

Firearms

311.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for issuing firearms, the safe and legal carrying of firearms, firearms maintenance, and firearms training.

This policy only applies to those members who are authorized to carry firearms.

311.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Authorized Firearm - Any make, model, or caliber of firearm that meets Department designated requirements and specification, and has been formally approved by the Chief of Police or designee. This includes primary service handguns, alternate duty handguns, back-up handguns, shotguns and rifles used for law enforcement purposes.

Back-up Handgun – Any handgun, other than the primary service or alternate duty handgun, that has been authorized by the Department to be carried concealed on duty.

Department Armorer – Sworn personnel, appointed by the Rangemaster, whose primary responsibility is to maintain and repair Department owned firearms.

Department Issued Firearm– Any firearm purchased by the Department and provided to an officer for use in official law enforcement duties.

Firearms Instructor – Sworn personnel appointed by the Rangemaster to conduct firearms training and range operations.

Firearms Qualification – Periodic testing required of officers to determine their competency to carry authorized firearms.

Off-Duty Firearm – Any make, model or caliber of firearm that sworn personnel carry during off-duty (non-working) hours.

Primary Service Handgun – The firearm issued and/or authorized by the Department to be carried as part of the service uniform for uniformed personnel or the firearm issued and/or authorized to be carried by plain clothes officers. This includes personally owned and authorized firearms used as a primary service weapon that were previously defined as an alternate duty weapon.

Rangemaster – Sworn employee, appointed by the Chief of Police, to lead the firearms instruction and be responsible for the management and facilitation of the firearms program.

311.2 POLICY

The Vancouver Police Department will provide sworn personnel a firearm or allow them to carry an authorized, personally owned, firearm on-duty in the performance of their duties. The Department will ensure that members meet the training requirements for each type of firearm carried, the firearm is properly maintained, and the officer's adherence to this policy.

Firearms

311.3 RANGEMASTER DUTIES

The range and all firearms training will be under the exclusive control of the Rangemaster. All members attending will follow the directions of the Rangemaster or designee.

The Rangemaster or designee has the responsibility of making periodic inspections, at least once a year or as determined by the manufacturer, of all duty weapons carried by officers of this Department to verify proper operation. The Rangemaster or designee has the authority to deem any Department issued and/or authorized personally owned firearm unfit for service. The member will be responsible for all repairs to a personally owned firearm; it will not be returned to service until inspected and approved by the Rangemaster or designee.

The Rangemaster shall complete and submit to the Training Sergeant documentation of all firearms training and other courses provided. Documentation shall include the names of each instructor who provides the training, a description of the training provided and, on a form that has been approved by the Department, a list of each member who attends and/or completes the training. The Rangemaster should keep accurate records of all firearms training, qualifications, repairs, maintenance or other records as directed by the Training Sergeant.

311.3.1 ARMORER DUTIES

The Department Armorer, or designee, is the only police personnel authorized to make alterations, repairs, adjustments or modifications to Department issued and/or authorized firearms. The armorer's responsibilities include:

- (a) Conduct inspection of Department issued and/or authorized firearms on an annual basis or otherwise required by the manufacturer.
- (b) Inspect all weapons if used in an officer involved shooting or accidental discharge.
- (c) Modifications include adjustments to the grips, springs, trigger, sights, finishes and any other aspect of the firearm.

311.4 AUTHORIZED FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER WEAPONS

Members shall only use firearms that are issued or approved by the Department and have been inspected by the Rangemaster or Department Armorer. Except in an emergency or as directed by a supervisor, no firearm shall be carried by a member who has not qualified with that firearm (e.g., post Officer Involved Shooting).

311.4.1 HANDGUNS

The Chief of Police will authorize firearms that officers are permitted to carry as their primary service weapon.

To receive authorization to carry the primary service handgun, officers must:

1. Successfully pass firearms qualification,
2. Attend Use of Force training, and
3. Attend training regarding the use of firearms.

Vancouver Police Department

Vancouver PD Policy Manual

Firearms

After receiving authorization, officers will carry their Department issued or authorized handgun while on duty at all times and/or when operating a Department vehicle whether on or off duty.

311.4.2 SHOTGUNS

While on duty, shotguns shall be carried in a secure shotgun rack in the patrol vehicle or in the trunk of the patrol vehicle in an approved rack or case with the magazine tube loaded, the chamber empty and the safety in the "on" position.

