

STANDARD PROCEDURES  
OF  
THE WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

ORIGINATOR <b>Floyd E. Holt</b> Director, Office of Security Services	DEPT. & NUMBER <b>GM 91-01</b>	APPROVED BY/DATE <b>Cortez A. White</b> Assistant General Manager <i>Cortez A. White</i>	EFFECTIVE DATE <b>6/12/91</b>	PAGE <b>1</b>
SUBJECT <b>FIREARMS AUTHORIZATION</b>				

**PURPOSE:** To establish the policy of the WSSC with respect to the carrying of firearms by specified, qualified members of the Office of Security Services, in the conduct of their official duties.

- POLICY:**
1. It shall be the policy of the WSSC that only specific, qualified members of the Office of Security Services shall carry and use an approved firearm, while on duty. A firearm shall only be employed to defend themselves or others when no apparent alternative from the threat of death or life threatening injury exists.
  2. In every instance, only the minimum force necessary to accomplish the objective shall be used and every other means of defense shall be exhausted before a firearm may be unholstered.
  3. Written guidelines shall be established concurrent with this SOP governing firearms training and qualifications which shall meet or exceed the minimum training standards established by the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions. (See General Order 91-01, attached).
  4. Written guidelines shall be established to govern the proper wear and use; prohibited use; reporting of discharge or violations; investigation of violations; and care and maintenance of official firearms.
  5. The Commissioners will be notified of any changes to the written guidelines described in paragraphs #3 and #4.

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WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

OFFICE OF SECURITY SERVICES

GENERAL ORDER 91-01  
FIREARMS PROCEDURE

Issuing Authority:

Cortez A. White  
Cortez A. White  
Assistant General Manager

Floyd E. Holt  
Floyd E. Holt  
Director

Effective Date: 6/12/91

**GENERAL:** The value of human life is immeasurable in our society. Police officers have been delegated the responsibility to protect life and property and apprehend criminal offenders. However, the apprehension of criminal offenders and protection of property must at all times be subservient to the protection of life. The officer's responsibility for protecting life must include his own.

WSSC officers are charged with the responsibility to patrol the Commission's reservoirs, properties, facilities, systems, buildings and grounds, investigate fraud, theft, arson, sabotage and the use and sale of controlled dangerous substances as well as other suspected criminal activity that may affect the WSSC. Day-to-day they are exposed to the threat of imminent danger including serious bodily injury and possibly even death. As personal protection against such a threat, it has been deemed appropriate to arm certain qualified members of the Office of Security Services.

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this General Order is to delineate the Policy and Procedure of the WSSC with respect to the use of firearms by members of the Office of Security Services.

**POLICY:**

It shall be the policy of the WSSC that members of the Office of Security Services shall, in every instance, use the minimum force necessary to accomplish their mission, and shall exhaust every other means of defense before using a firearm. The use of a firearm shall be justified only for self-defense or in the defense of others when the officer has an honest, sincere, and reasonable belief that his life and/or safety or the life and/or safety of another person is in imminent danger and may only be averted with the use of a firearm. The decision to use

a firearm shall be justified only under circumstances that a reasonable police professional would consider sufficient. In no instance, may the use of force be more than is necessary to achieve a lawful purpose.

PROCEDURE:

I. USE OF FIREARMS

- A. An authorized member of the Office of Security Services shall discharge his firearm in the performance of his official duties only under the circumstances hereinafter specified:
  - 1. In defense of self or others when no apparent alternative exists for protecting one's self or others from what reasonably appears to be a significant and imminent threat of death or life threatening injury.
  - 2. At an approved range for the required training, qualification and re-qualification.
  - 3. For additional range practice with the prior authorization of the Director of the Office of Security Services or his designee.

II. PROHIBITED USE OF FIREARMS

- A. When lesser force could reasonably be used.
- B. When the possibility exists for innocent persons to be unduly endangered.
- C. When used as a warning.
- D. In the apprehension of a fleeing felon or misdemeanor, unless the officer reasonably believes that the use of a firearm is necessary for the defense of self or others as described in Section I.A,1. above.

III. REPORTING PROCEDURE

A. Discharge of a firearm on WSSC property.

1. When a member intentionally or accidentally discharges a firearm that is in his possession by virtue of his employment, he shall immediately notify, or cause to be notified, the Internal Investigations Section of the Office of Security Services. The involved member shall inform the Internal Investigator of all pertinent information regarding the incident.
2. The involved member shall use all reasonable efforts to secure the scene until the arrival of investigative personnel.
3. The involved member shall, as soon as practicable, complete a detailed written report, describing the incident.
4. The involved member shall make himself available to the appropriate investigator charged with the investigation.
5. In the event an authorized member discharges a firearm which causes injury or death to another person, he shall, by the workday following the incident, contact a counselor of the Commission's Employee Assistance Program.

