

Policy

It is the policy of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office to allow only agency approved firearms and ammunition to be carried on or off duty. This applies to all sworn personnel.

Purpose

The purpose of this Chapter is to establish control over the use and designate the types of firearms and ammunition approved for use.

A. Carrying Firearms

1. Deputies are considered to be available for duty at all times.
2. When deputies are on-duty they will be armed with a CCSO issued or approved firearm and carry their badge and CCSO identification card unless otherwise authorized for covert operations.
3. When off-duty, deputies will carry their badge or CCSO identification card and at the deputies option, an issued or approved firearm. However, when a firearm is carried off duty, deputies will carry both their badge and CCSO identification card.
4. When operating an agency vehicle off-duty, an agency-approved handgun must be carried.

B. Firearms in Court

1. While attending any court where carrying or displaying of firearms is restricted, CCSO employees will comply with those particular regulations.
2. While attending any court as a defendant in a criminal trial, a plaintiff in a civil trial, or while serving as a juror, employees shall not carry a firearm.

C. Safety and Security

1. Deputies should relinquish their weapon for inspection only to a superior officer or a firearms instructor, and only after the weapon has been completely unloaded.

2. All firearms should be unloaded in a safe manner and made safe before storage in an employee's home or in an unlocked storage area.
3. When available, personnel will properly secure firearms in a locked storage facility whenever they are not worn.
4. When stored in a motor vehicle, firearms must be secured in a locked trunk or in a locked storage compartment if the vehicle has no trunk.
5. When a deputy goes off-duty, and the vehicle is not being used in an off-duty status, or leaves a vehicle for service or repairs, all firearms, including personally owned firearms and rack-mounted weapons, will be removed from the vehicle.
6. Firearms shall be kept out of the reach of the public and shall not be left unsecured or unattended.
7. In the home, firearms should be kept out of sight. Pursuant to Annotated Code of Maryland, Criminal Law Section 4-104, an employee will not store or leave a loaded firearm in any location where, except in the case of unlawful entry, an unsupervised minor would gain access to the firearm.

D. Repairs and Maintenance

1. Deputies will regularly inspect and maintain their firearms, extra magazines, ammunition and leather to prevent accumulation of dirt, the formation of rust or corrosion, and excessive wear.
2. Firearms will be cleaned at least once a month or immediately when subjected to inclement weather or other contaminants.
3. Firearms shall be cleaned promptly after they have been used; however, it is imperative that this cleaning be done only in a safe location free from distraction.
4. Prior to cleaning, all weapons will be checked to assure that they are unloaded and safe.
5. CCSO employees will not make any repairs or modifications of any kind to CCSO issued firearms.

E. Inspection of All Firearms

1. All firearms shall be inspected during annual in-service training or a date and time designated by the agency armorer.

F. Primary Handguns and Ammunition

1. The primary weapon issued by the CCSO for on-duty sworn personnel is the Glock 23.
2. Personnel assigned the Glock 23 pistols may elect to purchase and equip the firearm with a light attachment provided that:
 - a. The light attachment must have a Mil Spec or equivalent rating with the ability to mount to the Picatinny Rails of the Glock 23 without any modifications to the light attachment or the Glock 23. The light attachment must be approved by the Range Master and Armorer by signing CCSO Form# SO-166 with the original to the personnel file and one copy to the employee.
 - b. Holsters accommodating light attachment will comply with Section H of this Policy and will be purchased at the deputy's expense.
3. Deputies working a non-uniformed investigative assignment or performing undercover work may carry their authorized secondary firearm as their primary firearm but only while working the assignment provided that:
 - a. The handgun has at least a 5 shot magazine and, if the weapon has less than a 12 round capacity, an extra magazine must be carried.
 - b. The handgun is a 380 caliber or larger.
 - c. The handgun will only be loaded with CCSO approved ammunition.
 - d. Deputies carrying a secondary firearm as their primary weapon must purchase and maintain it at their own expense.
 - e. All ammunition carried in and used for qualification with personal firearms, must be purchased at the employee's expense and be CCSO approved.
 - f. Deputies will maintain and fire an annual passing score with the CCSO issued or approved weapon.

4. Only that handgun ammunition approved by the CCSO Armorer/Range Master will be used in primary, secondary handguns carried by sworn personnel. When the Glock 23 is carried as a primary weapon, the only ammunition that shall be carried is the CCSO issued duty ammunition.
5. Only CCSO issued 12-gauge shotgun ammunition will be used in patrol activities requiring the use of the shotgun.
6. It is not mandatory for a deputy to carry a handgun off-duty unless he/she is either the operator of or a passenger in a CCSO vehicle.
7. No member of this agency shall consume alcoholic beverages on duty while wearing or carrying a weapon without prior authorization from a Command Staff member. In those cases when approved, consumption on duty will not be to the point of impairment preventing performance of duties or operation of a motor vehicle. If approved, the Command Staff member will ensure the approval is documented in the deputy's personnel file. Deputies assigned to a task force supervised by an allied agency will follow this policy unless another policy within that task force covers this activity.