While off duty the shotgun must be:

1. Stored in the officer's duty locker at a Vancouver Police facility.
2. Safely secured within the officer's home.
3. The police vehicle if the vehicle is stored within a secure garage and the shotgun is secured in a locking device or in the locked vehicle trunk.

When a Department vehicle is removed from service for maintenance, the shotgun will be removed from the vehicle and secured by the assigned officer.

311.4.3 PATROL RIFLES

While on duty, patrol rifles shall be carried in a secure patrol rifle rack in the patrol vehicle or in the trunk of the patrol vehicle in an approved rack or case with a loaded magazine inserted into the magazine well, the chamber empty, bolt forward with the dust cover closed, and the safety in the "on" position.

While off duty the patrol rifle must be:

1. Stored in the officer's duty locker at a Vancouver Police facility.
2. Safely secured within the officer's home.
3. The police vehicle if the vehicle is stored within a secure garage and the rifle is secured in a locking device or in the locked vehicle trunk.

When a Department vehicle is removed from service for maintenance, the rifle will be removed from the vehicle and secured by the assigned officer.

311.4.4 PERSONALLY OWNED DUTY FIREARMS

Members desiring to carry an authorized but personally owned duty firearm must receive written and signed approval from the Rangemaster. Once approved, personally owned duty firearms are subject to the following guidelines:

- (a) The firearm shall be in good working order.
- (b) The firearm shall be inspected by the Rangemaster or designee prior to being carried and thereafter shall be subject to inspection whenever it is deemed necessary.
- (c) Prior to carrying the firearm, officers shall qualify in accordance with the Department qualification schedule.
- (d) Officers are personally responsible for all costs associated with the purchase and maintenance of their personally owned duty firearm.

Vancouver Police Department

Vancouver PD Policy Manual

Firearms

- (e) If the firearm does not fit a Department issued holster and magazine pouch, the officer is responsible for the purchase for these items. These items must then be approved for carry by the Rangemaster or designee.
- (f) The calibers of the personally owned duty firearm carried on duty must either be .9mm, .40 or .45 caliber. The Department will supply practice and duty ammunition

All personally owned duty firearms shall be carried in accordance with uniform and related Department policies.

311.4.5 AUTHORIZED BACKUP HANDGUN

Members desiring to carry a personally owned backup handgun are subject to the following guidelines:

- (a) The handgun shall be in good working order and on the Department list of approved firearms.
- (b) The purchase of the handgun and ammunition shall be the responsibility of the officer. If the handgun's caliber is .9mm, .40 or .45 caliber, the Department may supply the ammunition, if available.
- (c) The handgun shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent unintentional cocking, discharge or loss of physical control.
- (d) The handgun shall be inspected by the Rangemaster or designee prior to being carried, and thereafter shall be subject to inspection whenever deemed necessary.
- (e) Prior to carrying the handgun, members shall qualify in accordance with the Department's qualification schedule. Officers must demonstrate proficiency and safe handling and that the handgun functions properly.
- (f) Only one backup handgun may be carried at a time.

311.4.6 AUTHORIZED OFF-DUTY FIREARMS

The carrying of firearms by an officer off-duty is permitted by the Chief of Police but may be rescinded should circumstances dictate (e.g., administrative leave). Members who choose to carry a firearm while off-duty, based on their authority as peace officers, will be required to meet the following guidelines:

- (a) The firearm shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent unintentional cocking, discharge or loss of physical control.
- (b) If an officer desires to use more than one firearm while off-duty, the officer may do so as long as all requirements set forth in this policy for each firearm are met.
- (c) When armed, off-duty officers shall carry their Vancouver Police Department identification card.

311.4.7 DUTY AMMUNITION

1. The Department shall provide duty ammunition for all primary duty handguns, patrol rifles, and shotguns.
2. The Department will replace duty ammunition annually at qualifications.

Firearms

3. The Department is responsible to replace unserviceable or depleted Department issued ammunition through the Rangemaster or designee.

311.5 EQUIPMENT

Firearms carried on/off-duty shall be maintained in a clean, serviceable condition. Maintenance and repair of authorized personally owned firearms are the responsibility of the individual member.

