



Sheridan Police Department  
Policies and Procedures  
11.3 Replaces 103.4  
Chapter 11 – Use of Force  
Section 3 – Weapons

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Signature:

It is the intent of the department to provide equipment to safely and effectively respond to situations requiring use of force. The department provides a variety of tools to that end. Only officers who have been trained and demonstrated a proficiency in the use of agency authorized weapons are permitted to carry or use such weapons.

**11.3.1 Oleoresin Capsicum (O.C.)**

- A. O.C. is a chemical agent that is dispensed by a device that emits a spray, fog, foam, stream, or gas.
- B. O.C. can be used by those authorized and trained in the specific agents' use.
  - 1. Use on People
    - a. O.C. may be used on persons who are actively resisting or exhibiting active aggression, or to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others.
    - b. O.C. may have limited, or no effect, on certain subjects. However, the effectiveness can only be determined after it has been used.
    - c. O.C. should not be used as a “compliance” technique, since the pain cannot be stopped when the subject complies.
    - d. After use, the arresting officer has the responsibility of starting decontamination of the subject as soon as practical.
    - e. In the event that an arrestee exhibits negative physical symptoms, or requests medical treatment, medical personnel will be summoned to the scene, or the arrestee will be transported to the medical facility for treatment.
    - f. At the detention center, steps will be taken to neutralize the effects of O.C., flushing the exposed area with water, and/or neutralizing chemicals (i.e. soap).
  - 2. Use On Animals
    - a. O.C. may be used in confrontations with an aggressive animal, or when an animal indicates it may attack an officer or others.
    - b. An officer using O.C. on an animal should make a reasonable effort to notify the animal's owner of the O.C. exposure, and recommend decontamination.

**11.3.2 Conductive Electrical Weapon**

Conductive Electrical Weapons (Taser) are designed to disrupt a subject's central nervous system by deploying battery-powered electrical energy sufficient to cause uncontrolled muscle contractions and override voluntary motor responses.

A. Authorized Devices

1. The department issued Taser X2 is the only conductive electrical weapon authorized for use by the Sheridan Police Department.
2. The Taser X2 and associated equipment shall only be carried in department authorized holsters. The holster shall be carried on the opposite side of any duty firearm holster.

B. Authorized Users

Tasers shall only be issued to and deployed by trained, certified officers and Community Service Officers. Re-certification shall be conducted annually.

C. Authorized Deployment

1. A Taser may be used against persons who are actively resisting officers, exhibiting aggression to officers or others, to prevent individuals from harming themselves or others, or when there is a reasonable expectation that it will be unsafe for officers to approach within contact range of the subject.
2. Tasers may be used to control an aggressive animal when the animal indicates it may attack or is attacking. In the event a Taser is used on an animal, the deploying officer shall make a reasonable effort to notify the animal's owner.
3. Upon firing the device, the officer shall energize the subject the least number of times necessary to stop and gain control of the suspect.
4. The subject should be secured as soon as practical while disabled by a Taser to minimize the number of deployment cycles. In determining the need for additional energy cycles, officers should be aware that an energized subject may not be able to respond to commands during or immediately following exposure. Each individual energy cycle is a separate use of force. Officers should re-evaluate the situation prior to applying additional cycles.
5. Officers should be aware of secondary injuries that may occur due to the effects of the Taser. Examples would be: falling from an elevated position and suffering a head injury or broken bone, submersion in liquid and drowning, and subjects holding a sharp object who then fall on the object and injure themselves.

D. Post Deployment

1. After the subject is restrained, Taser probes may be removed by certified officers in accordance with guidelines provided during training. Medical personnel shall remove probe strikes to the face, throat, groin, or female breast.
2. If an adverse reaction to the Taser occurs, or if requested by the subject, medical personnel shall be summoned to the scene or the subject shall be transported to a medical facility for treatment.
3. If a suspect is energized more than two times, is subjected to a continuous energy cycle of 15 seconds or more, or exhibits signs of extreme uncontrolled agitation or hyperactivity prior to exposure, emergency medical technicians shall be summoned to evaluate the suspect's condition.

