



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Chapter 14: Firearms

Revised:

Last Reviewed:

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I. PURPOSE:

- A. Establishes guidelines and rules for firearms' proper use, care, and display.
- B. Establishes a standard operating procedure for check-out of Agency weapons.
- C. Establishes a standard operating procedure for weapons qualification.
- D. Establishes a standard operating procedure for the Inventory of Weapons.

II. RULES AND REGULATIONS:

- A. General
 - a. Officers, while on duty, will only carry Agency authorized weapons.
 - b. Authorized handguns will be semi-automatic and of 9mm or higher caliber as approved by the Chief.
- B. Firearms Safety
 - a. It is imperative that each officer exercises extreme care in handling all weapons, always emphasizing safety, whether on or off duty.
 - b. Holsters shall not be unsnapped, or firearms removed from holsters unnecessarily.
 - c. Loaded shoulder weapons (e.g., shotguns, rifles, gas guns, etc.) shall not be carried inside a building unless a deadly force emergency is in progress.
 - d. A round will not be chambered in a patrol rifle or shotgun unless a situation exists in which an officer may be called upon to use the firearm in the course of duty. Once the situation is stabilized, the round is to be unchambered, and the weapon returned to the safe carry position; empty chamber, fully loaded magazine, and on safe.
 - e. Confiscated and found weapons shall not be placed into evidence loaded.

f. The safe and secure storage of weapons at an officer's home while either on or off duty shall be the responsibility of the individual officer.

C. Care of Firearms

All officers are to keep their firearms clean and in good operating condition. Officers' weapons are subject to supervisor inspection at any time. Unauthorized alterations shall not be made to Agency firearms.

D. Ammunition (**GLECP 1.13b**)

All issued or authorized weapons will be loaded with Agency issued or authorized ammunition for on-duty and extra-duty use, which shall be new factory loaded with expandable type projectiles approved by the College Chief of Police. The carrying of altered, reloaded, or remanufactured ammunition for duty use is prohibited.

E. Weapon Display

- a. Law enforcement officers should avoid the unnecessary display of firearms and not remove the weapon from the holster except when there is justification for its use to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement function. Double-action pistols and revolvers shall not be carried in a cocked position.
- b. Under Georgia law, a law enforcement officer is authorized to carry an issued or authorized firearm while on duty. The decision to carry a personal weapon and ammunition off-duty is an individual decision, not an Agency requirement.
- c. Firearms will be carried in the issued holsters or in a holster approved by the College Chief of Police while on duty. These holsters will properly retain and secure the weapon while being carried.
- d. Officers are prohibited from carrying agency-issued firearms while consuming alcohol or while still under its influence, whether on or off-duty, unless on an authorized special assignment.
- e. Investigators and other plainclothes personnel should carry their weapons as approved by the agency.

F. Discharging Firearms (**GLECP 1.14a**)

Whenever any member of a TCSG Law Enforcement Agency discharges an agency-issued firearm for any purpose other than one which is sporting in nature (e.g., hunting) or for target practice, whether on or off duty, they shall submit a Use of Force report to the College Chief of Police immediately after the incident or as soon as practicable.

The report will include the following:

- a. The number of shots fired and the reason and circumstances that required the use of firearms.
- b. The names and addresses of any injured persons and witnesses.
- c. The extent and treatment of any injuries, the hospital where treated.
- d. A description of any property damage resulting from the discharge of a firearm.
- e. The officers' evaluation of the situation at the time of the incident.

If the discharge of the firearm was during a lawful use of force, the TCSG Law Enforcement Use of Force policy reporting requirements should apply.

G. Personally owned and Backup Weapons

Secondary, backup, or personal handguns and patrol rifles are permissible; however, any personal firearm used on duty must be approved by the College Chief of Police. A backup weapon must be carried concealed on the person. Any backup or secondary approved weapon that is not carried concealed by the officer will be secured in the locked compartment of the vehicle.

All requests for permission to carry personally owned or backup handguns must be submitted in writing to the College Chief of Police for approval. The request shall include the make, model, and serial number of all weapons which the officer desires to use on duty. Personally owned weapons must not have had any modifications made from the original Manufacturer Specifications, which reduces the weight of the trigger pull or affects the safe operation of the firearm. In addition, before an officer is permitted to carry a backup weapon on duty, they shall be required to qualify with the weapon on a POST- approved course of fire.

H. Special Weapons and High-Risk Situations

- a. In hazardous situations, special weapons may be used only by members of the Agency that have been trained in their use and authorized by the Chief of Police.
- b. Only shotguns/rifles issued or approved by the Agency will be used as duty weapons. Prior to issuance or use, all officers must demonstrate proficiency in using the shotgun or rifle and shoot a passing score on a course of fire that the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council approve.
- c. While on duty, an officer may be temporarily unarmed only when required by applicable policy or law. For example, when the officer is in a jail or prison facility or traveling on a commercial airliner.

I. Surrendering Weapons

Officers shall only give up any of their weapon(s) it is necessary to protect A citizen's life or themselves. Even then, officers should carefully consider the consequences of their actions. Surrendering a weapon rarely de-escalates a serious situation and can put an officer and innocent persons in jeopardy.

J. Off-Duty Weapons (**GLECP 1.13**)

- a. An officer may carry a department- issued weapon while off duty provided other requirements of this chapter are met (qualification, sworn status, etc.).
- b. When officers have Agency permission to work an extra-duty job, an agency- issued or approved firearms (loaded with approved ammunition) carried in an approved holster shall be worn. In addition, officers shall carry a department- issued identification and badge when armed on or off duty.

III. AGENCY ARMAMENT CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES:

Weapons and personal protective equipment fall into the general classification of armament. Therefore, the equipment needed to make up the basic armament requirements of a Law Enforcement Agency can be divided into two distinct areas, individual armament, and Agency armament. This S.O.P. addresses the latter.

