



POLICY & PROCEDURES

HOLMEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: **DEPARTMENT FIREARMS**

NUMBER 1.8

SCOPE; ALL DEPARTMENT PERSONEL

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POLICY

A Law Enforcement Officer's firearm is perhaps the most commonly perceived symbol of his/her authority and role. The firearm has the potential, when used properly, to save officers, innocent civilians and community from the threat of great bodily harm or death when the actions of a subject(s) warrant the use of deadly force. The decision-making procedures when to use a firearm are covered in the [Use of Force Policy #1-1](#).

It is the policy of this department that issued firearms shall only be used by an officer when it meets law enforcement objectives and department sponsored training. Before an officer can use or carry a weapon, the officer must have received training and met department qualification standards for that weapon. Officers that receive approval from the Chief to carry personal off-duty or back up weapons, must also meet department qualification standards for that weapon and have that weapon registered with the department.

Officers are responsible for the maintenance of department issued weapons. The weapons shall be clean and functional for each shift assignment. Any critical malfunction of a weapon must be reported to a supervisor or firearms instructor.

Officers are responsible for the safe handling of all weapon systems in their possession. Weapons will be loaded in accordance with this policy.

Any discharge of a firearm, whether it was unwanted, caused property damage or caused injury/death shall be reported to a supervisor and a report shall be written. During training exercises, any discharge of a firearm, which causes property damage, injury or death, shall be reported to a supervisor and a report shall be written. When discharging a firearm in the humane dispatch of an animal, Dispatch will be notified and a Weapon Discharge Report filed. Any investigation or review will follow the guidelines set forth in the [Use of Force Policy #1-1](#).

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines in the following areas of Department issued firearms and off duty/ backup personal weapons:

- Authorization to use or carry
- Weapon safety
- Maintenance and storage.
- Weapon loading
- Training
- Inventory
- Documentation

DEFINITIONS

- *Firearm*: A weapon that fires a projectile with the use of gunpowder.
- *Law Enforcement Objective*: Action taken by an officer that is in accordance with State, County, Municipal and applicable Federal law. In the case with the use of firearms, it would be situations where the officer anticipates the use of a firearm whether it be a burglary alarm, high risk traffic stop, bank alarm, subject armed with a dangerous weapon etc...
- *Law Enforcement Certified Officer*: Any person employed by the state or any political subdivision of the state for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime and enforcing laws or ordinances, and who is authorized to make arrests for violations of the laws or ordinances the person is employed to enforce. For the intent of this policy, the officer must meet the State of Wisconsin Training and Standards basic certification standards and the Holmen Police Department qualification standards.
- *Qualified Officer*: An officer who has met qualification standards on a particular weapon system.
- *Unloaded*: Means having no ammunition in the chamber of a firearm and no magazine in the pistol, no ammunition in the magazine tube of a shot gun or rifle and no ammunition in the cylinder of a revolver.
- *Unwanted Discharge*: When the firearm unexpectedly discharges.

AUTHORIZATION TO USE/CARRY DEPARTMENT AND NON-DEPARTMENTAL FIREARMS

Note: *The intention of this section is to insure Holmen Police Department Personnel are qualified in the handling, function, marksmanship, decision- making and maintenance of the available weapon systems that may be issued to them. However, in an extreme crisis and if the situation warrants it, a supervisor may allow an officer the use a weapon system that officer has not received training with. At the time of issue a qualified officer shall give immediate instruction on the basic functions of the weapon (safety features, loading / unloading, caliber considerations).*

DEPARTMENT ISSUED HANDGUN-

- The Holmen Police Department will issue each officer an approved handgun.
- Only sworn personnel that meet departmental qualification standards may carry a department issued weapon with final approval from the Chief.
- Once approval has been granted, the officer may also carry off duty in concealed manner, however, the officer shall carry department picture ID and badge.

NON-DEPARTMENT ISSUED PISTOL/FIREARM- Only Law Enforcement certified officers can carry a personally owned firearm as a backup or off-duty concealed weapon in a law enforcement capacity, but only after the following conditions are met:

- The officer must have met department qualifications for the department issued pistol.
- The officer must submit a written request to the Chief for approval. The request shall indicate the make, model, serial number and caliber of the firearm as well as the type of ammunition, which should be used.
- Officer must qualify with that firearm.
- Officer must meet annual qualification standards for department issued pistol and non-departmental firearm.
- Officers must supply their own ammunition. Ammunition comparable to approved ammunition may be used for qualification and training.
- Officers are responsible for the costs incurred for care, cleaning, repairs and security of their non-department firearm.
- Firearm shall be secured in department approved manner.
- When off duty and carrying an off duty-duty firearm, the officer shall carry department picture ID and badge.