4. The spent air cartridge, probes, and when possible, 5 A.F.I.D tags shall be collected in accordance with guidelines provided during training and preserved as evidence. Probes that penetrated a subject's skin shall be labeled as a biohazard when submitted as evidence.
5. When possible, the deploying officer should photograph the probe impact area and these photographs shall be included with the incident report.
6. Supervisors or instructors will replace expended cartridges and record the serial number of the replacement cartridges, the date and to whom they were assigned.

**E. Reporting**

Officers shall explain the rationale for every Taser use in the report. Each individual energy cycle is a separate use of force and shall be documented as such. Officers shall pay particular attention in articulating the justification for any instance in which:

1. A Taser is energized more than two times;
2. More than one Taser is used against a subject in any given incident.

**F. Safe Handling**

1. Except for general maintenance, storage or authorized training, officers will not draw, point or exhibit the electronic control device unless circumstances create a suspicion to believe that it may be necessary to lawfully use the device.
2. Officers will secure Tasers in such a way as to ensure no unauthorized person will have access to it.

**11.3.3 Batons**

- A. Department issued expandable batons are authorized tools designed for blocking, striking and to apply control holds while engaged in a police action.
- B. Batons shall only be carried and used by those who have received training. All officers shall receive training once a year on baton techniques. All officers assigned to patrol duties shall carry an expandable baton on their duty belt.
- C. When used as less lethal force, the primary goal of a baton strike is to stop an aggressive subject by creating a temporary muscle or motor dysfunction. Baton strikes should primarily be directed toward major muscle groups, including but not limited to, the thigh, arm, or leg.
- D. Officers should avoid striking a subject's head, throat, neck, heart, and groin, unless threatened with serious physical harm justifying the use of deadly force.

**11.3.4 Duty Weapon**

- A. On-Duty Side Arms - The official duty weapon is the Glock 22, .40 caliber, semi-automatic pistol. No other side arm may be carried on duty unless authorized in this policy or with written permission from the chief of police.
- B. Only department issued ammunition may be carried or used by officers.
- C. Officers will be required to meet department qualification standards with any firearm carried on duty.

**11.3.4.1 Secondary Weapons**

- A. Officers may carry a second firearm in addition to the standard duty weapon.

- B. Secondary weapons shall be a Glock, semi-automatic pistol.
- C. Only department approved ammunition shall be authorized for secondary weapons.
- D. This weapon must be registered with the department and the officer must have passed a qualification course as set by the department.
- E. This defensive firearm must be carried in a concealed manner and used only when the primary weapon (duty weapon) is inaccessible or non operational.

#### **11.3.4.2 Rifles**

- A. The AR-15 is the standard department issue rifle for patrol officers and detective personnel. Only department issued ammunition may be carried or used by officers.
- B. Extra rifles and ammunition will be secured in the armory. The extra weapons will be secured in the rack unloaded. Command staff and firearms staff have access to the armory key.
- C. Rifles will be permitted to be left in unmarked vehicle trunks provided the vehicle is secured. Weapons left in trunks of police vehicles will be stored in a protective case approved by the firearms coordinator.
- D. Officers are responsible to inspect their weapon to ensure that it is operating properly.
- E. Rifles in use are to be secured in the rack in the police vehicle with the chamber empty and magazine locked in place. It is important that these weapons be secured in the vehicle in a uniform manner so every officer knows exactly what condition the weapon is in when it is removed from the rack.
- F. Rifles may be used by officers when necessary at their own discretion, in accordance with the provisions outlined in this order on the use of deadly force.
- G. Rifles are to be removed from the police vehicle when the vehicle is not in service for vehicle maintenance or if the vehicle is not scheduled to be in service for seven or more days. Rifles will be stored in a secured locker at the police department or in the officer's home.
- H. Rifle familiarization training will be conducted by staff at least once a year. Course content and qualification requirements will be established by the department using reputable sources.

#### **11.3.4.3 Review, Inspection and Approval**

- A. All firearms covered under 11.3.4, 11.3.41, and 11.3.42 will be inspected and approved for service by a firearms instructor or armorer prior to carrying. Inspections shall be carried out annually.
- B. All inspected firearms (approved and rejected) shall be recorded by manufacturer, model, serial number, and status in the firearms program records and forwarded to the office of chief of police.
- C. Department owned firearms found to be unsafe will be removed from service and not re-assigned until deemed safe by a trained armorer. In the event officer owned secondary firearms are found to be unsafe, the owner will be notified of its condition and informed it may not be used on duty until it has been repaired and re-inspected.

