

Department of the Interior
Law Enforcement Policy

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Series: Law Enforcement and Security

Chapter 10: Firearms Standards

Originating Office: Office of Law Enforcement and Security

10.1 Purpose. This chapter establishes policy concerning the management of law enforcement firearms by bureaus/offices of the Department of the Interior

10.2 Scope. This policy applies to all DOI bureaus/offices with law enforcement programs.

10.3 Authority. This policy is issued pursuant to 112 DM 17 and 212 DM 17.

10.4 Responsibilities.

A. Director, Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES) is responsible for policy development and provides program guidance and oversight of the Department's law enforcement programs.

B. Bureau Directors of Law Enforcement (BDLE) are responsible for promulgating and complying with this policy, and the corresponding *Law Enforcement Handbook*.

10.5 Policy. Bureaus/offices, through bureau/office policy and procedures, may authorize designated law enforcement officers (LEOs) to carry firearms. Bureaus and offices must ensure that:

A. All firearms are strictly accounted for and recorded within FBMS.

B. Appropriate security is provided for all firearms.

C. LEOs are properly trained in appropriate use of firearms and deadly force.

D. Complete and accurate records are maintained of firearms training and LEO qualifications.

10.6 Standards. Bureau/office law enforcement programs will establish and implement procedures that comply with this chapter and meet requirements specified in the corresponding *Law Enforcement Handbook*.

Law Enforcement Handbook

Chapter 10: Firearms Standards

January 15, 2016

Table of Contents:

- [10.1 What does this chapter do?](#)
- [10.2 Which employees are authorized to carry firearms?](#)
- [10.3 When must LEOs carry their firearms?](#)
- [10.4 What are the minimum safety requirements for firearms?](#)
- [10.5 Are there requirements for reporting of firearm discharges?](#)
- [10.6 What are the requirements for acquisition, inventory and disposal of firearms?](#)
- [10.7 How is the coordination of these requirements managed?](#)
- [10.8 Are there requirements for ammunition or specialty munitions?](#)
- [10.9 Can we convert firearms to training use?](#)
- [10.10 How often must we perform an inventory of bureau firearms?](#)
- [10.11 What is required when a firearm is lost or stolen?](#)
- [10.12 Are there inspection requirements for firearms and ammunition?](#)
- [10.13 What are the requirements for disposal of firearms?](#)
- [10.14 Can I purchase my government firearm upon retirement?](#)
- [10.15 How is ammunition and spent brass disposed of?](#)
- [10.16 What are the physical security requirements for storage of firearms?](#)
- [10.17 How are firearms shipped?](#)
- [10.18 What are the firearms training and qualification requirements?](#)
- [10.19 Can LEOs meet qualification standards using another bureau's or the FLETC qualification course?](#)
- [10.20 What training records must be maintained?](#)
- [10.21 What types of firearms must be issued to LEOs?](#)

10.1 What does this chapter do? This chapter provides standards for law enforcement firearms programs to be followed by bureaus and offices with law enforcement responsibilities.

Definition: What defines a firearm? Any weapon which is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the energy of an explosive. Also, firearms suppressors and destructive devices, such as flash-bang distraction devices are treated as firearms.

10.2 Which employees are authorized to carry firearms?

Only Department LEOs are authorized to carry firearms for law enforcement purposes. Trainees hired as LEOs and not yet commissioned may carry firearms only during authorized training exercises.

(a) Only government-issued or bureau-approved firearms and defensive equipment are to be carried or worn while on duty.

10.3 When must LEOs carry their firearms? LEOs must carry issued or approved firearms when engaged in, or whenever reasonably expected to be engaged in law enforcement duties, unless engaged in activities where carrying a firearm is deemed discretionary (e.g., undercover operations) in accordance with bureau/office policy. Bureaus/offices must establish policies for off-duty carriage of firearms.

10.4 What are the minimum safety requirements for firearms? All personnel responsible for maintaining firearms inventory, and have access to handling firearms, must receive appropriate Department-approved firearms safety training. Firearms that have not been made safe will only be handled by employees that have received training in firearms safety. Standards/certification of safety training are defined by DOI's Office of Acquisition and Property Management.

