



## *Kern County Sheriff's Office*

# **Policies And Procedures**

<b>TITLE: FIREARMS – TACTICAL RIFLES</b>		<b>NO: G-900</b>	
<b>APPROVED: Donny Youngblood, Sheriff-Coroner</b>			
<b>EFFECTIVE: August 1, 1990</b>	<b>REVIEWED: May 15, 2011</b>	<b>REVISED: May 15, 2011</b>	<b>UPDATED: May 15, 2011</b>

### **POLICY**

The Kern County Sheriff's Office recognizes that circumstances occasionally exist which place law enforcement officers armed with handguns and shotguns at a substantial disadvantage. These situations frequently occur due to Kern County's wide open rural areas, but can also occur as a result of the weapons, tactics, and other equipment utilized by the criminal element in today's society. In these situations, a tactical rifle deployed by a trained, qualified deputy would be beneficial in defending the officer, as well as protecting the public.

In order to meet these needs, the Kern County Sheriff's Office authorizes specified deputies to carry and utilize the tactical rifle. These deputies must first successfully complete a Sheriff's Office-approved training course, receive approval from their section lieutenant, and then demonstrate proficiency with the tactical rifle according to procedures established in this section. The Rangemaster will be the designated authority to determine whether a course attended by an employee meets the requirements of a Sheriff's Office-approved course. Only rifles and ammunition authorized by this section may be carried by deputies while on duty.

The tactical rifle is not meant to replace the handgun or shotgun. Instead, the tactical rifle is intended to augment the deputy's handgun and shotgun, which remain the most effective weapons in most situations requiring the use of a firearm. The tactical rifle should also not be seen as a substitute for the Sheriff's Office Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT). Deputies should continue to utilize the SWAT team, whenever circumstances dictate, to resolve critical incidents which require the use of special weapons or a highly trained tactical team.

Nothing in this section shall prohibit the SWAT Lieutenant from approving the use of other rifles or specialized equipment by trained, qualified members of the Sheriff's Office SWAT team.

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The only rifles authorized by the Sheriff's Office are:

- Rifles must be a Colt AR-15 or other semi-automatic, civilian versions of the AR-15/M-16 rifle made by Colt, or by other manufacturers as approved by the Rangemaster.
- All rifles must be in .223 (5.56mm) caliber.
- Rifles will have iron sights, a barrel length of at least 16 inches, and use a standard 10, 20 or 30 round magazine.

- Rifle stocks may be black composite material or a telescoping, collapsible stock of good quality. The stock shall not interfere with the ability to secure the rifle and shall be approved by the Rangemaster prior to being carried in the field.
- Accessories such as weapon-mounted tactical lights, fore-end grips or bipods must be inspected and approved by the Rangemaster.
- A Red Dot or Holographic sight may be used to co-witness the fixed sights. Privately-owned sights must be of good quality, shall not interfere with the ability to secure the rifle and shall be approved by the Rangemaster prior to being carried in the field.
- Rifles must be equipped with a carry sling approved by the Rangemaster.
- Privately-owned rifles must be inspected and approved by the Rangemaster.
- Only approved ammunition will be carried in any rifle while on duty, and only approved ammunition will be used at any time in rifles owned by the Sheriff's Office.
- Laser pointers and similar devices are not authorized for use with rifles under this policy.

**PROCEDURE A- LOADING, UNLOADING AND STORING RIFLES**

Any deputy who carries a tactical rifle, whether issued or privately-owned, will complete the following steps prior to the beginning of each shift:

- Point the rifle in a safe direction, make sure the safety is on, remove the magazine, and make sure the chamber is empty;
- Inspect the operation and condition of the rifle;
  - If the rifle is dirty, the deputy will perform the necessary maintenance on the weapon before putting the rifle back into service.
  - If the rifle is unserviceable, the weapon will be taken out of service immediately. If such a rifle is an issued weapon, the deputy will report the condition to a supervisor, and take the steps necessary to have the rifle repaired. If the rifle is a privately-owned weapon, the deputy will have the necessary repairs made, and then have the rifle inspected and approved by the Rangemaster prior to putting the rifle back into service.
- After the inspection is complete, insert a loaded magazine back into the rifle.
- Ensure that at least two (2) loaded spare magazines are immediately available. The magazines will be carried in a pouch attached to the rifle's butt-stock, a pouch or pouches attached to the deputy's duty or tactical belt, or in any system approved by the Rangemaster.

