

JACKSONVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policy: 8-9
Effective: 02-15-21
Revision: 02-17-21

PATROL RIFLES AR-15

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to outline the use of patrol rifles within this Department.

POLICY: The policy of the Department is to utilize patrol rifles for those operations where the safety of citizens and officers will be enhanced through the use of these firearms.

DEFINITIONS:

- I. **EMPLOYEE:** Any department sworn employee authorized, trained, and currently qualified to carry a rifle.
- II. **STORAGE CONDITION:** The weapon's selector lever is on "safe," the magazine has been removed, the chamber is empty, the bolt is locked open, and a magazine block is inserted in the magazine well.
- III. **TACTICAL CONDITION:** When the weapon's selector lever is on "safe," a magazine is loaded in the weapon, and a round is chambered, making the weapon ready for immediate use.
- IV. **PATROL CAR READY:** The weapon's selector lever is on "safe," no live round is in the chamber, the bolt is closed, a fully loaded magazine is inserted in the magazine well, and the ejection port dust cover is closed.
- V. **PATROL RIFLE:** AR-15 is the most commonly observed rifle in police patrol. The weapon system is safe, accurate, reliable, effective, and easily deployed by officers of all stature due to its lightweight, low recoil, and general ease of operation. Lights mounted to rifles will be installed in a manner that does not obstruct the iron sights on the firearm or an optic accessory. Personal rifles must be semi-automatic.

PROCEDURE:

- I. At the outset, it is recognized that patrol rifles are no different from a legal perspective than a handgun. Any limitations placed upon the use of patrol rifles in this policy have no bearing on whether a use of deadly force is justified. All uses of deadly force must be consistent with this department's deadly force policy.
- II. The purpose of the patrol rifle is to enhance the tactical capabilities of law enforcement personnel by augmenting the service pistol and shotgun, as appropriate. It should be recognized that any long gun diminishes weapon retention capability, and therefore are used as a standoff weapon rather than where the officer is faced with a close quarter tactical encounter.
- III. Officers will utilize only department issued or department approved rifles on duty unless authorized otherwise by the Chief.
- IV. Officers will only utilize department issued ammunition in a patrol rifle unless authorized otherwise by the Chief.
- V. Patrol rifles will only be carried and used by department personnel who have successfully completed the instructional and qualification course conducted by this department; personnel must continue to

qualify with the weapon each year thereafter. An exception is allowed only for exigent circumstances in which there is imminent loss of life of an officer or civilian.

VI. STORAGE ON DUTY:

- A. While on duty, all long guns shall be secured in the police car either in a locked rack OR hard or soft case in the vehicle but not visible to someone looking into the car (if in a case).
- B. The rifle will not have a round in the chamber while inside the police vehicle.
- C. A round will only be loaded into the chamber of the weapon outside the police vehicle in anticipation of the weapon's imminent use ("Tactical Condition").
- D. All police vehicles shall be locked with the windows fully closed whenever the officer assigned to operate that vehicle will be out of sight of the vehicle, except under extenuating circumstance. This provision is to discourage and prevent thefts or tampering with any JPD equipment, computers, or papers-especially long-gun weapons.
- E. Except when anticipating the imminent use of the rifle, employees will inspect the weapon to ensure that the safety is on and there is no round loaded in the chamber when:
 - 1. Checking a rifle out from an authorized police weapons storage facility or locker.
 - 2. Taking the rifle out of its locked holder or Department approved carrying case.
 - 3. Receiving a rifle from another person.
- F. If the rifle is found to have a round in the chamber, the employee will move to a safe location, point the muzzle in a safe direction or into a department approved clearing barrel and unload the weapon.
- G. The rifle will be placed in "Storage Condition" before it is turned in or stored.

VII. OFF-DUTY WEAPONS STORAGE:

- A. This provision applies to all departmentally issued long guns and strongly encouraged for privately owned long guns:
 - 1. While off duty, all long guns must be removed from the officer's vehicle (whether the vehicle is departmentally issued or privately owned) and secured inside the officer's home or other place of lodging if the vehicle is left outside.
 - 2. While off duty, if the vehicle is secured inside his locked residence (locked garage area not shared with other tenants), the weapons may be left in the vehicle.

VIII. WEAPON MAINTENANCE:

- A. All departmentally issued weapons must be maintained by the officer the weapon is issued to in accordance with the training received in the Patrol Rifle Program. Any damage or malfunctions of the weapon must be reported to the department armorer for repair.
- B. Modifications:
 - 1. Modifications to departmentally issued weapons must be approved by the Chief or his designee and performed by the department armorer.
 - 2. Modifications to personally owned weapons, which have been approved by the department, must be reviewed and approved before the weapon can be utilized on duty. Such modifications will be reviewed by the department armorer and approved by the Chief or their designee.