**SAMPLE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Firing Range Operations**

NOTE: The following guidelines address both safety and policy and are for internal use only. This document does not nor is intended to enlarge an employee’s civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense with respect to third-party claims. Violations of these guidelines if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

###### PURPOSE AND SCOPE

###### The purpose of this policy is to provide for the operation and use of any firing range that is utilized by the SAMPLE Police Department. This policy is applicable to all individuals present and/or participating in any training conducted by or for the SAMPLE Police Department, including department personnel, other law enforcement agency’s personnel, or members of the general public.

###### POLICY

1. Facilities for firearms training shall be provided to department personnel in order to maintain the highest level of proficiency in the use of firearms. Facilities may also be utilized by other law enforcement agencies and their personnel and members of the general public in specific circumstances and with the express written permission of the SAMPLE Police Department Chief of Police.
2. Use by other law enforcement agencies or members of the general public may requires additional prerequisites e.g., memorandum of understanding, proof of insurance, liability release, etc. Agencies or individuals may contact the Chief of Police for more information.
3. Use of the firing range is by permission only. All individuals utilizing the firing range must commit to its safe and effective use. The safety of all individuals is a primary concern, and all individuals will adhere to the highest standards of safety.

###### PROCEDURE

###### All individuals present on the grounds of the firing range, whether participating or observing, shall adhere to all guidelines listed herein. All firing range rules will be strictly enforced.

1. Firearms Instructor and Safety Officer [also referred to as Range Officer(s)]
2. The firing range shall only be used for instruction, training, or qualification purposes when there is a certified firearms instructor present to ensure proper and adequate supervision.
   1. All participants will receive a safety briefing from the Firearms Instructor / Safety Officer before conducting any type of training or qualification.
3. Individuals may conduct self-paced practice independently but must adhere to all other guidelines listed herein.
4. A Safety Officer, who is also a certified firearms instructor, shall be appointed to oversee the safety of individuals participating in firearms training.
5. The number of firearms instructors and safety officers present shall be based upon the number of individuals participating in the training and their experience level. An Instructor to Student ratio of 1:2 is preferred but no greater than 1:4.
6. Command of all activity and safety precautions at the firing range will be under the exclusive control of the firearms instructor and safety officer.
7. Individuals will obey all commands and instructions of the firearms instructor and/or safety officer.
   1. If a shooter does not understand any command, they will freeze their movement with the firearm pointed downrange, call for a cease fire, and raise their non-firing hand to gain the attention of the firearms instructor and/or safety officer.
8. Rules and Safety Precautions
9. All rules and safety precautions will be adhered to and enforced. Carelessness or negligence will not be tolerated at any time.
10. Always adhere to, teach, and reinforce the four (4) universal rules of firearm safety:
    1. All firearms are loaded. Treat them as such. If you cannot determine the status of a firearm, leave it alone.
    2. Never point a firearm at anything you are not willing to destroy.
    3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you are ready to shoot. Every bullet fired is the responsibility of the shooter.
    4. Always be aware of where your target is, what may be behind your target, and what may become in between you and your target.
11. All weapons will be inspected by the range officer for cleanliness and function before use at the range. Any firearm that is determined to be malfunctioning or in need of service or repair will not be used until repaired and inspected.
12. Immediately upon picking up any firearm, open the cylinder/action and check to see if it is unloaded – check it again.
    1. If the cylinder/action cannot be opened for inspection and its status confirmed, the weapon shall be safely removed from the firing range and secured.
13. Never carry a loaded firearm on the range except when on the firing line.
14. Be sure the barrel is clear of any obstructions before loading.
15. Never permit the muzzle of the firearm to touch the ground.
16. Load only after position is taken at the firing point and the command to load is given. Unload when and as instructed.
17. All firearms should be holstered, pointed down range, or otherwise secured at all times when not in use. Unsecured firearms shall be carried with the cylinder/action open and pointed upward
    1. While on the firing line all participants will keep their weapons holstered until the command to fire has been given by the range officer.
18. Never draw or holster a firearm with the finger in the trigger guard.
19. Never lower the hammer of a revolver on a live round without placing the thumb in front of the hammer and releasing the trigger, while pointing the pistol downrange or bullet trap.
20. Never lower the hammer of a semi-automatic pistol equipped with a decocker on a live round. Use the decocker, while pointing the pistol downrange or at a bullet trap.
21. Individuals will not give or receive a weapon from another person unless it is in a safe condition. A safe condition is a weapon that is unloaded, cylinder/action open, and pointed downrange or at the ground. Never give or receive a firearm muzzle first or with the muzzle pointed upward at the sky or ceiling.
22. Never move in front of the firing line until the line is clear, and the command to move forward has been given.
23. If you have a malfunction, e.g., misfire, jam, failure to extract, failure to eject, double feed, etc.; while on the firing line, it is the responsibility of the shooter to safely clear the malfunction and resume firing.
    1. If another problem occurs, e.g., squib load (low or no powder in shell) while on the firing line, the shooter will keep the firearm pointed down range for at least ten seconds before opening the cylinder/action. The weapon must be checked for obstructions prior to being fired again.
    2. If it is unclear what action is needed, do not attempt to solve the problem by yourself. Keep the weapon pointed downrange and signal the range officer by raising your non-firing hand.
    3. If the malfunction is caused by a defect (broken extractor, broke ejector, or other defective part) safely unload the firearm, immediately remove it from the range, and secure it for inspection by a qualified gunsmith or armorer.
    4. Before returning a firearm to service after a malfunction, it is recommended that it is double checked by range officers or other knowledgeable participants.
24. If anything is dropped on the range deck (magazine, loose rounds, sunglasses, etc.), wait until the range has been called safe and you are instructed to pick up any items.
25. Never leave the firing line until after unloading your firearm and instructed to do so.
26. Pay strict attention to the range officers, as they will instruct you on what to do.
27. Never anticipate a command from the range officer.
28. While on the firing range there will be no excess talking, or “horseplay”.
29. Any personnel or participant observing any unsafe weapons handling may call for a cease-fire and will inform the range officer.
30. Upon observation of unsafe activity and after calling for a cease fire, the range officer will address the safety infraction in a prompt, firm, and professional manner and demeanor. Participants will not be insulted or berated.
31. Never dry fire or practice quick draws except as instructed by the range officer.
32. All participants are required to wear the following safety equipment: safety glasses, a baseball-type cap, and ear protection while on the firing line.
    1. In addition, participants shall dress appropriately. Open-toed shoes, flip-flops, or sandals are prohibited. Participants are discouraged from wearing low or scoop-neck shirts or blouses to prevent hot ejected shell casings from getting trapped against the body.
33. While at the firing range facility smoking is only permitted in designated safe areas.
    1. Tobacco, food products, and cell phones are prohibited on the firing line.
34. Clean-up is the participants responsibility. All trash, refuse, spent shell casings, used targets, etc. will be collected and properly disposed of.
35. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
36. Good common sense is the best safety tool we have.

APPROVED: CHIEF OF POLICE DATE

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS ORDER

SIGNATURE OF OFFICER DATE

***DISCLAIMER***

***NOTE****: These documents are being provided to you from the AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division and are not intended to be legal advice. They do not identify all the issues surrounding a particular topic. Laws and “Best Practices” change and policies must be continually reviewed and updated as needed. Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert or an attorney who is knowledgeable about the topic. Reliance on this information is at the sole risk of the user.*