

**VICKSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
**Law Enforcement**  
**Policies and Procedures**

<b>Subject: Firearms Training &amp; Proficiency Demonstration</b>	<b>Policy Number: 2.10</b>
<b>Issue Date: May 15, 2013</b>	<b>Revision Date: July 21, 2017</b>
<b>Approval Authority Title and Signature: The Board of Mayor and Aldermen; Police Chief Milton Moore</b>	
<b>Accreditation Standard: 1.3.9; 1.3.10; 1.3.11; 33.1.5; 33.4.1</b>	

## **POLICY**

All officers of the Vicksburg Police Department are required to demonstrate proficiency on a semi-annual basis with all firearm types (make, model, and caliber) they carry or have occasion to carry on duty. This includes handguns, long guns, and any secondary firearms used as back-up weapons.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Demonstration of Proficiency:** The student or officer demonstrates to the satisfaction of the instructor the successful ability to carry out or accomplish the learning objective in the time and manner prescribed. In firearms training, a proficiency demonstration is not limited to just a score on a target. The shooter must be able to explain the task and repeatedly perform the task safely and efficiently in the time and under the conditions imposed.

**Cold Range:** Firing range where all weapons, magazines, clips, or speed loaders are unloaded at all times except on the verbal command of a range or safety officer. There are no exceptions. This is a very effective method of control for basic shooters prior to commencement of any live fire exercise.

**Hot Range:** Firing range where weapons, magazines, clips, or speed loaders are loaded at all times. This method of control requires more instructor control and officer skill. Hot range operations are most effective in teaching tactical, maneuver, and gun advanced handling techniques.

**Range Master:** The overseer of a shooting range.

**Firearms Instructor/Range Officer:** An officer who has completed an approved law enforcement firearms instructor course conducted by certified instructors of a State or Federal government, the National Rifle Association, or U. S. Military; demonstrated 95%

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proficiency with each category of firearm carried by officers of the Department; and is proficient in teaching firearms safety, care and cleaning, safe storage, tactical firearms use, and weapons retention to other officers.

## PROCEDURES

### General Provisions of Firearms Training and Use

The following standards apply to the carrying and use of firearms in training and on duty:

1. No individual may carry or use a firearm on duty who is not a current certified peace officer or certified law enforcement instructor unless authorized by the Chief of Police. This authorization will be given only in cases of a new employee and then given only after a familiarization course and a qualification score in compliance with Department standards is performed. (33.4.1)
2. No officer may carry a firearm type that is not approved by the Department and the officer has not demonstrated proficiency within the last twelve (12) months.
3. No officer may carry or use ammunition that has not been approved by the Department.
4. No officer is allowed to carry or use a firearm when the officer anticipates the use of or is under the influence of mind-altering chemicals including alcohol, prescription drugs, or like substances. Casual or recreational use of alcohol while armed is not permitted.
5. The exception to 1, 2, 3, and 4 above is action taken during a life-threatening emergency. Exceptions based on an emergency declaration will be documented in writing to the officer's immediate supervisor.

### Firearms and Range Officer Qualifications

Firearms instructors of the Department must meet the following qualifications:

1. Complete an approved law enforcement firearms instructor course conducted by certified instructors of a State or Federal government, the National Rifle Association, or U. S. Military.
2. Demonstrate 95% proficiency with each category of firearm carried by officers of the Department.
3. Be proficient in teaching firearms safety, care and cleaning, safe storage, tactical firearms use, and weapons retention.

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## Demonstration of Proficiency Guidelines

1. Initial qualification and semi-annual demonstrations of proficiency include live-fire training conducted at specified times at an approved firing range or location and safe gun handling. Two (2) additional training sessions (one will be low-light training) are also required.
2. Officers shall wear and use the rig, holsters, weapons, and equipment they normally use on duty. For uniformed officers, this includes all equipment normally worn or carried on the person. Detectives and those working primarily in civilian attire that also wear and use holsters or other ancillary equipment will carry and use only that equipment normally carried on duty. Extra magazines, weapons, or other equipment is not allowed; i.e., if you only carry one extra magazine, this is all you will be using on the range to qualify. At times, training will be conducted that will mandate the wearing of clothing other than duty uniform or coat and tie. Officers will be notified prior to training date in accordance with this policy.
3. All officers shall wear protective body armor while training and during qualification or during any live-fire exercises.
4. Officers will use and have access to only the number and type of magazines, clips, or speed loads normally carried on the person during normal duty hours.
5. Qualified firearms instructors shall conduct all firearms training and proficiency demonstrations. (1.3.11.a)
6. Instructors will schedule off-duty courses and practice sessions prior to proficiency tests that officers may attend free of cost.
7. Officers who do not qualify have the option of attending a remedial weapons course to be conducted off-duty. (1.3.11.c)
8. The minimum firearms proficiency demonstration score for armed officers of the Vicksburg Police Department is ~~eighty percent (80%)~~ **seventy-five percent (75%)** of the required courses of fire. This standard applies to all firearms carried or used by individual officers. (1.3.10)
9. Officers must also demonstrate proficiency in tactical loading, reloading, clearing of malfunctions, safe gun handling, and care and cleaning of the firearms.
10. Officers will be provided with two (2) opportunities to meet proficiency standards. (1.3.11.c) Officers unable to demonstrate proficiency will be scheduled for a conference with the Chief of Police. Any officer who is unable to meet the minimum firearms qualification score established by the Department will not be eligible to perform duties of an armed officer. (1.3.11.c)

Records of all approved firearms training are maintained at the Department level with a listing of pass or fail only. Actual scores are not recorded on training records (1.3.11.b).