The items required to supplement individual equipment for special operations, the heavier weapons, specialized riot equipment, and individualized protective equipment make up the Agency armory.

A. Normal Circumstances

- a. All weapons and equipment approval/check-out will be managed by a supervisor, or a person designated by the College Chief of Police as follows:
 1. Check-Out: The weapon, type, and serial number will be noted on the sign-out ledger. No weapon will be removed from the vault without being signed out unless a campus emergency requires the immediate dispersal of weapons/equipment to officers. Officers may only use the weapons/equipment assigned or approved to carry by the Chief of Police. After such an emergency has been resolved, the records can be documented in the ledger. Non-serialized equipment will be noted by type (e.g., riot helmet, shield) and any individual identifying number.
 2. The supervisor and officer will both sign the ledger, noting the date and time.
 3. Any ammunition removed will also be noted on a separate line in the ledger.
- b. All weapons or equipment shall be returned to the Agency arms vault using the following procedure: **(GLECP 1.13.c)**
 1. Weapons will be checked in immediately after the officer completes their tour of duty or immediately following a campus emergency, as mentioned in section A, subsection a. above.
 - i. Weapons will be cleaned and wiped free of dirt, moisture, and harmful residue before being replaced in the vault. In Addition, the bore will be cleaned if the weapon has been fired, fouled, or exposed to the elements.
 - ii. The weapon and/or ammunition will be placed in the proper storage area, and the date and time will be noted in the ledger.

Any weapon fired, or damaged equipment will be reported to the shift supervisor and/or the College Chief of Police.

- c. The College Chief of Police or designee will regularly inspect the arms vault and its contents to ensure that these procedures are being followed as outlined. Any weapon incident requiring maintenance after being checked out will be reported to an armorer.

The weapon will be tagged for repair and returned to the vault. Therefore, repair tags must remain in place, and the weapon only is used once the repair has been made. Repair tags will be kept in the vault for this purpose.

B. Emergency Conditions

Under emergency conditions, a supervisor shall secure the armament needed on the scene. Once the incident has been resolved, the issuing officer shall be responsible for returning the armament, as discussed in section A above. Any missing or unaccounted-for equipment shall immediately be reported to the College Chief of Police.

IV. WEAPONS QUALIFICATION:

A. Administration

- a. The College Chief of Police or a designated Training Officer is responsible for implementing firearms qualification programs, classroom instruction, and

remedial training as needed for Agency personnel.

- b. The College Chief of Police or designated range officer/armorer is responsible for ensuring all Agency-issued firearms are maintained in good working order. Those TCSG Law Enforcement Agencies which do not have a certified armorer on staff should obtain assistance from an armorer at a local law enforcement agency or another TCSG agency. Upon notification from any officer that a weapon is malfunctioning, the officer will be issued another weapon, and the malfunctioning one will be taken out of service until the proper repairs can be made. **(GLECP 1.13d)**
- B. Qualification Requirements (GLECP 2.6a, b)**
- a. All sworn personnel of the Agency shall be a POST-certified Peace Officer and have taken the oath of office prior to receiving authorization to carry a weapon in an official capacity or to exercise the power of arrest. **(GLECP 1.6)**
 - b. All TCSG sworn officers shall meet yearly Georgia POST re-qualification requirements for all issued firearms and personal firearms authorized for use on duty. This will consist of shooting a passing score on a course of fire that meets POST standards annually. The course of fire must be supervised by a POST Firearms Instructor approved by the College Chief of Police.
 - c. An officer will be given three (3) opportunities to achieve a passing score on an approved course of fire. Any personnel authorized to carry a firearm who fails to achieve a qualifying score with their primary duty weapon will be removed from law enforcement duties.
 - d. The College Chief of Police will notify the TCSG DPS Chief of Police within one (1) business day of any officer who fails to re-qualify and is removed from law enforcement duties.
 - e. An officer who fails to achieve a passing score with their duty weapon will receive remedial training from a qualified Firearms Instructor. After remedial training, an officer will have three more opportunities to shoot one qualifying score. These three opportunities shall all be on the same day. **(GLECP 2.6c and d)**
 - f. The remedial training and opportunity to re-qualify will be provided to the officer as soon as possible but by thirty (30) days after the initial attempt at yearly re-qualification. The Chief of Police may grant the TCSG Law Enforcement Agency an extension in extenuating circumstances (such as temporary physical conditions or medical problems).
 - g. Should the officer still fail to qualify with their primary duty weapon, they will be removed from any law enforcement duties pending administrative review.
 - h. An officer will not be authorized to carry any backup or secondary weapons (patrol rifle, shotgun, etc.) with which they have not qualified.

V. INVENTORY OF FIREARMS:

A. Administration

1. Whenever there is a change in the Chief of Police at one of the TCSG Colleges, the new Chief shall require that an inventory be conducted to account for all departmental firearms. The TCSG DPS Chief of Police may need other inventories to be conducted periodically. **(GLECP 1.23)**
2. The Chief will be responsible for maintaining a record of every weapon approved by the agency for official use. The record will include serial numbers, model

numbers, caliber, issue date, and to whom the weapon was issued. Other identifying information may also be recorded. **(GLECP 1.13e)**

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: GEORGIA LAW ENFORCEMENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (GLECP) STANDARDS INCLUDED: 1.6, 1.13, 1.14a, 1.23, and 2.6.

This policy is for the Law Enforcement Agencies of the Technical College System of Georgia use only and does not apply to any criminal or civil proceeding. The policy shall not be construed as creating a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense concerning third-party claims. Violations of this policy will form the basis for departmental administrative sanctions only. Violations of law will form the basis for civil and criminal sanctions in a recognized judicial setting.