearm for on-duty use, arrangements for an unscheduled qualification should be made through the Firearms Coordinator.

Off Duty Carry

Officers who wish to carry a personally owned firearm while off duty under the protection and privilege afforded a Fennimore Police Department Law Enforcement Officer shall qualify with the firearm. The firearm will be subject to the same requirements as personally owned firearms approved for duty use.

Officers who wish to carry a personally owned firearm while off duty without protection or privilege afforded a Fennimore Police Department Law Enforcement Officer do not have to qualify with the firearm and are restricted to the same laws applicable to non-law enforcement citizens (open carry, concealed permit, etc...).

Care and Maintenance of Firearms

Care and maintenance of firearms, whether owned by the department or the officer, are the responsibility of the officer using the firearm. All officers shall report for duty with a clean and well-maintained weapon. Routine maintenance and cleaning should occur frequently to ensure the firearm is mechanically operational. Any malfunction or damage to a department-owned firearm shall be reported to the Chief of Police without delay.

The department shall inspect department issued or approved for duty personally owned firearms once per year to ensure the firearms are not altered, damaged or unserviceable for any reason. Firearms found to be altered, damaged or otherwise unserviceable shall not be utilized for on-duty use until they have been repaired and approved.

Firearms damaged in the line of duty will be repaired or replaced by the department provided the firearm was properly approved and the officer currently qualified with the firearm when the damage occurred.

Officers shall ensure that all department firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control in a manner that will keep the firearm inaccessible to everybody but the officer. Officers shall be aware that negligent storage of a firearm could result in criminal prosecution and/or disciplinary action.

If an officer discharges a firearm while on duty, the officer shall notify dispatch immediately. The Chief of Police should then be notified as soon as possible by means of documentation in the duty log or incident report.

Any modifications to any firearm carried on duty must be approved by the Chief of Police and must be conducted in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Modifications to the firearm will be documented and kept with department records. The officer will be required to qualify with the firearm as soon as practical after the modifications have been completed.

DISCLAIMER

This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violations of this policy may form the basis for departmental administrative action, but it is not intended for use in courts of civil or criminal jurisdiction.

/s/ Christopher J. French

09/22/2020

Christopher J. French
Chief of Police

Date