10.5 Are there requirements for reporting of firearm discharges? Some firearm discharges must be reported according to bureau/office policy as well as 446 DM 17 *Reporting of Serious Incidents* and 446 DM 26 *Internal Affairs* policy. Specifically, bureau/office Internal Affairs units will investigate any discharge of a government issued or bureau approved firearm, excluding non-injury discharges during training, qualifying, and authorized administrative uses such as the euthanasia/dispatch of wildlife.

10.6 What are the requirements for acquisition, inventory and disposal of firearms? Bureaus/offices must establish written policies and procedures for the accountability of each firearm, throughout each firearm's lifecycle, to include details related to justification for acquisition, acquisition process, entry into inventory management system, physical security and storage, issuance, tracking and eventual disposal in accordance with this section, Interior Property Management Directives (IPMD 114-60) and Federal regulations (41 CFR Chapter 102). This section does not apply to firearms maintained in evidence. Applicable evidence procedures are detailed in 446 DM 7.

(a) The BDLE will establish firearms acquisition procedures to ensure that law enforcement firearms are acquired only upon justification of need, and that only approved types of firearms are acquired. All law enforcement firearm acquisitions, bureau-wide, must be approved by the BDLE or a single designated national coordinator to assure that acquired firearms meet defined policy and standards and are accounted for in inventory control systems. New firearms must be purchased by a contracting officer and processed through DOI's Financial and Business Management System (FBMS). Bureau/office procedures must detail inventory controls for firearms acquired in ways other than purchase (e.g., court-ordered forfeited, transfer from other Federal agencies, etc.). Additionally, procedures must detail processes for disposal of firearms to assure that FBMS is adjusted to account for disposal or reassignment to other work units or other Federal agencies.

(b) Bureaus/offices are responsible for physically accounting for all firearms issued or cached and maintaining a current inventory of all government-owned firearms. Bureaus/offices will utilize FBMS as the primary system of record for firearm inventory data. All supporting backup records of acquisitions/disposals/transfers must be readily available for review by the Department upon request. If required, bureaus/offices may use other accounting systems

(databases, spreadsheets, lists, etc.) only as a secondary means of maintaining firearms inventories.

(c) Bureaus/offices must establish specific standards for firearms inventories to maintain a nationwide quantity that is not greater than what is operationally necessary for issuance, training and repair.

(d) Unserviceable, excess, voluntarily relinquished, or abandoned firearms not suitable for government use must be disposed in accordance with IPMD and GSA guidelines and reporting requirements.

10.7 How is the coordination of these requirements managed? Bureaus/offices must designate one National Law Enforcement Firearms Coordinator (NLEFC) responsible for ensuring that firearms acquisition/disposal, inventory, inspection, maintenance, etc. is performed as required.

(a) Bureaus/offices must provide NLEFC coordinators' names, contact information and program responsibilities to OLES annually or upon request.

10.8 Are there requirements for ammunition or specialty munitions? Yes, bureaus/offices must establish procedures for acquisition and disposal of ammunition to include bureau-wide, multi-bureau/agency, or DOI-wide IDIQ-type acquisition contracts to save money. Bureaus must also establish procedures for central acquisition, inventory and disposal of specialty munitions such as grenade-disbursed chemical agents and flash-bang distraction devices.

(a) Bureaus/offices should maintain a general inventory of approximate quantities of ammunition so as to purchase and maintain a nationwide inventory that corresponds to what is necessary for training and operations.

(b) Bureaus/offices must maintain an accurate inventory of specialty munitions.

10.9 Can we convert firearms to training use? Firearms deemed to have instructional value may be converted to training and demonstration props if rendered permanently incapable of discharging lethal ammunition. With complete and formal documentation, these firearms may be removed from the FBMS inventory, however, firearms must permanently remain in FBMS inventory if they may be subsequently converted in any way to fire lethal ammunition, or if the serialized portion of the firearm may be used in any other firearm that fires lethal ammunition.