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## **Proficiency Course of Fire and Demonstration**

The Range Master shall determine the course of fire and demonstration of proficiency requirements, subject to the approval of the Chief of Police, at least three (3) months prior to the date set for firearms proficiency qualifications. The firearms instructor shall then publish a description of these requirements to all officers. The firearms instructor may vary these requirements from time to time to provide officers with innovative and realistic training. Physical movement, use of cover and concealment, verbal command responses, and firearms retention practices may also be included in training scenarios.

All shooting exercises require employees to clear malfunctions, jams, and misfires in attempts to complete the exercise in the time allotted. Supplemental ammunition reloading is allowed, but employees may not fire more than the required number of rounds.

## **Qualification Scoring and Award**

Each course of fire will be set by the Range Master and may be changed from time to time unless the Mississippi Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training (BLEOST) mandates other courses of fire.

Officers may be awarded badges and awards that demonstrate the following proficiency levels:

1. MARKSMAN, (75% to 85%)
2. SHARPSHOOTER, (86% to 94%)
3. EXPERT, (95% to 100%)
4. DISTINGUISHED EXPERT. (Five (5) perfect scores within one year's time.)

## **Range Safety Rules and Regulations**

1. Fire the actual weapon carried on the job.
2. Weapons must be empty except on the firing line.
3. Load your weapon only after you are on the firing line and given the command to load.
4. The range officer and officers receiving the training will maintain strict discipline at all times.
5. When picking up a firearm, open the cylinder or action and check to see that it is loaded. Check the weapon a second time to assure that it is safe.
6. Do not give a firearm to anyone unless the cylinder or action is open and no rounds are in the weapon.
7. Do not anticipate a command on the range.
8. Always check the barrel of a firearm for obstructions before loading.

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9. Unload when and as instructed.
10. Keep the barrel of your firearm down range in the target area at all times when in your hands.
11. Do not remove a weapon from its holster with your finger on the trigger.
12. The index finger is indexed (placed on the frame of the weapon) until the command to fire is given.
13. Smoking, chewing, or dipping tobacco products is absolutely prohibited while at the firing line.
14. Full attention must be given to instructions and commands of the Range Officer.
15. If a firearm is dropped or the muzzle touches the ground, notify the Range Officer immediately. At his command, unload the weapon, check the barrel for obstructions, and follow the commands of Range Officers before resuming a firing exercise.
16. In the event of a misfire, jam, or malfunction, clear the weapon immediately and attempt to complete the firing exercise in the time allowed. Loading additional rounds is permissible to accomplish the proficiency objective in the time allowed. Demonstration of proficiency includes prevention and recovery from malfunctions.
17. Do not go in front of the firing line until the Range Officer has given the command to cease fire and the line has been cleared and the order to go forward has been given.
18. Dry firing on the range is prohibited except when under the supervision of the Range Officer.
19. If you are taking any type of medication or have consumed alcoholic beverages within eight (8) hours of firing a weapon, the Range Officer must be notified.
20. Repeated violations of any safety rule or regulation, whether intentional or unintentional, will result in loss of proficiency or removal from the range.
21. Ear and eye protection is required to be worn while firing a weapon during range training. Equipment will be provided; however, employees are also allowed to use personal items. Privately-owned equipment is subject to approval by the firearms instructor.
22. The Range Master is in charge of the firing range. Firearms instructors, regardless of rank, are in charge of the firearms training. All officers, including superior officers, must follow the firearms instructor's commands concerning range operation and demonstration of proficiency procedures. The firearms instructor will report to the Range Master any problems that he/she might encounter.
23. Officers attending firearms training will be attentive and cooperative in class and on the firing range. Misconduct, horseplay, or negligence of any kind will not be tolerated and the officer may be asked to leave the range depending on the safety risk of the officer's actions.

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24. Any officer has the right to challenge the scoring of his or her target. The challenge must be made to the Firearms Instructor at the time of the original scoring.
25. Firearms Instructors are to keep a written evaluation of each officer's performance during training exercises noting positive attributes and deficiencies. Recommendations will also be noted. All certified Firearms Instructors present during the training session will assist in this process (1.3.11.b).