311.5.1 REPAIRS

Officers shall report and immediately remove from service any defective, unsafe, malfunctioning or damaged Department issued or authorized firearm. This firearm shall be arranged to be submitted to the Rangemaster/armorer for evaluation on the next working day and a replacement arranged.

311.5.2 HOLSTERS

Only Department issued or Department approved holsters shall be worn by members. Those members wanting to use their personally owned holsters must first have them inspected and approved for use by the Rangemaster or designee. Members shall periodically inspect their holsters to make sure they are serviceable and provide proper security and retention of the handgun.

311.5.3 OPTICS OR LASER SIGHTS

Optics or laser sights may only be installed on a firearm carried on/off-duty after they have been examined and approved by the Rangemaster or designee. Any approved sight shall only be installed in strict accordance with manufacturer specifications.

311.5.4 WEAPON MOUNTED LIGHTS

A light source mounted to a firearm where the light beam is aligned with the gun barrel is considered a purpose-specific tool. Weapon mounted flashlights are not intended to replace the Officer's handheld flashlight. A weapon mounted light is a tool to be used as an aid during situations where the deployment of a firearm is reasonable.

311.6 SAFE HANDLING, INSPECTION AND STORAGE

All Department issued and authorized firearms shall be carried and handled in a safe and secure manner as authorized by this Department and taught by the Firearms Training Staff.

311.6.1 INSPECTION AND STORAGE

At the start of each shift, officers shall inspect their firearms, safely and in accordance with training, to assure they are loaded properly and are clean and in working order.

All Department authorized firearms may be safely stored in the officer's duty locker at the end of the shift.

311.6.2 STORAGE AT HOME

Members shall ensure that all Department issued firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, and in a manner that will keep

Firearms

them inaccessible to children and others who should not have access. Members shall not permit Department issued firearms to be handled by anyone not authorized by the Department to do so.

The Vancouver Police Department will issue Department owned gun safety locks or locking storage containers for the primary service handgun at the time the firearm is first issued or authorized or upon request.

Officers shall notify a supervisor immediately following the discovery of a lost or stolen VPD owned and issued firearm. The supervisor will assure appropriate written reports are completed and the Rangemaster and the officer's chain of command is made aware.

311.6.3 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Officers shall report to their immediate supervisor any use of prescription drugs or other medication that may impair their ability or judgement to use a firearm. Officers shall not carry a Department issued or authorized firearm on/off-duty when impaired by alcohol, prescription or non-prescription drugs. Officers should not take any off-duty action, even if authorized by the policy, when impaired, unless the situation is life threatening and is reasonable under the circumstances.

311.7 FIREARMS TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

All officers authorized to carry firearms shall be required to qualify with each Department issued and/or authorized firearm at the time of employment and acquisition of a weapon, at the change of any weapon used on duty, and as follows:

- (a) Annually for primary service handguns, rifles, and/or shotguns.
- (b) Annually for back up handguns.
- (c) Annually for off-duty firearms carried under the authority of the Chief of Police.
- (d) As otherwise required by this policy or a supervisor.

During a qualification, officers shall be allowed no more than three attempts to qualify with each weapon.

Officers assigned to a special tactics unit, such as SWAT, DTF, or NRT, may be required to qualify using additional proficiency standards established by the Department.

The Chief of Police (not a designee) may modify these qualification requirements for officer(s) based on job performance and/or responsibilities.

311.7.1 NON-QUALIFICATION OF PRIMARY SERVICE HANDGUN

If any officer fails to meet minimum standards for primary handgun training and qualifications for any reason, including injury, illness, duty status or scheduling conflict, shall submit a memorandum to their immediate supervisor prior to the end of the required training or qualification period.

Those officers who fail to meet minimum standards or qualifying on their first shooting attempt shall be provided the following:

- (a) On-site remedial training

Firearms

- (b) Two additional attempts to qualify

If the officer fails to qualify after three attempts, the Training Unit Sergeant and the officer's immediate supervisor shall be notified, and the officer will be prohibited from carrying their service handgun while on duty. The officer must then attend a formal, remedial training conducted by the firearms training unit for a minimum of 8 hours and not to exceed 40 hours in duration. Such training does not preclude an officer from engaging in any additional informal practice or training session that the officer may deem necessary.