10.10 How often must we perform an inventory of bureau firearms? Bureaus/offices must perform a physical firearms inventory of issued firearms twice yearly. For convenience, this can be accomplished through semi-annual qualifications sessions. A physical inventory of cached (unissued) firearms will be conducted annually.

10.11 What is required when a firearm is lost or stolen? Bureaus/offices must ensure that any stolen or missing issued or cached firearm is reported to DOI within 24 hours followed by a

complete report submitted within 48 hours. See 446 DM 17 *Reporting of Serious Incidents* and bureau/office policy and guidelines.

(a) All incidents involving lost, stolen or missing firearms must be reported to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and entered in the DOI Internal Affairs Tracking System. Pursuant to bureau/office policy, the circumstances of the loss will determine whether the bureau/office Internal Affairs unit will conduct an investigation.

10.12 Are there inspection requirements for firearms and ammunition? At a minimum, all firearms will be inspected for functionality by a firearms instructor at every qualification session. Also, firearms (including magazines if feasible) will receive an armorer service inspection once every three years or sooner if recommended by the manufacturer or if subjected to harsh environments (e.g., saltwater marine patrol) or subject to above normal usage (e.g., training weapons). Armorer inspections will be conducted by personnel trained to service the specific weapon.

(a) Ammunition cached or issued must be inspected regularly for serviceability. Any ammunition not deemed serviceable will be immediately taken out of service. Ammunition subject to harsh environmental conditions, specifically salt water environments, must be replaced more frequently. Any ammunition deemed unserviceable will be taken out of service and replaced according to bureau/office policy. Ammunition must be properly disposed of according to this handbook and bureau/office policy.

10.13 What are the requirements for disposal of firearms? Disposal of firearms is regulated by law (41 CFR 102-40.175) with policy guidance from the DOI Office of Acquisition and Property Management. Generally, bureaus may dispose of excess firearms by transfer to another Federal agency for law enforcement use. Excess firearms not transferred to another Federal agency as well as firearms designated for destruction must have verifiable documentation of destruction or else sent for disposal to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), National Firearms Center, Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division in West Virginia. Disposal of bureau/office firearms must be coordinated through one central point.

10.14 Can I purchase my government firearm upon retirement? Federal Regulations (41 CFR 102-40.175) prohibit the transfer or sale of government firearms. Firearms may be transferred only to those Federal agencies authorized to acquire firearms for law enforcement use.

10.15 How is ammunition and spent brass disposed of? Requirements for disposal, sale, transfer or donation of these items are detailed in 41 CFR 102-40.145.

10.16 What are the physical security requirements for storage of firearms?

(a) All LEOs will be issued a safety locking device for each firearm issued.

Definition: What is a safety locking device? A weapon-specific locking device, or a box, case or safe secured with a lock that when activated, prevents access to, or operation of, the firearm by unauthorized persons.

(b) LEOs are responsible for the security of their issued firearms, ammunition and other defensive equipment at all times. Firearms not in an officer's immediate control must be appropriately secured to ensure they are kept out of reach of children or other unauthorized persons.

(1) All firearms stored in vehicles must employ two layers of security as defined by bureau/office policy, e.g., stored within a locked vehicle, and also locked to the vehicle by a chain, steel cable, secured container, or solenoid gun mount.

(2) LEOs in long-term non-duty status (medical leave, military deployment, extended leave, etc.) must appropriately secure all issued firearms until they return to duty. Bureaus/offices may require that the LEO return all issued firearms to their bureau/office firearms custodian for storage until they return to duty.

(c) Bureaus/offices must establish physical security standards and procedures for the secure storage of cached firearms and ammunition to include, at a minimum, securing firearms with highly controlled access.

Definition: What is a firearms cache? A cache is secure storage for two or more unissued firearms for a period exceeding 30 days. Bureaus/offices may establish procedures for short-term control of firearms that are pending issuance, repair or central cache storage.

(1) Cached firearms must be secured in either: a) locked containers specifically designed for the secure storage of firearms, or, b) stored in secured spaces (e.g., secure cages, vaults, weapons rooms, etc.) provided that such spaces are secured with a high security lock with accountable mechanical key control or electronic credential access control and also alarms if possible.