G. Approval and Registration Required

1. All requests to carry/use a personally owned handgun as primary, secondary, or off-duty weapon, or a shotgun as a secondary weapon, will be submitted to the Range Master on a Request and Approval to Carry Weapon (Form SO-166) for initial approval, who will then forward the form to command staff for final approval. A copy of this form will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
2. All personally owned firearms must be inspected and approved by an Agency armorer certified for that particular weapon.
3. Deputies requesting approval shall demonstrate proficiency in the use, carrying and cleaning of the weapon prior to approval by a certified firearms instructor.
4. A member may be permitted to carry a second handgun while on-duty, provided the member conforms to established secondary handgun requirements and qualifications as delineated in this policy.

5. If a member is carrying a second handgun, the handgun shall be concealed.
6. All Secondary handguns must meet the criteria mandated in the list below of pre-approved caliber weapons and specifications:
 - a. Capacity: Minimum five (5) rounds of ammunition.
 - b. Type: Revolver or semi-automatic.
 - c. Barrel: Minimum of two (2) inches in length
 - d. Caliber(s): .380 auto, .38 special, .357 magnum, 9mm, .40 caliber, or .45 ACP only.
 - e. Only agency approved ammunition shall be used.
 - f. No reloaded ammunition shall be used.
7. An adjustment or modification to an approved weapon requires prior approval and a re-inspection by a certified armorer prior to use and deputies are responsible for all expenses associated with repairing and maintaining such weapons.
8. Approval of secondary weapons will be limited to two such weapons per deputy at any one time. A deputy will not carry more than two handguns at one time.

H. Holsters

1. Only holsters, magazine pouches, and gun belts issued by the CCSO, as an item of uniform equipment, may be used by on-duty deputies in conjunction with their issued primary handgun. Deputies who wish to carry a light attachment on the issued Glock 23 will comply with F. #3 of this Section. Deputies normally in uniform, who are temporarily required to work in civilian attire, may use an issued or approved off-duty holster.
2. Holsters for on-duty use of the Glock 23 equipped with an approved light attachment must be approved by the Range Master and Armorer. The holster will be a Level III retention design and will be black finish to match the accompanying agency issue leather gear.
2. Holsters for use with secondary weapons must be approved by the Range Master and Armorer. The holster will be quality made and securely held to the body when worn. It must also have a covered trigger guard and provide concealment for the weapon when worn. Generally, the holster should have a thumb strap unless the holster is of a level II design that has a retention device that securely holds the weapon in place.

4. Those employees who elect to purchase a “fanny pack” or “gun sack” to be worn while off-duty must qualify with it during off-duty qualification. These items must be approved by the Range Master and Armorer prior to being worn.
5. Each member using a non-issued holster shall qualify wearing that holster.

I. Shotguns

1. Only shotguns issued or approved by the agency may be utilized by qualified sworn members.
2. The shotgun shall be loaded with four (4) rounds of agency issued ammunition, with the action closed on an empty chamber. Shotguns with extended magazines may be loaded with seven (7) rounds.
3. A member is prohibited from carrying or using a shotgun unless he/she has qualified annually with the weapon.
4. Members are prohibited from using an agency issued shotgun and/or ammunition for personal use.
5. The shotgun shall not be altered in any way without prior written approval from the Director of Law Enforcement.
6. Deputies are only authorized to carry a CCSO issued shotgun in the patrol vehicle.
7. Safety precautions when carrying shotguns in patrol vehicles:
 - a. Shotguns may be carried in a patrol vehicle with a fully loaded magazine, but no ammunition shall be carried in the chamber. (Car carry condition)
 - b. Weapons will be encased or fastened in a CCSO approved rack or secured in the vehicle trunk.
 - c. Shotguns will not be laid on the seat where they may be thrown about the inside of the vehicle.
 - d. Shotgun rack installation shall only be completed by approved, experienced personnel.
 - e. Only those shotgun racks approved by the CCSO will be used in CCSO vehicles.

J. Patrol Rifles

1. Upon successful completion of a MPCTC approved rifle course, deputies are authorized to use and carry a CCSO issued rifle and ammunition.
2. Once approved, deputies will complete a bi-annual qualification course with a minimum score of 90% with the issued rifle. All scores will be recorded and retained by the agency training officer.
3. Approved deputies will not use an assigned CCSO rifle or ammunition for personal use.
4. Rifles will be carried in a CCSO vehicle with a fully loaded twenty or thirty round magazine inserted, bolt forward on an empty chamber, and weapon on safe.
5. Rifles will be encased in a CCSO approved rack or rifle case and secured in the vehicle's trunk.
6. Rifles will be removed from the trunk and appropriately stored in a safe location when the vehicle is left for service, repairs, vacation, extended leave, overnight training.
7. The CCSO issued rifle will not be altered in any way without prior approval by the Director of Law Enforcement.
8. Personally owned rifles will not be carried by sworn personnel in Cecil County Sheriff's Office vehicles.