

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting the Columbia )  
County Department of Community Justice- Adult ) Order No. 13-2025  
Firearms Authorization Policy )

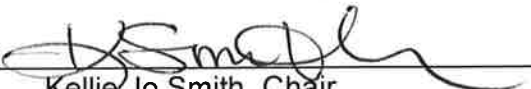
WHEREAS, the Columbia County Department of Community Justice- Adult uses Firearms in the course of business as a potential Use of Force; and

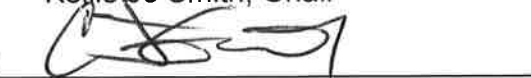
WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the County to adopt a policy setting forth the terms and conditions associated with carrying firearms by the Department of Community Justice-Adult.

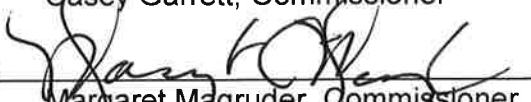
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Columbia County Firearms Authorization Policy, which is attached hereto, and incorporated herein, is hereby adopted.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2025.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By:   
Kellie Jo Smith, Chair

By:   
Casey Garrett, Commissioner

By:   
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

Approved as to form

By:   
Office of County Counsel

**COLUMBIA COUNTY**  
Community Justice Adult Division



ST. HELENS, OR 97051

901 Port Ave.  
Direct (503) 397 6253  
Fax (503) 397 6645  
[www.co.columbia.or.us](http://www.co.columbia.or.us)

**FIREARMS AUTHORIZATION**

Administrative Policy

Effective: April 9, 2025

By Board Order No. 13-2025

**AUTHORITY and PURPOSE:**

This Policy governs the authorization for Adult Parole & Probation Officers ("PO" or "Officer") to carry Department-approved firearms while on duty, as well as the safe and legal carrying of firearms, firearms maintenance, and firearms training.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Department: Columbia County Department of Community Justice- Adult Division.

Director: The Director of Columbia County Department of Community Justice is the individual appointed by the County Board of Commissioners to head the Department.

Officer: An employee of the Columbia County Department of Community Justice who has been hired as a Certified Parole and Probation Officer as defined in ORS 181A.355.

Justice Involved Individual (JII): Any person sentenced to probation, parole, post-prison supervision, interstate compact, or any other form of supervised release, who is under supervision in the State of Oregon in Columbia County.

DPSST: Oregon State Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

Primary Duty Firearm: A Department-approved firearm carried by an authorized Officer while on-duty.

Secondary Firearm: A personally-owned firearm which has been authorized to be carried to and from work with a valid concealed handgun license.

Firearms Instructor: Currently certified firearms instructor, certified by a recognized firearms instructor program and identified by the Director.

Deadly Physical Force: Physical force that under the circumstances in which it is used is readily capable of causing death or serious physical injury. ORS 161.015(3).

Physical Force: The use of hands, other parts of the body, objects, instruments, Tasers, firearms, or other physical methods to restrain, subdue, control, or compel a person to act or stop acting in a particular way.

Threat: (1) Any person, animal, or object controlled by a person that is presenting a danger to themselves or others; (2) Any person actively resisting arrest or lawful control; or (3) Any animal that presents a danger to others and is not under the control of a person.

Use of Force: Taking any action that results in, or is alleged to have resulted in, injury or death of another person; discharging a firearm, for other than training or recreational purposes; applying force through the use of any less-lethal or lethal weapon technology applying physical force necessary to subdue or control and individual(s).

Injury: ORS 161.015 defines "physical injury" as impairment of physical condition or substantial pain.

**On Duty/Shift:** The specific time(s) of the day or night that an officer is assigned to perform the duties of his/her job.

**On-Duty:** An Officer is "on-duty" when they are performing their official duties as described in their job descriptions and other such duties as assigned by management. Typically, an Officer is "on-duty" during their normal scheduled workday. However, the nature of the work may require an Officer to conduct official duties at unscheduled times (evening hours, weekends, and/or holidays).

**Use of Force Instructor:** A person certified by DPSST in the use of force and identified by the Director.

**Use of Force Instructor Team:** A team consisting of the Use of Force Instructor, the PO Supervisor, and a member of the FOPPO Bargaining Unit.

## **POLICY:**

1. It is the policy of the Department that at the discretion of the Director and at the recommendation of the PO Supervisor, Firearms Instructor, and Use of Force Instructor, Officers will be authorized to carry Department-approved firearms in accordance with the terms and provisions of this Policy.
2. It is the policy of this Department to comply with state law, federal law, and court decisions related to the use of deadly physical force, including the use of firearms. Training and demonstration of proficiency with firearms is necessary for those Officers who are authorized to be armed.