(2) If possible, access to cached weapons storage containers/spaces should require dual-credential access, e.g., vault with combination lock *and* user-specific PIN for alarm panel, or, electronic credential access *and* accountable mechanical key, or, user-specific PIN for alarm panel *and* accountable mechanical key, etc. When electronic credential access or a user-specific PIN is used, an electronic audit trail must be maintained for all access to cached weapons.

(3) Alarm systems must include 24-hour central station monitoring by bureau personnel, a local police agency or a commercial alarm company. Alarm systems must also be continuously electronically supervised to monitor system status and alert authorized personnel of faults, failure or manipulation of the system.

(4) Whenever there are changes in employees with authorized access, containers/spaces with combination locks must have combinations changed and, user-specific

PIN codes and electronic access credentials must be deleted from electronic access control or alarm systems. As electronic credential access cards can be duplicated, access cards must not be reissued to other employees. Mechanical locks must be re-keyed whenever keys are lost, stolen or unaccounted for. Electronic cards must be immediately deleted from the system whenever lost, stolen or unaccounted for.

(5) Mechanical locks must not be part of facility master key systems. Mechanical or electronic locks and alarm panels must not be able to be accessed by non-authorized persons using master keys or master access cards, PIN codes or combinations utilized for facility or access control system maintenance.

(6) Bureaus/offices will maintain a current written physical security plan for firearms storage. This plan will include minimum standards and SOPs for assuring the security integrity of cached firearms as well as SOPs for security of firearms during short-term storage, inbound and outbound shipment, or repair. This plan should require maintaining a current list of employees with mechanical key access, vault combination access and electronic credential access to all firearms caches. All mechanical key cutting and issuance history and combination lock, access control and PIN issuance and changes are to be documented and available for review.

(7) Ammunition awaiting issuance or disposal must be kept in a locked bureau/office-approved storage container.

(i) Small arms ammunition (pistol, shotgun, and rifle) must be separated from materials classified by the U.S. Department of Transportation as flammable liquids, flammable solids, and oxidizing materials by a distance of 15 feet (4.6 meters) or by a fire partition having a fire resistance of at least one hour.

(ii) Small arms ammunition must not be stored together with explosives unless the storage facility is rated for explosive materials.

(8) Firearms and ammunition received at loading docks or warehouses and not yet distributed to firearm custodians must be adequately secured at all times. Firearms and ammunition awaiting outbound shipment must also be adequately secured.

Definitions:

What is a high security lock? A mechanical key-controlled lock that has a high degree of resistance to forced entry, covert entry, and assurance that the ability to duplicate keys is restricted. Such locks have an industry rating (usually identified as ANSI 156.30) and utilize countermeasures to prevent picking, impressioning and bumping, and also provide resistance to attack by common hand tools, hand or portable electric tools, drills, saw blades and puller mechanisms.

What is accountable key control? Provides facility managers with knowledge of who has access to secure areas. Requires high security locks that use mechanical keys, normally cut by a

locksmith or cut and provided directly from the manufacturer, that meet the following standards: 1) keys are protected from unauthorized duplication since specially-manufactured key blanks are restricted in their distribution and available only to government facility managers or their partner locksmiths, 2) to provide for accountability of keys issued, all keys are identified by unique serial number and only issued to authorized personnel, 3) a record system keeps track of all keys issued, and, 4) locks are promptly re-keyed whenever keys are lost or unaccounted for.

What is an access control system? Physical security systems controlled by information technology that restrict access by specific location, room or facility and only to authorized personnel. Software is programmed to designate who is allowed access to specified restricted areas and what hours/days they are allowed access. To gain access to restricted areas, users present a “credential” in the form of an electronic key card, electronic key fob, or biometric data (fingerprint scan, iris scan, etc.) and the access control system verifies the credential and retains an audit trail of the transaction. Access control systems can be programmed to require dual-credential access (e.g., key card plus PIN entry) for enhanced security.