- D. All department issued firearms covered in 11.3.4 and 11.3.4.2 will be issued by a firearms instructor and signed for by the receiving officer. A hand receipt shall be kept on file with a copy provided to the receiving officer.

#### **11.3.5 Off-Duty Firearms**

- A. Under normal circumstances an officer may carry an off-duty firearm.
- B. Off duty officers carrying a handgun should also carry their badge and police identification.
- C. Officers will not carry or use any firearm while impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- D. United States Code Title 18, section 926B allows qualified law enforcement officers an exemption from state laws that prohibit carrying a concealed firearm. Officers traveling outside the Sheridan Police Department's jurisdiction, who intend to carry a weapon, need to familiarize themselves with laws where they intend to carry to make sure they are in compliance. Considerations include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. A visiting officer does not have law enforcement authority unless specifically granted that authority;
  - 2. State laws vary regarding restrictions on where weapons are prohibited.

#### **11.3.6 Specialized Weapons**

- A. The police department has specialized weapons, such as long-range sniper rifles, shotguns, Trek suppressors, impact munitions and tear gas available for use by qualified and authorized members of the department.
- B. Only properly authorized and trained personnel are permitted to possess or use these weapons. The Patrol Operations Commander shall determine training content and qualification requirements.
- C. These weapons will be used only in accordance with established policy and procedure for special operations incidents.

#### **11.3.7 Prohibited Weapons**

- A. No member of the police department while on duty, will carry or use any weapon unless it has been issued by the department and the member has been trained on the use of the weapon.

##### **11.3.7.1 Restrictions on the Use of Firearms**

- A. Warning - When officers are about to invoke deadly force, they will, when possible or practicable, issue a verbal warning to the suspect. In this warning, officers will identify themselves as police officers and instruct the suspect to cease or stop whatever action the suspect is doing that has caused the officer to consider the use of deadly force.
- B. Shoot to Stop - Officers will fire their weapons to stop and incapacitate an assailant from completing a potentially deadly act as described in this order. For maximum stopping effectiveness and minimal danger to innocent bystanders, officers should shoot at "center mass" when practical.
- C. At or From Moving Vehicles - Officers will not discharge a firearm at or from a moving vehicle except when all other reasonable means have been exhausted and it is necessary for the defense of the officer's life or the life of another person, or the

officer has reasonable cause to believe that the suspect poses a significant threat of death or serious physical harm to the officer or others.

- D. Risk to Innocent Bystanders - When officers are about to discharge their firearms, they will be cognizant of their field of fire and will not unnecessarily create a substantial risk of harm to innocent persons.
- E. Warning Shots - Officers shall not discharge their firearm for the purpose of a warning shot.
- F. While Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs While On Duty - Officers may not use or carry any firearm while having any detectable alcohol in their system or while under the influence of any drug or medication that would likely negatively affect their decision making.
- G. To Destroy Animals
  - 1. The killing of an animal is justified for:
    - a. Self defense;
    - b. To prevent substantial harm to the officer or others;
    - c. When the animal is so sick or badly injured that humanity requires its relief from further suffering.
  - 2. A seriously wounded, sick or injured animal may be destroyed only upon approval of a supervisor. If available, an animal control officer should be notified to determine if the animal can be saved or should be destroyed in a safer manner.
  - 3. Officers will complete a report and will notify their supervisor whenever it becomes necessary to kill an animal in defense of himself or another. Supervisors will complete the appropriate Guardian tracking entry.

#### **11.3.7.2 Safe Handling of Firearms**

- A. Except for general maintenance, storage or authorized training, officers will not draw, point or exhibit their firearm unless circumstances create a suspicion to believe that it may be necessary to lawfully use the weapon in conformance with other sections of this policy.
- B. As a general rule, officers will not surrender their weapons to any person who is not a police officer for any reason except for maintenance at the police building or other designated place.
- C. Officers will secure and store weapons both on and off duty in such a way as to ensure no unauthorized person will have access to and gain control over the weapon.

#### **11.3.8 Training Exercises**

- A. Officers may discharge their firearm for the purpose of training at the police department or other established shooting range.
- B. Officers will exercise all normal safety precautions and obey all appropriate rules or directives while practicing on the department range or any other established range.