



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD.

**DIVISION OF COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION SERVICES**  
**DIRECTIVE**

April 8, 2009

NUMBER: 09-04

**TO:** All Fire and Explosive Investigations Section Personnel

**FROM:** Division Chief Michael T. Love, Fire Marshal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Love".

**SUBJECT:** Firearms

**I. Goal.** A goal of the Fire and Explosive Investigations (FEI) Section is to provide all investigators with quality firearms, ammunition, and professional training to ensure that personnel acquire and maintain firearms proficiency and safety.

**II. Authorization to Carry a Firearm.**

A. All Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission (MPCTC)-certified FEI investigators are authorized to carry a firearm and must comply with all requirements indicated in this Directive.

B. The Fire Chief, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), may authorize other FEI personnel to carry a firearm. Those personnel must:

1. apply for and receive a "Permit to Carry a Handgun" from the State of Maryland before they can carry a firearm as an FEI representative; and
2. comply with all sections of this Directive.

**III. Armorer.** The Montgomery County Police (MCP) Armorer will serve as the FEI Armorer.

**IV. Investigator Responsibilities.**

A. On-duty investigators will be armed with the Department-issued handgun, which they must carry on their person whenever they leave the FEI facility. When in plainclothes, investigators must conceal their weapons from view, except when inside a police or FEI facility/area. Investigators will carry a total of fifteen rounds of ammunition in their handgun, 14 in the magazine and one in the

chamber. Each additional magazine will carry fifteen rounds. The FEI Section Chief may make exception for investigators on special details or assignments.

- B. Off-duty investigators may carry the Department-issued handgun or any approved handgun listed in Section V. B.1. of this Directive if the investigator has met the qualification requirements for that model weapon.
- C. Investigators must have each off-duty or back-up weapon they carry approved by the FEI Armorer and the FEI Section Chief.
- D. Investigators must keep all authorized weapons clean, free of rust, and in good working condition.
- E. While in a police or FEI facility, investigators must use clearing barrels each time they load and unload their weapons, including during inspections.
- F. In addition to the Department-issued handgun, only one other Department-approved handgun will be authorized for use off-duty.

**V. Handguns.**

- A. Department-issued weapons will be used only for law enforcement purposes and related activities, private range practice, and Department-approved firearms competition. Investigators must not use their Department-issued weapons for hunting or any other activity without the prior written approval of the FEI Section Chief.
- B. Non-Department issued handguns authorized for off-duty or back-up use must meet the criteria below.
  - 1. Make and Model – must be a .40 caliber Glock.
  - 2. Specifications:
    - a. Semi-automatic handgun.
    - b. Double-action only.
    - c. No external safety or decocking lever.
    - d. Minimum 8lb. trigger pull.
    - e. Any subdued (non-shiny) finish.
    - f. Three magazines are required for training and qualification purposes.
    - g. Extended magazines are not permitted. Magazines must be standard/factory issue, specified for that particular weapon. While

on duty, investigators are authorized to carry a total of two spare magazines in addition to the one in the issued handgun. All spare magazines must be carried in a pouch designed to protect the open end of the magazine from damage, lint, etc. Additional magazines for Department-issued or back-up handguns may be stored in a secure area of a FEI vehicle.

h. Fixed, adjustable, or night sights are authorized if they do not interfere with holstering or drawing the weapon.

C. Investigators are prohibited from modifying or adding any accessories to a Department-authorized handgun without the prior written approval of the FEI Section Chief and the FEI Armorer.

## **VI. Holsters.**

A. When carrying their Department-issued handgun on duty, investigators may wear and use either the Department-issued holster, or an alternate holster purchased at their own expense. Any alternate holster must meet or exceed the security standard of the Department-issued holster.

B. While on duty, plainclothes investigators may use a Department-approved “fanny pack” style pouch to carry their Department-issued handgun, if the pouch was originally designed to conceal a handgun, and if it has a secure Velcro or zippered method of retaining the weapon. “Fanny pack” style pouches *must* have this method of securing a weapon.

C. An investigator who carries the Department-issued handgun off-duty, or a personally-owned and approved handgun off-duty or as a back-up, must use a holster that meets or exceeds the security standard of the Department-issued holster. Department-approved “fanny pack” style pouches are also authorized for off-duty use.

D. Investigators who are authorized to carry personally-owned handguns for off-duty and back-up weapon use must supply their own holsters for those handguns.