10.17 How are firearms shipped? To enable tracking of shipments while minimizing time in transit which will reduce the chance of loss, all routine government shipments of firearms between offices or repair facilities must be conveyed by overnight parcel delivery (FedEx Priority Overnight or FedEx Standard Overnight, UPS Next Day Air, etc.), and sent only on a work day when next calendar day delivery is achievable. Firearms will be unloaded and ammunition will never be packaged together with firearms. The U.S. Postal Service is not authorized for shipment of firearms.

10.18 What are the firearms training and qualification requirements?

(a) Prior to assuming law enforcement duties, all LEOs must meet minimum firearms qualification standards in accordance with bureau/office requirements.

(b) LEOs are only authorized to use firearms for which they have received training and are currently qualified.

(c) All LEOs must be able to demonstrate firearms proficiency through qualification at any time and without advance notice or “warm up” shooting prior to qualification. This does not preclude firearms instructors from conducting other firearms training prior to conducting qualifications. Qualification must occur at intervals designed to ensure that firearms proficiency is consistently evaluated over a 12-month period. At a minimum, all LEOs must qualify at least twice each year (i.e., once every six months and separated by a minimum of 90 days) with each approved make/model of firearm. LEOs attending FLETC basic training or Firearms Instructor Training Program courses will meet their semi-annual qualification requirement with their FLETC training. Bureaus/offices may authorize LEOs in other than full-duty status (e.g., injured/light duty, maternity) to postpone semi-annual qualification but they must qualify prior to returning to full duty.

(d) Minimum bureau/office pistol qualification standards must include both day and reduced-light courses of fire.

(e) Qualification courses for all weapons will begin with the weapon loaded in the same manner as when carried for duty; however, the ammunition type used in qualification or training may vary from the ammunition type carried for duty.

(f) No more than two attempts at qualification will be allowed per shooting session. This provides appropriate rest and opportunity for remedial training prior to re-qualification attempts. The minimum standard for qualifying on any course of fire will be 70% however bureaus/offices may require higher score standards per bureau/office policy. All firearms scores will be recorded and maintained according to bureau/office policy/procedures.

(g) Meeting firearms qualifications is a requirement for maintaining a law enforcement commission. Each bureau/office policy must specify appropriate procedures and corrective action for personnel that fail to meet qualification standards. Bureaus/offices must also establish criteria to identify and correct patterns of marginal performance.

(h) Firearms Instructors. All bureau/office firearms instructors must be trained and certified according to standards established and approved by the FLETC or equivalent Federally recognized or accredited standards.

Pistol qualification

(i) Bureau/office approved pistol qualification must include, at a minimum, the following components:

- (1) minimum of 30 rounds for day and 30 rounds for reduced light courses of fire;
- (2) timed shooting at defined distances up to 15 yards in reduced-light shooting conditions, as well as 25 yards for daylight shooting;
- (3) shooting with one or two hands as well as support hand only;
- (4) tactical and emergency reloads; and,
- (5) shooting from behind cover or concealment.

Shotgun qualification

(j) Bureau/office approved shotgun qualification courses must include, at a minimum, the following components:

- (1) daylight course with a minimum of 14 rounds using 00 buck and slugs;
- (2) timed shooting at 15 and 25-yard distances;

(3) to promote consistency in training/qualification versus duty carry, qualification course components must emphasize operation of the shotgun in exactly the same duty carry configuration as when removed from the vehicle weapon lock mount or case. For tactical speed and efficiency, shotguns must have external shell carriers, affixed to the weapon or sling to enable shooters to carry eight or more shells in and upon the weapon; and,

(4) bureau/office training must also emphasize supplemental skills training and weapon familiarization drills including use of the weapon carry sling and transitioning from shotgun to pistol while still carrying the shotgun, tactical movement with shotgun, use of safety, fore-end charging, reloading, safe unloading and weapon clearing as well as returning the weapon to duty carry mode in vehicle lock mount or weapon case.

Patrol Rifle Qualification

(k) Bureau/office approved patrol rifle qualification courses must include, at a minimum, the following components:

(1) daylight course with a minimum of 30 rounds;

(2) timed shooting using different shooting stances and/or different sources of cover;

(3) bureau/office training must also emphasize supplemental skills training and weapon familiarization drills including use of weapon carry sling and transitioning from patrol rifle to pistol while still carrying the rifle, tactical movement with patrol rifle, use of safety-selector switch, tactical reloading, safe unloading, weapon clearing and use of safety block, as well as returning the weapon to duty carry mode in vehicle lock mount or weapon case.