## **PROCEDURE:**

1. Application.
  - A. Any sworn Officer, who has completed the DPSST law enforcement firearms training program, is current and proficient in use of force and arrest

policies/procedures, use of restraints, aerosol subject restraints, and use of force training, as deemed appropriate and evidenced by Department training records and evaluations, may apply to carry a firearm while on duty.

- B. An Officer desiring to carry a firearm shall make written application to the PO Supervisor. Upon review of the application, the Supervisor will review the application and submit the final application to the Director along with an assessment of the applicant's qualifications and recommendation.
2. Approval/Denial: The Director shall review, and at their discretion, approve or deny all applications to carry a firearm.
- A. In reviewing an application, the Director may consider the Officer's background, performance and adherence to Department rules, procedures, pertinent statutory provisions and training mandates, and whether the Officer otherwise exercises sound judgment and emotional control.
  - B. In compliance with ORS. 166.263, Officers shall be required to submit to a psychological screening from a certified psychologist or psychiatrist, approved by the Department, and at the Department's expense prior to being authorized to carry a firearm. Refusal to submit to an evaluation shall result in immediate and automatic denial of an application. If an Officer does not successfully pass psychological testing, they will not be eligible to carry a firearm.
  - C. Prior to carrying a firearm, all Officers authorized to carry firearms shall receive copies and acknowledge understanding of all County and Department policies pertaining to the use of force as well as pertaining to carrying and using a firearm.
  - D. The Director's decision to approve or deny an application shall be promptly communicated to the Officer in writing.
  - E. When an Officer's application to carry a firearm has been approved, they will be required to participate in the Department's designated firearms trainings as described herein. Training for duty weapons shall be limited to designated firearms trainings on duty.

### 3. Secondary Firearm

Authorized Parole & Probation Officer may carry a personally-owned Secondary Firearm while commuting to and from work. All secondary firearms must be secured in the designated secure locker upon arrival to work. Upon end of shift, the firearm should be retrieved when exiting the building.

### 4. Suspension or Revocation of Authorization.

- A. The Director, or their designee, may suspend an Officer's authority to carry a firearm at any time. Such suspension will be reviewed within 60 days by the Director and the use of force instructor team before becoming permanent.
- B. Failure on the part of any Officer to demonstrate proficiency during annual proficiency testing shall result in an immediate and automatic suspension of the Officer's authority to carry a firearm. An Officer's authority to carry a firearm pursuant to this policy may be reinstated by the Director, or their designee, when proficiency is demonstrated in the presence of a firearms instructor.
- C. The firearms instructor shall promptly advise the PO Supervisor of failure to demonstrate proficiency by the quickest manner possible, to be followed by a written report.
- D. To assist the Director, or their designee, in determining whether to revoke or reinstate an Officer's authority to carry a firearm pursuant to this policy, the Officer may be required to submit, or resubmit, to an evaluation from an approved physician, psychologist and/or psychiatrist at Department expense, whenever it is deemed that such an evaluation is necessary or advisable. Refusal to submit to an evaluation shall result in immediate and automatic revocation of an Officer's authority to carry a firearm.
- E. The decision to revoke or reinstate an Officer's authority to carry a firearm pursuant to this policy shall be promptly communicated to the affected Officer in writing.

5. General Terms & Conditions:

- A. All approved firearms, and firearms related duty gear, shall be provided by the Department. With the approval of the PO Supervisor and/or Director, POs have the option to use their own duty gear.
- B. While they are armed, Officers shall carry their badge in a belt clip or badge holder which will ensure that the badge is always readily visible. Officers who are in the field and do not have their firearm concealed must wear clothing that clearly establishes them as a Columbia County Parole Officer. While armed, Department identification cards shall be carried. Name tags will be displayed on outer vest carriers.
- C. Officers who are authorized to carry a firearm, pursuant to this Policy, shall do so when conducting field-related duties. Officers choosing to carry their Department issued firearm in the office are required to wear a Department issued ballistic vest.
- D. Authorization for Officers to carry a firearm, pursuant to this policy, is strictly limited to the performance of official duties as follows:
  - a) In accordance with the Officers job description or as assigned by the Department Supervisor and/or Director.
  - b) When called out after an Officer's regular work hours to address a field-related matter.
  - c) Commute time: Officers are not considered to be on duty during commute times.
- E. To manage the risk related to removing and re-holstering firearms, firearms may be carried in the office. All firearms that are not locked in an approved gun locker shall be worn on the Officer's person and inside their holster.
- F. Firearms stored in a Department facility must be secured in an approved firearms locker designated for that purpose. Firearms shall never be stored in an unlocked desk, file cabinet, or otherwise left unattended.
- G. Firearms stored at an Officer's home must be secured in an approved firearms locker designated for that purpose. Firearms shall never be stored in an unlocked desk, vehicle, file cabinet, or otherwise left unattended.