DEPARTMENT ISSUED SHOTGUN- The Holmen Police Department utilizes several types of shotguns in various types of law enforcement capacities. Only sworn personnel that have received department training and met annual qualification standards can use Holmen Police Department shotguns.

DEPARTMENT ISSUED SHOTGUNS DESIGNATED FOR SPECIALTY IMPACT MUNITIONS- Shotguns designated for specialty impact munitions (less lethal) shall only be used by officers certified in the use of specialty impact munitions ([policy #1-4](#)).

DEPARTMENT ISSUED RIFLE- The Holmen Police Department will issue approved rifles. Only sworn personnel that have received department training for approved rifles and met annual qualification standards may use a department issued rifle.

WEAPON SAFETY

Though the Holmen Police Department has different types of firearm systems, these basic safety rules shall be followed:

Note: It is the policy of this department, that law enforcement personnel maintain absolute sobriety and not be under the influence of alcohol or medication while being armed with a firearm. This applies whether the officer is on or off duty (carrying a concealed weapon pursuant statute 941.23).

- Never point a firearm at something that is not safe to shoot or does not meet authorized law enforcement objectives.
- When loading or unloading, make sure the firearm is pointed in a safe direction.
- Store or secure firearms so that children or unauthorized personnel cannot gain access to. *When storing weapons at home, it is recommended that the cable lock issued with department issued pistol be used. Firearms should be stored unloaded with ammunition locked in a separate location. The Holmen Police Department also advocates the use of gun safes.*
- Unless a Law Enforcement objective requires it, never shoot at water or a hard surface.
- Know the safety features of the firearm you are using, but remember: *Safety devices are not a substitute for safe handling procedures.*
- Properly maintain your weapon.
- Use proper ammunition. *It is your responsibility to insure your weapon is loaded with the correct ammunition and loaded in accordance with this policy.*
- If firearm fails to fire, keep firearm pointed in safe direction and follow trained malfunction drill.
- During **any** department sponsored shoot using live ammunition, or in conjunction with other agencies shoot for training purposes, eyes, ears, and body armor will be worn. If anyone wants to shoot off duty on their time not sponsored by the department, body armor eyes and ears are encouraged but that will be left up to the individual officer(s).
- Never run or climb over/under obstacles with your finger on the trigger of the firearm. It is also recommended that the handgun be holstered, unless actively engaged in a shoot situation.
- There shall be no horseplay with firearms.

MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

Officers are responsible for the care, cleaning, and security of department weapons issued to them. Daily squad checks on each shift shall be conducted to insure that the squad is properly equipped and that the assigned firearms are clean, functioning, and properly loaded. There shall be no tampering with department firearms. The following procedures shall be followed:

- Holmen Police Department issued pistols shall be cleaned and inspected on a regular basis. At the minimum the pistol should be cleaned every 2 weeks. However, should the pistol become exposed to wet or dirty conditions due to weather or otherwise, the pistol shall be cleaned that day.
- All officers are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of firearms issued or

assigned to them.

- Any firearm found to be in poor condition and/or malfunctioning should be reported to there a supervisor or firearms instructor immediately.
- No officers will modify or alter any department firearm unless prior approval has been received from the Chief or Lieutenant.
- With written approval from the Chief or Lieutenant, market products that improve grip or accommodate hand size may be used. The grips, however, must not interfere with the normal function of the handgun.
- The Chief or Lieutenant shall conduct monthly inspections of officers duty issued firearm, to include any authorized non-department firearm, along with squad firearm inspection.

CLEANING OF FIREARMS- The following procedures shall be followed when cleaning department firearms, whether it be at the range or at the Holmen Police Department:

- The firearm safety should be on (if equipped). Firearm pointed in safe direction.
- The firearm shall be unloaded. This includes magazines, rounds in shotgun magazine tube, slings, stock slings, rounds on person, etc..
- The firearm shall be visually and physically inspected to insure that it is unloaded.
- There shall be no ammunition on the cleaning table or bench where the firearm is being cleaned. It is recommended that ammunition be stored in lockers when cleaning at the Holmen Police Department.
- When conducting a function test, no ammunition shall be loaded into the firearm and function test will be conducted in a safe location.