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Any deputy who carries a tactical rifle, whether issued or privately-owned, will take the following steps to ensure the rifle is carried in a safe and secure manner:

- Rifles will be carried with the safety on, the chamber empty, and a loaded magazine locked in place.
- Rifles carried in a vehicle will be secured in a locking rack or locked in the trunk. If the vehicle does not have a locking rack or trunk, the rifle will be carried out of view. Vehicles which contain an unsecured rifle will be locked when unattended.

Any deputy who carries a tactical rifle will store the rifle in the following manner when off duty:

- Sheriff's Office rifles will be stored in a secure location at the deputy's duty station, or secured in a Sheriff's Office vehicle if the deputy is assigned a take-home car.
  - Rifles stored at a Sheriff's Office facility or in a Sheriff's Office vehicle will have an empty chamber, and the safety on.
  - Deputies who store rifles in a Sheriff's Office vehicle will park the vehicle in a secure location whenever possible, and take steps to prevent the weapon from being stolen, or otherwise being accessible to children and other irresponsible persons.
- Privately-owned rifles may either be stored according to the above procedures, or in a secure location separate from the Sheriff's Office.
  - Deputies who store tactical rifles away from the Sheriff's Office will take steps to prevent the weapon from being stolen, or otherwise being accessible to children and other irresponsible persons.

If a round has been loaded into the chamber, the deputy will:

- At the termination of the situation, unload the chambered round, reload the magazine, lock the magazine back into place, and make sure the safety is on before returning the rifle to the vehicle.
- If the rifle has been discharged, at the termination of the situation the deputy will follow the reporting requirements listed in G-300 of this manual.

#### **DIRECTIVE A-AUTHORIZATION**

A deputy may not carry a tactical rifle unless:

- The deputy's section lieutenant has so authorized
- The rifle is issued to the deputy by the Sheriff's Office, or the deputy owns the rifle
- The deputy has successfully completed the Basic Rifle Marksmanship course or other approved course

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- The rifle has been inspected and approved by the Rangemaster; and
- The deputy is currently qualified.
  - Currently qualified shall mean the deputy has successfully completed the mandatory qualification/training session at the range that has most recently ended.

Deputies who carry tactical rifles will not loan such rifles to another officer, without the approval of a sergeant or lieutenant, except when necessary to resolve an immediate, life-threatening, emergency situation. In such incidents, the receiving deputy, whether qualified or not, may deploy the rifle when reasonably necessary to resolve an immediate, life-threatening emergency situation.

Section lieutenants who authorize deputies to carry a tactical rifle will:

- Ensure that such deputies adhere to all safety and security measures; and
- Ensure that only properly trained and qualified deputies carry a tactical rifle.

The Rangemaster will:

- Establish and maintain a training and qualifying course of fire for tactical rifles;
- Ensure authorized deputies are qualified to use the tactical rifle by:
  - Scheduling a minimum of two qualifications per year and
  - Providing remedial training when necessary.
- Maintain records of training and qualifying scores
  - Provide written notification to the section lieutenant or division commander of any deputy who fails to qualify.
- Maintain a record of all approved rifles, including each rifle's:
  - Manufacturer
  - Model
  - Serial number
  - Any approved modifications

## SWAT MEMBERS

The SWAT team is a 24-hour tactical response unit that engages in regularly scheduled special tactical training. Therefore, SWAT team members who qualify with the tactical rifle during SWAT training may be exempted from the regular rifle qualifications for that quarter.

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The SWAT Lieutenant may authorize members of the Sheriff's Office SWAT team to carry rifles or other special weapons during the SWAT member's regular duty hours, if the following conditions are met:

- The deputy who is carrying a SWAT weapon is trained and currently qualified in its use;
- Proper documentation is completed on all SWAT firearms training; and
- Records are maintained of all training sessions and qualifications scores involving the use of SWAT weapons.

Any deputy who carries a SWAT weapon during the course of their regular duty hours will:

- Advise their division commander, in writing, of the type of weapon carried and the location and conditions under which the weapon is carried and stored;
- Only deploy such a weapon under the following conditions:
  - During designated SWAT assignments; or
  - When authorized by their division commander;
    - In the absence of the division commander, when authorized by the ranking officer.
  - When necessary to resolve an immediate, life threatening situation, and circumstances prevent the deputy from seeking prior approval from his or her division commander.

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