E. Except for MCFRS Bomb Squad operations, investigators are not authorized to use ankle holsters or thigh holsters.

F. Shoulder holsters may be used, but will not be issued by the Department. Shoulder holsters must meet or exceed the security standard of Department-issued holsters, and must be concealed.

## **VII. Shotguns.**

A. Authorization to carry and use a shotgun is based on successful completion of shotgun training and on-going qualification.

- B. Investigators are prohibited from modifying or adding any accessory to a Department-authorized shotgun without the prior written approval of the FEI Section Chief and FEI Armorer. Adding slings (except those issued by the Department), ammunition carriers, magazine extenders, or any other modification or accessory to the issued shotgun is prohibited.
- C. The guidelines below apply to transporting and handling shotguns.
  - 1. The shotgun must be must be secured in a Department-issued hard case and locked in the trunk or caged cargo area of the investigator's vehicle.
  - 2. While transporting the shotgun, its chamber must be empty, the magazine must be loaded with four rounds, and the safety must be off. A shotgun round must not be chambered until the weapon is to be used.
  - 3. When the weapon is stored at a residence or FEI facility locker, investigators are encouraged to use a Department-issued trigger lock, in accordance with established training procedures.
  - 4. Only those shotguns and ammunition approved by the Department may be used.

### **VIII. Qualifying.**

- A. Each FEI investigator must qualify with the Department-issued handgun, in accordance with the qualification requirements established by MCP and the MPCTC.
- B. Each FEI investigator who carries an authorized off-duty or back-up handgun must qualify with that handgun, in accordance with the qualification requirements established by MCP and the MPCTC.
- C. Each FEI investigator may qualify with the Department-issued shotgun, in accordance with the requirements established by MCP and MPCTC. The method used to determine "qualified" will be a course established by the Director, MCP Training Academy, and approved by the MPCTC.
- D. When an FEI investigator is issued a replacement handgun, the investigator must qualify with that handgun within 30 calendar days of its receipt, and in accordance with the qualification requirements established by the MCP and MPCTC. The method used to determine "qualified" will be a course established by the Director, MCP Training Academy, and approved by the MPCTC.
- E. The Director of the MCP Training Academy will notify the FEI Section Chief if any investigator fails to qualify with the Department-issued handgun, authorized off-duty handgun, or Department shotgun. The FEI Section Chief will ensure

that the investigator receives remedial training and qualifies within 30 calendar days.

**IX. Ammunition.**

- A. Investigators must use only factory ammunition that is identical to the type issued by the Department. The use of reloaded ammunition is forbidden.
- B. Investigators who carry a personally-owned, approved off-duty, or back-up handgun must provide ammunition that meets the requirements indicated above at their own cost.

**X. Firearms Inspection.**

- A. The FEI Safety Officer or designee will conduct and document on FEI Form #604, *Quarterly Handgun Inspection Form*, a quarterly inspection of all weapons carried on-duty by investigators. The FEI Safety Officer will retain FEI Form #604 in the Section's safety files. It is the FEI Safety Officer's responsibility to ensure that any deficiencies in appearance or working condition found during the quarterly inspections are corrected as soon as possible.
- B. The MCP range instructor may inspect each weapon before investigators qualify. Any defect must be reported to the FEI Section Chief.

**XI. Firearm Repair.**

- A. When a firearm needs repair, the investigator must take it to the FEI Armorer. Only the FEI Armorer or designee will repair Department-issued firearms. If the firearm cannot be repaired immediately, the Department will replace it.
- B. The FEI Armorer will *not* repair an investigator's personally-owned off-duty or back-up handgun. The investigator is responsible for all maintenance and repair costs relating to their personally-owned off-duty or back-up handgun.

**XII. Firearm Security.** When not being worn on their person or in the Investigator's immediate control, all Department-issued or authorized firearms must be secured by a trigger lock or barrel lock and stored in a way that deters unauthorized use or theft.

**XIII. Revision.** When a new MCP Department Directive or Headquarters Memorandum is issued that affects MCP Function Code 305.A, *Weapon, Handguns, and Holsters*, January 15, 1995, the FEI Section Chief will determine its applicability and will amend this Directive as required, subject to the Collective Bargaining Law and to the negotiated Agreement.

**XIV. Replacement.** This Directive replaces Department of Fire and Rescue Service Policy and Procedure # 1101 - *Firearms Qualification*, which is rescinded by a Fire Chief's General Order.