
Patrol Rifles

414.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this general order shall be to provide guidelines for Fountain Valley Police Department Officers in the safe handling and deployment of patrol rifles in the course of their duties. In an ongoing effort to equip officers with weapons that allow them to gain or reclaim a tactical advantage when encountering dangerous suspects, the Department has placed patrol rifles within each marked patrol car.

414.2 DEFINITIONS

The patrol rifle is an authorized weapon which is available to properly trained and qualified officers as a supplemental resource to their handgun. Patrol rifles shall meet the following requirements:

- Must be an AR-15 style rifle.
- Semi-automatic only.
- Chambered in .223 caliber (5.56 mm)
- A barrel length of 16 to 20 inches.
- Must be produced by a reputable manufacturer, as approved by the Chief of Police.

414.3 AUTHORIZED WEAPONS

- The Department will supply a Daniel Defense DDM4 Semi-automatic rifle.
- Officers may carry personally owned AR-15 style rifles only after submitting a request in writing, having the rifle inspected by a certified department armorer, and obtaining written approval from the Chief of Police. Any personally owned rifle must be registered with the California Department of Justice and be in compliance with California State Law.
 - Once authorized for carry, rifles shall not be modified in any manner.
 - If modified, a rifle shall not be carried until inspected by a certified department armorer and, if requested, a new qualifying score fired.
 - These rifles must be kept in a locked trunk.
- Members of the Department assigned to the West County SWAT team are authorized to carry their assigned SWAT weapons while on patrol. Such weapons will meet the guidelines set forth by the West County SWAT Manual.

414.3.1 AMMUNITION

The only ammunition authorized for duty use in patrol rifles is that which is issued by the Department.

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414.4 PATROL READY CONDITION

A rifle is considered "patrol ready" when it has been inspected by an officer and meets the following conditions:

- There is no cartridge in the chamber.
- A magazine inserted in the magazine well.
- The bolt carrier is forward, resting on a chamber safety tool.
- The safety selector is in the "Safe" position.
- A magazine pouch with loaded magazines is clipped to the cage behind the rifle.
 - For vehicles without a cage, ammunition will be located in the trunk.
- The rifle shall be secured in the rifle rack or cased in the vehicle's trunk when not in use.
- Rifles may only have a round chambered when deployed in compliance with this policy.

414.5 RIFLE MAINTENANCE

- Certified department armorers are responsible for the maintenance of Department owned patrol rifles. Patrol rifles shall be serviced and inspected annually.
- Officers carrying personally owned rifles are responsible for the maintenance of their weapons. Personally owned weapons shall be inspected by a certified department armorer on an annual basis.
- Officers who have completed department training may field strip, clean, and lubricate rifles. No department rifle may be disassembled beyond field stripping unless done so by a certified department armorer.
- A personally owned rifle which has been disassembled beyond field stripping must be inspected by a certified department armorer prior to re-deployment.

414.6 TRAINING

Officers shall not deploy a patrol rifle unless they have successfully completed patrol rifle training. Initial patrol rifle training shall consist of a minimum of 16-hours of instruction. This can be satisfied by completion of a POST approved patrol rifle course. The Officers shall thereafter be required to successfully complete department approved bi-annual training and qualification conducted by a certified patrol rifle instructor.

- Bi-annual training and qualification will be completed at a department approved range.
- Specialized training and/or courses may be implemented by the Department in lieu of bi-annual qualifications at locations other than the WPD range.
- Officers who fail to attend two consecutive qualifications should not deploy a patrol rifle until successful completion of training and qualification.
- Officers who are unable to shoot a qualifying score will immediately be precluded from deploying a patrol rifle until remedial training is received and successful qualification.

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- The Personnel and Training Sergeant will be responsible for training records and qualification rosters. The Training Sergeant shall notify other supervisors when officers fail to attend quarterly training or fail to shoot a qualifying score.

414.7 DEPLOYMENT OF PATROL RIFLES

Officers may deploy a patrol rifle in any circumstance where the officer can articulate an expectation the rifle may be needed. Examples for deploying patrol rifles may include, but are not limited to:

- Situations where the officer anticipates an armed encounter.
- When an officer is in a situation that may require the delivery of accurate fire at long range.
- To meet or exceed the firepower of a suspect armed with a firearm.
- When an officer believes a suspect may be wearing body armor.
- When authorized by a supervisor.
- Officers may deploy the patrol rifle if they encounter suspects armed with a weapon, not a firearm, whose lethal capabilities place the officers at a distinct disadvantage.
- Where feasible, officers deploying a patrol rifle should inform the scene supervisor that a patrol rifle is being deployed and advise over the radio the area is to be covered or controlled by the patrol rifle.

414.8 RIFLE STORAGE

- When not in use, department-owned patrol rifles will be stored in the upstairs armory.
- Rifles shall be stored unloaded with the magazine removed, bolt locked open, and the safety in the "Safe" position.
- Department rifles shall not be taken home without authorization.
- Personally owned rifles shall be stored in compliance with California State law.
 - Officers shall ensure that all firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles, or any other area under their control in a manner that will keep them inaccessible to children and irresponsible adults.
 - Officers shall be aware that negligent storage of a firearm could result in criminal prosecution under Penal Code § 25100.

414.9 SWAT MEMBERS

West County SWAT Team rifle qualification will also satisfy the bi-annual patrol rifle training and qualification. SWAT team members who fail to attend training/qualification for a six month period or fail to successfully fire a qualifying score will be precluded from deploying a patrol rifle until remedial training is received and successful qualification.

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Nothing in this policy is designed to preclude officers assigned to the West County SWAT Team from using their training and experience in both weapons and tactics to achieve a legitimate law enforcement purpose as outlined by the West County SWAT Manual and Department General Orders.

414.10 DISCHARGE OF THE PATROL RIFLE

The discharge of the patrol rifles shall be governed by the Deadly Force Policy.