



Patrol Rifles AR-15	Related Policies: Response to Resistance/Deadly Force; Safe Storage of Firearms
<i>This policy is for internal use only and does not enlarge an employee’s civil liability in any way. The policy should not be construed as creating a higher duty of care, in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party civil claims against employees. A violation of this policy, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department for non-judicial administrative action in accordance with the laws governing employee discipline.</i>	
Applicable Arkansas Statutes:	
CALEA Standard:	

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

II. 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.

III. Definitions:

- A.** Employee -- any Department sworn employee authorized, trained, and currently qualified to carry a rifle.
- B.** 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.
- C.** 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.
- D.** 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.
- E.** Patrol Rifle - AR-15 Colt or Bushmaster – the AR15 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.

IV. Procedure:

- A.** 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.

- B.** 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.
- C.** Officers will utilize only department issued or department approved rifles on duty unless authorized otherwise by the Chief.
- D.** Officers will only utilize department issued ammunition in a patrol rifle unless authorized otherwise by the Chief.
- E.** 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.
- F.** 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 MPD 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:
 - i.** Checking a rifle out from an authorized police weapons storage facility or locker.
 - ii.** Taking the rifle out of its locked holder or Department approved carrying case.
 - iii.** 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.** In the Department building at the range or other facility where a firearm-unloading barrel is present, the rifle must be unloaded with the muzzle pointed into the barrel.
 - h.** The rifle will be placed in "Storage Condition" before it is turned in or stored.
- G.** Off-duty Weapons Storage: This provision applies to all departmentally issued long guns and strongly encouraged for privately owned long guns:

- a. 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.
 - b. 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.
- H. Weapon Maintenance:** 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.
- a. Modifications: Modifications to departmentally issued weapons must be approved by the Chief or his designee and performed by the department armorer.
 - b. 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.
- I.** If in a soft or hard case, patrol rifles will be kept unloaded with at least one (1) fully loaded magazine in the case with the rifle. Patrol rifles that are stored in a locking rack in the patrol car shall be stored "Patrol Car ready." Additional issued magazines should be maintained in a suitable carrier. Only department issued ammunition shall be utilized.
- J.** The rifle safety will be ON at all times unless the operator is on target and has decided to shoot.
- K.** The trunks of the vehicles that will store these weapons shall have the interior trunk button disconnected so that the trunk cannot be accessed without the proper key. In the event a weapon is not going to be in the control of the supervisor or an officer, it shall be placed in the department's arsenal.
- L.** In cases where a vehicle is out of service for repair, it shall be the responsibility of the officer to ensure that the patrol rifle is removed.
- M.** Patrol rifles may be deployed only for emergencies when there is an imminent danger to officers or civilians.
- a. Patrol Rifles shall be deployed only in situations that the officer may reasonably believe that the tactical advantage afforded by the rifle would be necessary. They are not to be used for routine calls where the deployment of a patrol rifle is not or for calls where the information dispatched is not matched by a clear threat to public safety.
 - b. This order does not seek to articulate the only situations where rifle deployment is appropriate. Officer/supervisor judgment is the first indicator of appropriate deployment.
 - c. Additionally, the patrol rifle may be deployed in situations:
 - i. Where the officer believes a suspect he/she may encounter is wearing protective body armor;
 - ii. To provide immediate tactical response to calls involving armed and/or violent offenders;
 - iii. To increase citizen and officer safety during high-risk incidents;

- iv. To provide for more accurate and controlled shot placement;
 - v. For perimeter/containment situation involving a hostage situation and/or barricaded subject;
 - vi. To provide cover for a police K-9, or another officer, in the search for an armed subject believed to be armed with or has immediate access to high powered or shoulder fired weapons or is believed to be armed and situated in a distant or fortified location that affords the suspect a tactically superior position;
 - vii. Active Shooter situations; or
 - viii. Other situations where approval for deployment of patrol rifle is authorized by the Supervisor.
- d.** When an officer determines the event has de-escalated and lethal force is not necessary, the rifle should be secured as soon as practical.
- N.** Under any circumstances concerning this weapon, compliance with the Response to Resistance/Deadly Force policy applies.