Following the formal training session, the officer shall be given an opportunity to re-qualify. If again after three attempts the officer fails to qualify, the Rangemaster will forward a report to the Chief of Police documenting the attempts to train the officer and their failure to qualify.

An officer who fails to qualify following the formal remedial training will be relieved of field assignment, surrender their handgun, and be administratively reassigned pending the Chief of Police (not a designee) determination of the appropriate course of action.

311.7.2 NON-QUALIFICATION OF NON-PRIMARY SERVICE HANDGUN

The Department will take specific actions for any officer who fails to qualify with a firearm other than their primary service handgun.

- (a) The officer shall be given opportunities with a reasonable period of time to re-qualify with the weapon.
- (b) If the officer fails to qualify, they cannot carry the firearm in question until such time as the officer re-qualifies.
- (c) The officer may remain on regular duty assignment if qualified to carry their primary service handgun.

311.8 FIREARM DISCHARGE

Except during training or recreational firearms practice, any member who discharges a department issued firearm intentionally or unintentionally, on/off-duty, shall make a verbal report to their supervisor as soon as circumstances permit. If the discharge results in self-inflicted gunshot wound or injury or death to another person, additional statements and reports shall be made in accordance with the Officer Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy.

In all other cases, written reports shall be made as follows:

- (a) If on-duty at the time of the incident, the member shall complete a report if applicable or file a written memorandum with his/her immediate supervisor prior to the end of shift, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.
- (b) If off-duty at the time of the incident, a report if applicable or a written memorandum shall be submitted no later than the end of the next regularly scheduled shift, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.
- (c) The supervisor will ensure appropriate documentation and any necessary chain of command notifications are completed.

Firearms

311.8.1 DISPATCHING OF DANGEROUS ANIMALS

Members are authorized to use firearms to stop an animal in circumstances where the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

In circumstances where there is sufficient advance notice that a potentially dangerous animal may be encountered, Department members should develop reasonable contingency plans for dealing with the animal (e.g., fire extinguisher, Taser, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, animal control officer). Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any member from shooting a dangerous animal if circumstances reasonably dictate that a contingency plan has failed or becomes impractical.

If practicable, the officer should notify an on-duty supervisor prior to dispatching the animal.

On duty incidents involving discharging a firearm to stop a dangerous animal are documented in BlueTeam.

311.8.2 EUTHANIZING INJURED ANIMALS

An officer may euthanize an animal that is so badly injured that human compassion requires its removal from further suffering and where other dispositions are impractical.

If practicable, the officer should notify an on-duty supervisor prior to euthanizing the animal.

On duty incidents involving euthanizing an injured wild animal with a firearm are documented in BlueTeam.

311.9 FLYING WHILE ARMED

An operational need for armed travel must be met under applicable federal law and TSA regulations.

Current TSA procedures will be followed for approval to fly while armed.

311.9.1 CEREMONIAL EVENTS

Officers attending a law enforcement ceremonial function or funeral may transport unloaded firearms and ammunition in a locked hard-sided container as checked baggage only. Officers must follow the storage and transportation requirements outlined by the TSA.

311.10 TRANSPORTING DEPARTMENT ISSUED FIREARMS OUT OF STATE

Transporting a Department issued firearm while out of state will be approved under the following circumstances:

1. If the uniform is required to be worn.
2. If the firearm is required for training approved by the Department.
3. If on official Department business.
4. If the firearm is evidence subpoenaed by another jurisdiction.

Vancouver Police Department

Vancouver PD Policy Manual

Firearms

5. If the situation leads the commissioned employee and his/her supervisor to believe a firearm is needed (circumstances must be specifically outlined in a memo to the Chief of Police).
6. If the employee lives in Oregon.

311.11 CARRYING FIREARMS OUT OF STATE – OFF DUTY

Qualified, active, full-time officers of this Department are authorized to carry a concealed firearm in all other states subject to the following conditions:

- (a) The officer shall carry his/her Vancouver Police Department issued identification card whenever carrying such firearm.
- (b) The officer is not the subject of any current disciplinary action which prohibits the officer from carrying a department issued firearm
- (c) The officer may not be under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating or hallucinatory drug.
- (d) The officer will remain subject to this and all other Department policies (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 state or local government property, installation, building, base or park. Federal authority may not shield an officer from arrest and prosecution in such locally restricted areas.