B. Discharge of a firearm off WSSC property.

1. When a member intentionally or accidentally discharges a firearm that is in his possession by virtue of his employment, he shall immediately notify the law enforcement agency within that jurisdiction. (It should be noted that there are numerous law enforcement agencies within the Sanitary District. Each agency may adhere to different procedures regarding the investigation of the discharge of firearms. It is

incumbent on the member to cooperate with the appropriate agency in their approach to the incident).

2. The involved member shall notify, or cause to be notified, the Internal Investigations Section of the Office of Security Services.
  3. The involved member shall, as soon as practicable, complete a detailed written report describing the incident.
  4. The involved member shall make himself available to the appropriate investigator charged with the investigation.
  5. In the event an authorized member discharges a firearm which causes injury or death to another person, he shall, by the workday following the incident, contact a counselor of the Commission's Employee Assistance Program.
- C. In the event an authorized member discharges a firearm which causes injury or death to another person, his police powers and authority to carry a firearm shall be suspended, he shall immediately be placed on Administrative Leave, with pay, in accordance with the WSSC Personnel Policy and Benefits Program, Section 5.20, pending an investigation concerning the propriety of the officer's actions.

#### IV. INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

##### A. Discharge of a firearm on WSSC property.

Upon notification of a firearm discharge, the appropriate Internal Investigator shall:

1. Assess all information obtained.
2. Determine if outside law enforcement agency notification and/or assistance is required.

- a. This determination shall be based on all available information, the severity of the incident, and the resources available in order to direct the investigation to a successful conclusion.
- b. In the event the decision of the Internal Investigator is to request outside law enforcement agency assistance, the following procedure shall be utilized.
  - (1) The Internal Investigator shall notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the incident.
  - (2) The Internal Investigator shall ensure that the scene of the incident is secured.
  - (3) The Internal Investigator shall relinquish all aspects of the investigation to the law enforcement agency.
  - (4) The Internal Investigator will maintain a close liaison with the law enforcement agency and ensure a complete exchange of information throughout the investigation.
3. The Internal Investigator shall be responsible for conducting an accurate and detailed investigation of the incident.
4. The Internal Investigator shall prepare a detailed written report of the investigation describing all aspects of the incident.

B. DISCHARGE OF A FIREARM OFF WSSC PROPERTY

1. Upon notification, the Internal Investigator shall establish a liaison

with the reporting law enforcement agency and monitor the investigation until it is concluded.

2. The Internal Investigator shall prepare a separate detailed written report of the investigation describing all aspects of the incident.
3. The Internal Investigator shall provide cooperation in all aspects of the investigation as required.

V. TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION

- A. All members shall complete a certified course of instruction, training and qualification before authorization is granted to carry any firearm. The time, date, length and location of this course shall be determined by the Director of the Office of Security Services, or his designee, in conjunction with the certification requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions.
- B. All members shall requalify at least once yearly in the use of the issued firearm. The time, date, and location of this requalification shall be determined by the Director of the Office of Security Services, or his designee, in conjunction with the certification requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions.
- C. In the event that any member shall fail to meet the minimum standards of instruction or qualification for the firearm, their authorization to carry or use the firearm shall be suspended. Authorization to carry or use the firearm will not be reinstated until the member meets all qualification standards.
- D. Standards for firearm training, instruction and certification shall meet or exceed, the



standards of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions. (Pertinent excerpts from the requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions are attached to this General Order).

VI. AUTHORIZATION TO CARRY/USE FIREARMS

- A. Only those members of the Office of Security Services recommended by the Director of the Office of Security Services and approved by the WSSC Assistant General Manager shall be authorized to carry/use firearms.
- B. Only members of the Office of Security Services who have successfully completed the requirements of the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions shall be authorized to carry/use firearms.
- C. The issued firearm shall be carried/used only while on duty, enroute to and from duty, or as otherwise designated in this General Order.

VII. AUTHORIZED WEAPON AND AMMUNITION

- A. Only those weapons and ammunition issued by the Office of Security Services shall be carried by those members authorized to carry firearms.

VIII. WEAPON MAINTENANCE

- A. All weapons shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended procedure.
- B. All weapons will be inspected at least monthly by the Director of the Office of Security Services or his designee.
- C. When not on duty, officers shall handle and store their service revolver in accordance with training requirement 3.iv.

IX. WEARING OF WEAPONS

- A. When on duty, members shall wear the firearm in the issued holster in accordance with General Order # 88-1 (Uniform Regulations) as amended.
- B. Under no circumstances will members wear, carry, or display a weapon in an obtrusive or flagrant manner, or in any manner which would be offensive or invite unfavorable comment from the public.
- C. An officer shall not draw a firearm from its holster or otherwise display a firearm unless, in the officer's judgement, a degree of imminent danger exists that necessitates the drawing or display of the firearm for the officer's safety or for the safety of others.

X. VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this General Order may result in disciplinary action, which could include termination.