(l) Bureaus/offices must establish qualification courses of fire for burst-fire rifles, bolt action rifles or specialized weapons to meet specific operational needs consistent with the firearms principles and practices taught by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC).

10.19 Can LEOs meet qualification standards using another bureau's or the FLETC qualification course? The required qualification components established with this DM serve to ensure that all bureau/office firearms qualification courses share core elements. As a result of these shared core elements, bureaus/offices may allow LEOs to meet firearms qualification requirements by utilizing another bureau's/office's qualification courses, or the course of fire utilized in all bureau/office basic FLETC training programs, the FLETC Semiautomatic Pistol Course (SPC).

10.20 What training records must be maintained? Bureaus/offices will track LEO firearms qualifications to assure compliance with qualification frequency and performance and bureau/office policy. All firearms training and qualification records must be maintained in one central bureau/office location.

10.21 What types of firearms must be issued to LEOs? Bureaus/offices must establish policy regarding the types of firearms and ammunition authorized for use by LEOs to include required training specific to all firearms issued.

(a) The following are considered to be **standard firearms**:

(1) Pistols. Bureaus/offices must establish specifications and policy for primary pistols, and if applicable, secondary pistols. The minimum caliber will be .380.

(2) Shotguns. Bureaus/offices must establish specifications for shotguns. All shotguns must be 12 gauge pump-action or semi-automatic with a minimum internal four-round magazine as well as external shell carriers affixed to the weapon or sling to provide immediate access to eight or more shells in and upon the weapon.

(3) Rifles. Bureaus/offices must only issue semi-automatic (single shot) rifles as standard service weapons. In addition, bureaus may establish policy covering the issuance of burst-fire rifles (maximum 3-round burst) or bolt action rifles for specialty work units or unique requirements.

(b) BDLEs may issue written exceptions within the standard firearms category as needed for unique environmental conditions, special work units, small stature LEOs, etc.

(c) The following categories are considered to be **non-standard firearms**:

(1) All firearms other than those described above (e.g., all fully automatic weapons, specialty munitions such as grenade launchers, grenade-disbursed chemical agents, flash-bang distraction devices). Fully automatic is defined as a weapon that continuously fires rounds as long as the trigger is pulled and there is ammunition in the magazine/chamber.

(2) Non-standard firearms, including those in inventory prior to the issuance of this policy are **not authorized** for any use without written approval by the Director, OLES. Requests for waivers of non-standard firearms as detailed in 446 DM 45, *Policy Waivers and Program Enhancements*, must be submitted through the BDLE to the Director, OLES and should contain the following elements in support of the justification: 1) background and objectives, 2) analysis of the benefits and risks both with and without the enhancement, 3) mitigations for the identified risks, 4) limitations and controls, 5) training and support provisions, and 6) other research, literature and/or justifications.

(d) Ammunition: Only commercially manufactured ammunition will be allowed for duty use. Commercially manufactured lead-free cartridges may be used for qualification and training.

(e) Less-Lethal Firearms. Only clearly identified and dedicated firearms may be used to deploy less-lethal ammunition. For example, beanbag rounds may only be deployed in shotguns that are never used to fire lethal ammunition. All less-lethal weapons will be clearly identified, e.g., shotguns will have a colored stock and fore-end set.

(f) Training Firearms. Firearms used in training that are non-operational or do not fire lethal ammunition, e.g., marking cartridges, paint ball, etc., must be clearly delineated by a bureau/office-defined color scheme to differentiate them as training weapons.

(1) Bureaus/offices using non-lethal training ammunition (NLTA) in firearms must establish bureau-approved NLTA operational procedures to assure safety.

(g) New Categories of Firearms and Specialty Munitions. To address approval of emerging technologies, the Director, OLES must approve bureau/office policies regarding the use of new categories of firearms and specialty munitions not currently addressed in this policy.