- H. Officers shall, at all times, handle their firearms as prescribed by Department rules, procedures, and training.
- I. Protective body armor will be required to be worn by all Officers, always, when conducting official field duties.
- J. All sworn Officers, who have successfully completed the DPSST firearms training course, are eligible to carry a firearm while on duty, and will be allowed to use and train on Department approved training range(s) as part of the ongoing Departmental firearms training program. During work hours, any Officer who requests to use the range must have a firearms instructor with them and train according to Department policy/practice. Officers shall follow all rules and guidelines of approved ranges.
- K. Officers shall not carry a firearm while under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that could affect reflexes or judgment. All Officers should be compliant with Columbia County Policy Drug Free Workplace policy.
- L. Firearms that meet the definition of "large-capacity magazine" in Ballot Measure 114 may only be used related directly to an Officer's official law enforcement duties. Officers who deploy from home may possess such firearms at home (provided they are compliant with other relevant policies). However, such firearms shall not be possessed outside of the home, with the exclusion of being on duty or during commute time. This subsection shall be in effect unless and until Ballot Measure 114 is overturned by a court of competent jurisdiction and all appeals are concluded.

6. Proficiency Testing and Training:

- A. Every Officer who is authorized to carry a firearm is required to demonstrate proficiency annually. Proficiency is demonstrated by successfully passing the Department's designated qualification test. Additionally, every armed Officer is required to attend and effectively participate in all Department scheduled firearms proficiency and training sessions, unless exempted due to medical reasons or authorized by a Supervisor and/or Director. Whenever practical, absences shall be made up within thirty (30) days of the last session of a



scheduled training session unless an extension is authorized by the Department's Supervisor and/or Director. Scheduled proficiency testing and training sessions are mandatory, except when authorized by the PO Supervisor and/or Director.

The Department qualification course is the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) handgun course deemed applicable to Parole and Probation Officers. This course requires a score of 80% proficiency.

- B. Firearm trainings shall be designed to keep the Officer abreast of current techniques and tactical methods, maintain knowledge of relevant legal requirements, and improve effectiveness and efficiency with their firearm.
- C. All proficiency courses shall be approved by the Director and/or or their designee.

#### 7. Failure to Qualify:

Officers will be required to qualify according to policy on an annual basis. Any Officer failing to qualify for any reason, including injury, illness, or scheduling conflict will immediately notify the PO Supervisor and/or Director, in writing, any reason(s) for his or her inability to qualify. Officers failing to qualify will be given three (3) opportunities to qualify. If the Officer does not demonstrate proficiency, at that time, they will have remedial training consisting of a curriculum developed on a per case basis. The firearms instructor will notify the PO Supervisor and/or Director of any Officer who does not qualify under the aforementioned conditions and that Officer will no longer be authorized to carry a firearm while on duty until which time as proficiency can be demonstrated.

Exception: If an Officer has missed qualifications or is not available to re-qualify due to illness, medical issue, or approved time off, they will be given a reasonable amount of time to qualify or re-qualify. The firearms instructor will notify the PO Supervisor and/or Director of any Officer who does not qualify under the aforementioned conditions and that Officer will no longer be authorized to carry a firearm while on duty

until which time as proficiency can be demonstrated, with the exclusion of a period when the Officer is still engaged in field operations when pregnant.

8. Range Safety:

- A. During scheduled firearms training or proficiency testing, the firearms instructor(s) shall be in command regardless of rank, unless officially relieved by a Supervisor and/or Director.
- B. During range training, Officers will wear ballistic vests, protective eye and ear wear, hat, long sleeve shirt, pants, and appropriate footwear.
- C. Range rules will be followed at all times.
- D. The four cardinal rules of safe gun handling will be followed at all time;
  - a. Always treat all firearms as if they were loaded.
  - b. Never allow the muzzle of any firearm to point at anything you are not willing to shoot.
  - c. Never put your finger near the trigger until you are ready to fire. Do not depend on any mechanical device for safety.
  - d. Always be sure of your target, and what is behind and in front of it. Firearms will always be pointed in a safe direction.

9. Care & Maintenance of Firearms & Accessories..

It is the policy of this Department to ensure public and Officer safety in the event deadly physical force is necessary by maintaining properly functioning firearms and their related weapon system components (holster, magazine, belt, etc.). This is a critical, affirmative duty for all persons affected.

