SHERIFF OF GARFIELD COUNTY
LOU VALLARIO

107 8TH Street
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601
Phone: 970-945-0453
Fax: 970-945-6430

106 County Road 333-A
Rifle, CO 81650
Phone: 970-665-0200
Fax: 970-665-0253

GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
POLICY / PROCEDURE
GENERAL

SUBJECT: FIREARMS

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 01, 2024
Amended: December 01, 2025

POLICY:
The Sheriff's Office adheres to a firearms policy that ensures proper firearms use and safety by all sworn personnel of the Office.

PURPOSE:
To provide guidelines for authorized weapons that may be carried, qualified training and usage of firearms.

METHOD:
Handguns: It is the responsibility of the individual deputy to provide his own handgun that meets Sheriff's Office authorized standards. The Sheriff's Office will specify the type of ammunition to be used in the handgun. All handguns will be inspected by a Firearms Instructor prior to being authorized for carry. Should a Deputy change handguns, he/she must qualify with the new handgun prior to using it. The basic load of duty ammunition shall be a minimum of two (2) fully loaded magazines. The handgun shall be carried in a secure holster, fully loaded with a round in the chamber. Security, serviceability, and cleanliness of the handgun are the responsibility of the Deputy. As a minimum, handguns will be cleaned after firing or after exposure to inclement weather. Deputies must qualify per Sheriff's Office standards on all handguns carried.

Prohibited Handguns: Due to safety concerns, the Sig P-320, Sig M-17, and the Sig M-18 are not authorized for carry in any capacity. Also, no colored handguns that can be confused with training aids or toys shall be allowed.

Caliber: The following handgun calibers are approved for carry by all Deputies whether in uniform, plain clothes or off duty:

- .38 Special, 9 mm, 40 S&W, 45 ACP, .357 Magnum.

Secondary/Backup Handgun: Deputies are authorized to carry one concealed handgun while on duty. In addition to the above listed calibers, the .380 is authorized as a secondary/back-up weapon.

Off-Duty Handguns: Patrol Deputies and certain qualified Detention Deputies are authorized to carry a *concealed* handgun off duty. The weapon will be completely concealed at all times. Deputies shall have their badge and identification with them at all times while an off duty handgun is carried. Only those Detention Deputies that have completed the Garfield County Sheriff's Office firearms instruction course or a POST certified course, shall be permitted to carry a concealed weapon under the Sheriff's authority, regardless of the implied consent printed on the Garfield County Sheriff's Office identification card.

Optics: The addition of optics to duty/off-duty handguns is voluntary and will be will be allowed with the following requirements:

Training:

- Deputies who are firearms instructors and wish to train staff on the proper use of optics shall be trained and certified with a minimum of 16 hours of training
- Deputies who wish to carry optics shall attend and complete a minimum of 8 hours of training held by GCSO certified firearms instructors in the use of optics
- All handguns with optics shall be sighted-in using duty ammunition (zero to duty rounds)

Equipment Requirements:

- All handguns capable of supporting optics shall be milled by the manufacturer. No secondary milling or alterations shall be allowed.
- Optics must be mounted by, or under the guidance of the Firearms Team
- Iron sights will be co-witnessed
- Optics will be operated with a manual adjust
- Batteries will be changed annually

Allowable Equipment:

- See ATTACHMENT

Rifles: The Sheriff's Office will issue an AR-15 style rifle, .223 caliber, to Patrol Deputies, as authorized. The Sheriff's Office will also specify the type of ammunition to be utilized in these weapons. The purpose of the rifle is to enhance the tactical capabilities of law enforcement personnel by augmenting the service handgun. Normally, rifles will be employed at a range of 100 yards or less. That range may be extended, as appropriate, depending upon the tactical situation, the nature of the threat and the terrain involved. All weapons will be inspected, test fired and zeroed by a Firearms Instructor prior to being issued. Deputies must complete a twenty-four (24) hour training and qualification course with their assigned weapon prior to carrying it on duty. Should a deputy change weapons, he/she must qualify with the new rifle prior to using it. The basic load of duty ammunition shall be three (3) fully loaded Sheriff's Office issued magazines. Until actually deployed, rifles will be kept in the cruiser-ready condition, which consists of the following:

- Chamber empty
- Bolt forward
- Safety on
- Loaded magazine inserted into the magazine well

A round may be chambered if required by the tactical situation. However, once a round has been chambered, the safety shall be placed in the "on" position and kept there until a conscious decision has been made to fire the weapon. Security, serviceability, and cleanliness of the rifle is the responsibility of the deputy to whom it is issued. At a minimum, rifles will be cleaned after firing or after exposure to inclement weather. While in the vehicle, the weapon shall be secured in a gun rack. No vehicle containing weapons will be left unlocked. Rifles that malfunction or appear to have broken parts will be turned in to the Firearms Instructor for repair/replacement, as required.

Course Development: The responsibility for developing appropriate courses of fire and supervising all facets of firearms training rests with the Firearms Training Team. They will be assigned duties that are commensurate with their training and experience. Courses of fire will be changed periodically in order to keep the training program dynamic and take advantage of new training requirements and techniques.

Demonstrating and Maintaining Proficiency: Qualification with the duty weapon is mandatory for all Patrol Deputies and certain Detention Deputies (determined by the Sheriff). Deputies who fail to report to the range for qualification will be subject to disciplinary procedures. At each scheduled qualification session, Deputies will be allowed two (2) attempts to successfully complete the qualification course. Deputies who fail to qualify on their second attempt will be required to complete mandatory remedial training and qualify prior to returning to regular duty. Remedial training will be scheduled as soon as possible. The length of remedial training will be determined based on the needs of each individual Deputy, but in no case shall exceed a total of eight (8) hours. Once the Deputy feels ready, a qualification course will be shot. If the Deputy qualifies, the remedial training will be completed. If not, remedial training will continue, but will not exceed a total of eight (8) hours per Deputy. If the Deputy fails to qualify after a total of eight (8) hours of remedial training, they may be subject to disciplinary action. During all training and qualification sessions, Deputies will be evaluated on their gun handling skills as well as their basic shooting ability. Gun handling techniques must be safe, effective, and tactically sound. Any significant or continuing deficiencies in this respect may result in mandatory remedial training and/or appropriate administrative/disciplinary action.

Carrying Firearms Out of State: Qualified active and full-time Deputies and retired Deputies of this Office are authorized to carry a concealed firearm in all other states subject to the following conditions (USC 926B and C):

- The Deputy shall carry his/her GCSO identification card whenever carrying such weapon
- Qualified retired Deputies shall also carry certification of having met firearms qualification within the past 12 months
- The Deputy is not the subject of any current disciplinary action
- The Deputy may not be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating drugs
- The Deputy will remain subject to this and all other GCSO polices, including qualifying and training

Officers are cautioned that individual states may enact local regulations that permit private persons or entities to prohibit or restrict the possession of concealed firearms on their property, or that prohibit or restrict the possession of firearms on any federal, state or local government property, installation, building, base or park. Federal authority may not shield a Deputy from arrest and prosecution in such locally restricted areas.