

TITLE: Police Rifle Program

SOP NUMBER: 08-034

EFFECTIVE DATE: 04-01-13

REPLACES/RESCINDS: 01-01-12



I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to establish guidelines regarding departmental use of the police rifle.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of this agency to use only the level of force reasonably necessary to control or otherwise subdue violent or potentially violent individuals. The police rifle has been proven effective in furtherance of this policy, and the rifle is authorized for use in appropriate circumstances by trained personnel.

Only officers who are trained by the Firearms Training Unit (FTU) shall use police rifles issued by the Police Department. In order to maintain their certification with the semi-automatic police rifle, trained personnel must attend quarterly training and requalify once a year.

The Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) within the Operations Support Bureau (OSB) and officers within the Animal Services Division (ASD) shall not be governed by this policy. Decisions involving police rifle selection and operation for SWAT (including supplemental SWAT officers) fall under the authority of the OSB commander and standard operating procedures within the Special Operations Division. Animal Control officers are issued specific rifles for euthanasia purposes and other mission essential tasks that are governed by SOPs within the ASD. Any other exceptions to this policy shall be approved by the Criminal Justice Academy (CJA) director, who will consult with the FTU supervisor.

III. DEFINITION

Semi-automatic: A firearm designed to discharge only one round with each pull of the trigger, and complete the cycle of operation. The system utilizes a .223 caliber (5.56 mm.) round. The police rifle is intended to provide enhanced ballistic performance over the pistol and shotgun. These rifles and the ammunition are more accurate at greater distances than pistols and shotguns and are capable of penetrating body armor rated Level IIIA or less (i.e. light body armor).

IV. AUTHORIZED USERS

Only sworn personnel trained and certified by the FTU shall use the police rifle. Police rifle operators must meet qualification standards set by the FTU. Officers who fail to meet qualification standards will lose the authority to carry and operate the police rifle until qualification standards are met.

Only Police Department approved magazines and ammunition shall be loaded into police issued rifles.

V. SEMI-AUTOMATIC RIFLE OPERATOR SELECTION CRITERIA

Candidates for the semi-automatic rifle program shall be:

- Officers with two or more years of service with the Department. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis for individuals with equivalent military or law enforcement experience.
- Routinely post expert scores on the Tactical Qualification Course.
- Possess and have demonstrated professional competence and mature judgment.
- Recommendation from first-line supervisor through station commander
- Able to attend mandatory quarterly training and qualify annually.

The CJA director, with input from FTU staff, will select candidates for training who will best provide a balance of availability throughout the Department. The Patrol Bureau will retain the largest number of police rifles to ensure effective and efficient community response across all operational shifts on a 24-hour basis.

Officers selected for the program must successfully complete the 50-hour Fairfax County Police Rifle School conducted by the FTU. Officers may miss one quarterly training session per year while maintaining their status as rifle operators. Officers may not miss more than one training session in a calendar year; nor may they miss two consecutive sessions that fall on separate calendar years. If, due to unforeseen and extenuating circumstances, an officer must miss more than one mandatory training session in a given year, the absence must be approved by the division commander. This excused absence must be reported to both the FTU supervisor and the CJA director.

When police rifle officers transfer to operational duty assignments within their assigned bureaus, their rifles will transfer with them. Officers transferred outside of their bureau must promptly return their rifle and all issued equipment to the FTU. This equipment will be re-issued to other police rifle operators within the bureau where the rifle was assigned. Exceptions to this policy may be approved by the CJA director when in the best interest of the Department. Appropriate coordination and notification will be made by the CJA director.

VI. POLICE RIFLE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Supervisors and qualified police rifle operators shall consider the deployment and use of the rifle based upon specific circumstances of the event or operational situation to include, but not limited to:

- An evaluation of the specific event
- Known or expected threat level
- Incident in which a firearm is being used or implied
- Containment and or stand off weapon for hostage/barricade incidents
- Active shooter(s) or critical incident

In the event of an active critical incident where the immediate deployment of a rifle is prudent, a qualified rifle operator is authorized to deploy and use the rifle without supervisory authorization.

A supervisor may override an officer's decision to deploy the rifle on a given situation. This should only be done after careful consideration of the known facts and circumstances surrounding the situation, taking into account all safety concerns.

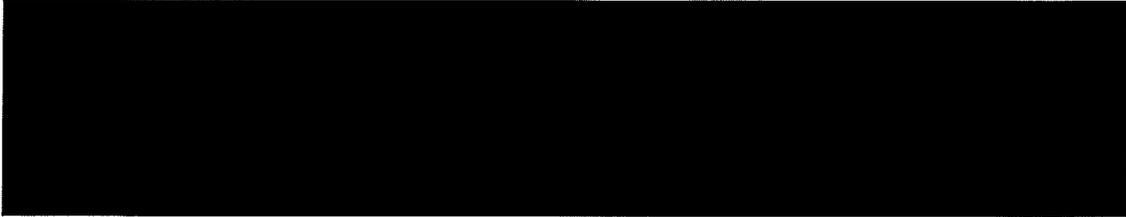
Requests for the assistance of a police rifle operator may be made by any sworn police officer through the Department of Public Safety Communications.

For preplanned operational situations, deployment of the rifle shall require a supervisor's approval (i.e., planned arrests, warrant services, stakeouts).

The police rifle operator shall at all times follow the guidelines pertaining to the use of deadly force as outlined in General Order 540.1, Use of Force.

VII. WEAPON READINESS

Cruiser Ready

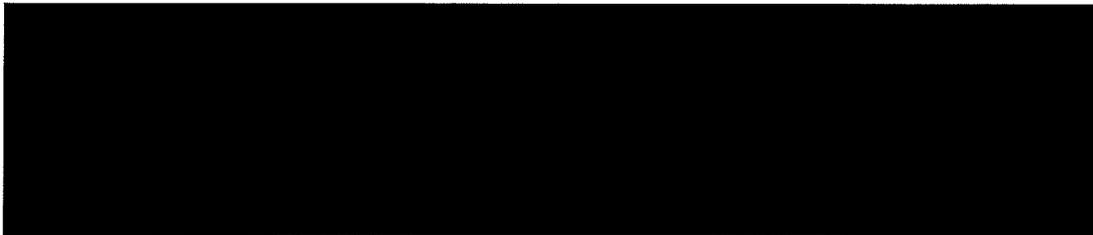


Deployment

Operators shall ensure the rifle is loaded with a round in the chamber and the safety on. Unnecessary public display of rifles should be avoided.

VIII. STORAGE

Affirmative steps shall be taken at all times to secure these weapons from unauthorized access and/or theft. At the end of a shift, the rifle operator shall ensure the rifle is unloaded and removed from the police vehicle. The rifle shall be properly stored and secured as follows when the operator is off duty:



Police rifles shall not be transported:

- In any vehicle unless it is for official Department business.
- To any overnight training, conference, or event unless it is directly related to the operator's performance of duty and approved by the operator's division commander.

IX. MAINTENANCE

Routine maintenance, as prescribed by the FTU, shall be performed after qualification/training, deployment during inclement weather, and at least every 30

days to ensure the rifle is properly cleaned and lubricated.

Only certified armorers of the FTU are permitted to alter, repair, modify, or detail strip (beyond field stripping) these rifles.

X. ACCREDITATION STANDARDS REFERENCE

VLEPSC

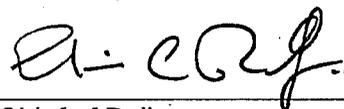
ADM

05.03

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This SOP becomes effective April 1, 2013 and rescinds all previous rules and regulations pertaining to the subject.

Issued by:



Chief of Police