AMMUNITION MAINTENANCE- Firearm ammunition shall also be inspected on a regular basis. Ammunition that is damaged or corroded should be replaced immediately. Damaged or corroded ammunition should then be turned over to a supervisor or firearms instructor for disposal. Ammunition should be rotated at least once per year, if not more through training. Ammunition in pistol magazines should be rotated frequently to avoid the same round being loaded and unloaded into the chamber at beginning and end of shift assignments.

WEAPON LOADING

The Holmen Police Department will supply duty and training ammunition for the department issued firearms. When loading and unloading a firearm, the general safety rules shall be followed. No one is to tamper with ammunition or load spent cartridges into a firearm that is being used for shift assignments.

DEPARTMENT ISSUED HANDGUN-

- Only Holmen Police Department approved duty ammunition shall be loaded in officers duty pistol when pistol is used in law enforcement capacity.
- The Holmen Police Department will supply training ammunition for in-service and in-house training sessions.
- With prior approval from Chief, Lieutenant, or firearms instructor, Officers may use department ammunition for training on their own time.
- Pistols shall be administratively loaded and unloaded per training guidelines.
- When on duty, pistol magazines will be loaded to capacity and a round in the chamber.

NON DEPARTMENTAL FIREARM-

- Firearm shall be administratively loaded and unloaded.
- Firearm when carried in law enforcement capacity shall be loaded to capacity and a round in the chamber.

DEPARTMENT ISSUED SHOTGUN-

- It is the policy of the Holmen Police Department that the shotguns be loaded with a minimum of 5 – 1 oz. slugs in the magazine tube and a box of 00-buck in the glove box
- Shotguns shall be administratively loaded and unloaded per training procedures.

- Shotguns will be stored in a condition commonly called “squad ready”, in which, the bolt will be locked forward on an empty chamber, safety on. When chambering a round you must push the action bar lock to cycle the action. **Under no circumstances should the trigger be pulled to release the action.**
- **No rounds shall be loaded into the chamber** until the shotgun is needed for a law enforcement objective.
- When the weapon is returned to the squad the round shall be emptied from the chamber and the shotgun will be made “squad ready”.
- **It is each officer’s responsibility to inspect your squads’ shotgun at the beginning of your shift to insure it is properly loaded.**
- Should you find a shotgun that is not properly loaded it should be reported to your supervisor or a firearms instructor.

DEPARTMENT ISSUED SHOTGUNS DESIGNATED FOR SPECIALTY IMPACT MUNITIONS- Shotguns designated for specialty impact munitions shall be maintained in accordance with [Policy #1.4 Use of Specialty Impact Munitions](#).

DEPARTMENT ISSUED RIFLE-

- The rifle shall be stored “squad ready” with the breech closed, no round in the chamber and the safety on. Magazines will be loaded two (2) rounds less than maximum capacity and may be inserted in the magazine port or stored in the gun case.
- Should you find a rifle that is not properly loaded, it should be reported to your supervisor or a firearms instructor.

TRAINING

All Law Enforcement personnel authorized by the Chief are required to participate in annual firearms qualifications for each of the weapon systems they are authorized to utilize. Qualification standards will be scored using pass / fail criteria. Officers that do not pass will have an opportunity to re-qualify within 2 weeks, after receiving remedial instruction. Officers who do not qualify the 2nd time are subject to retraining, loss of use of that particular weapon system and possible disciplinary action by the Chief. The Training Supervisor or his/her designee(s) will maintain training records.

INVENTORY

A designee by the Chief shall maintain inventory records of firearms and ammunition utilized by the Holmen Police Department. The inventory shall include the following:

- Log book divided into section for each category of firearms.
- Log sheets indicating make, model, serial number.
- Log will also include activity of firearm: officer assigned, squad assignment, location, repair history.
- Ammunition inventory
- Record of Non-Department authorized weapons, requests and qualification status.

DOCUMENTATION

As with any use of force incident, a detailed report shall be completed as directed in the departments [Use of Force Policy \(#1-1\)](#).

DISCLAIMER

This policy is for internal use only and doesn’t 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, 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 civil or criminal cases.

Chief of Police
Shane Collins