### **Issuance of Weapons**

All firearms will be inspected by a certified firearms instructor before issuance to an officer. The City will provide training to the Department certified firearms instructors in order to review, inspect, and approve all Department-issued firearms. (1.3.9.c)

Any firearm deemed unsafe by a Department firearms instructor will be removed from service and maintained in the Department armory. If a weapon becomes unsafe for any reason, the officer shall immediately report it to a Department firearms instructor who will remove the weapon from service. (1.3.9d)

Each approved weapon shall have an inspection form completed and kept on file with other firearms records maintained by the Department. (1.3.9.e)

Unissued Department firearms will be maintained in the Department armory. (1.3.9.f)

Firearms taken from the armory to be tested or fired at an approved range must be signed out and signed in upon return.

Only certified officers/bailiffs of the Vicksburg Police Department are allowed to sign out a weapon from the armory and must have approval from range personnel or command staff.

### **Firearms Qualification Procedure**

No officer will be authorized to carry any firearm until the following has been completed:

1. Received Department-approved instruction in the use of force; (1.3.11.b)
2. Been issued and trained in use of force and qualification procedures;
3. Had the firearm inspected by the Department's Certified Firearms Instructor; (1.3.9.c)
4. Qualified with that firearm on an approved course as certified by a qualified firearms instructor and documented by the Department's Range Master; (1.3.10) and
5. Successfully re-qualify on at least a semi-annual basis.

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Officers who fail to qualify with the firearm shall have thirty (30) days to demonstrate proficiency with their firearm. During that period, remedial training may be provided in order to review the skills necessary to successfully qualify. Should an officer fail to meet the qualification standards as established by this Department based upon industry standards, the officer may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. During this 30-day period, the officer is not authorized to carry a firearm and shall be assigned non-law enforcement duties, if available, until such time as he/she qualifies. (1.3.10) Documentation shall be maintained of such training and officer proficiency. (33.1.5)

Generally, newly-employed officers receive their initial firearms training at the State Academy before being assigned a firearm and placed in a position to make an arrest. However, officers who cannot be immediately assigned to an academy can undergo field training and are assigned to such training. They may receive firearms training as outlined in this policy by a competent firearms instructor and carry a firearm after successful completion of such training. During the time a newly-employed officer is waiting to go to the State Academy, he/she will be assigned to ride with a Field Training Officer and will follow their instructions and will not have the power of arrest. (33.4.1)

### **Firearms Qualification Procedure (Retired Officers)**

Qualified retired law enforcement officers may carry a firearm provided the officer carries on his person a photo ID issued by the Department that indicates the officer has been tested or otherwise found by the department to meet the standards established by the department for training and qualification for active law enforcement to carry a firearm.

Retired officers must do the following:

1. Qualify with their firearm on an approved course. The qualification must be certified by a Firearms Instructor and documented by the Department's Range Master; and (1.3.10)
2. Successfully re-qualify on an annual basis.

Retired officers shall follow all range safety rules and regulations.

Standard brands and calibers of ammunition will be provided by the Department to retirees for qualification.

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### **Department-Issued Weapons (1.3.9.a)**

The Chief of Police reserves the right to change the official service firearm or authorize the carrying and use of other firearms, including any other weapon deemed necessary and approved by firearms/weapons instructors.

Glock Model 31(.357 SIG) and the Smith and Wesson Model 442 (.38 SPC.) are the official firearms of the Department, along with at least three (3) high-capacity magazines.

Shotgun: Remington 870 12 gauge

Off-Duty: To be authorized by Firearms Instructors and/or Range Master

\*ASP Batons ASP brand

Special-Purpose: Submachine Gun, Colt SMG 9mm  
37mm grenade launcher

Patrol Rifle: Smith and Wesson M&P 15 .223 caliber / 5.56 MM

Long-Range Rifle: Remington Model 700, .308 caliber

Less lethal weapons include Taser X26 (21' range taser cartridge) and Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray and similar chemical spray agents.

\*ASP batons may be carried while on duty after the officer has successfully completed the training academy.

### **Narcotics Division**

Glock Model 31(.357 SIG) and the Smith and Wesson Model 442 (.38 SPC.) are the official firearms of the Department, along with at least three (3) high-capacity magazines.

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### **Ammunition (1.3.9.b)**

Firearms will only be loaded with Department-issued or approved ammunition unless otherwise approved by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. Due to fluctuations in cost and availability of all brands and calibers of ammunition, our Department will strive to acquire only commercially available ammunition or law enforcement ammunition that is currently being used by other agencies. Research and documentation of ammunition brands, calibers, and costs will be compiled and kept on file within the Firearms Training Division of the Vicksburg Police Department.

The approved **duty** ammunitions of the Vicksburg Police Department are as follows:

1. .357 SIG -- 125 Grain Hollow Point
2. .38 SPC -- 125 Grain +P Hollow Point
3. .223 Caliber / 5.56mm – 55 Grain **Soft Point**
4. .308 Caliber – 168 Grain Full Metal Jacket
5. 12 gauge -- “00” Buck Shot (9 shot)
6. 12 gauge – Rifled Slug

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