- A. At all times, all firearms and related equipment carried by Officers shall be kept clean, properly maintained, and operational by the Officers. Firearm cleaning supplies will be provided by the Department. After each training/use of an issued firearm, a PO will adequately clean the firearm using Department approved supplies.

- B. Every Officer shall immediately, or as soon as practicable, report to the Department's designated armorer, if any, and PO Supervisor and/or Director, or a firearms instructor, any malfunctioning or defective firearm or related equipment. Such firearm or equipment shall not thereafter be carried or used on duty until repaired and certified safe and operational by a Department armorer or designated gunsmith. A temporary emergency replacement firearm or related equipment shall be authorized until the affected item can be repaired as stated.
- C. All repairs, adjustments, and permitted modifications of firearms and related equipment approved for duty carry must be approved by the PO Supervisor and/or Director, as well as periodic inspection by a Department designated armorer.
- D. All Officers shall submit their firearm for inspection upon the request of the PO Supervisor and/or Director. Visual inspections of firearms and related equipment for proper function and cleanliness may be made at any appropriate time and place.
- E. All repairs, adjustments, modifications, and scheduled periodic inspections of firearms shall be documented in writing on the appropriate forms maintained by the PO Supervisor.
- F. The Director and/or designee, upon the recommendation of the firearms instructor, shall designate gunsmiths and armorers authorized to perform repairs, adjustments, modifications, and inspections for all firearms.

#### 10. Authorized Firearms & Ammunition.

It is the policy of this Department to ensure Officers will only carry Department issued firearms and range/duty ammo.

Firearms shall conform to the following listed minimum standards and are subject to specific approval by a PO Supervisor and/or Director. Firearms, and firearms related gear, shall be provided by the Department. The Department issued firearm is a Glock 19 pistol.

- A. No modification to firearms internal operating components is permitted. Any other modifications or alterations to a firearm is subject to approval by the PO Supervisor and/or Director, as well as the Glock Armorer.
- B. Only commercially manufactured and re-manufactured ammunition will be provided by the Department. No personally reloaded ammunition will be allowed.
- C. No multiple projectile or explosive tipped bullets are allowed unless specifically authorized in writing by the Director.
- D. No alterations are allowed to the bullet or other parts of the cartridge.
- E. Ammunition carried continuously in firearms or reloading devices may be exchanged as needed. Officers will report any defective rounds or shortages to the PO Supervisor and/or Director.
  - a) The Department standard issue ammunition is:
    - i. 9 mm, factory grade. Duty ammo will be police grade.
    - ii. Due to ammunition shortages other types of factory ammunition may be substituted during training.
    - iii. Duty ammo will be changed according to the manufacture's recommendation.
- F. The PO Supervisor, with Director approval, may elect to change issued loads based on current research on law enforcement handgun incapacitation probability.
- G. Only Department approved ammunition may be carried on duty.

#### 11. Holster & Ammunition Carriers:

The firearm holster is a critical piece of Officer safety equipment and is part of the defensive weapon system being carried. The holster must be designed for a fast draw in response to a sudden lethal attack upon the Officer or a citizen, allowing proper firing grip without adjustment, but also must provide security against accidental loss of the firearm and attempted physical disarming of the Officer by a threat.

- A. All holsters shall be subject to specific approval. Any holster outside of what is provided by the Department cannot be used until the employee qualifies using the requested holster.
- B. Permission to carry a specific holster is subject to continual review by the PO Supervisor and/or Director, with recommendation from the firearms instructor. A holster may be revoked at any time based on evidence of manufacturing defect(s), serviceability problems, or other identifiable reason(s) pertaining to reliability or safety.
- C. All duty holsters shall have a functioning retention device that shall be kept fastened at all times unless the Officer has drawn the firearm as authorized. Upon re-holstering, the retention device shall be immediately refastened. If a holster becomes defective, the Officer shall report it immediately to the PO Supervisor, Director, and/or the firearms instructor.
- D. Officers shall carry a minimum of two (2) magazines on their person (one being in the firearm).
- E. Magazine carrier(s) must offer adequate security against inadvertent loss during vigorous activity and protection (especially to the feeding end) of the magazine.
- F. Only magazines approved by the Department may be used for duty purposes.

#### 12. Reporting Unholstering of Firearms; Reviews:

- A. When an Officer points their firearm in the ready position an incident report will be submitted to the PO Supervisor by the end of the workday.
- B. Use of Physical Force Report is required whenever an Officer unholsters a firearm and points the firearm at an individual.
- C. All incidents in which a firearm is pointed at a threat shall be reviewed and evaluated by the PO Supervisor no later than ten working days following the incident.
  - a) All incidents involving the discharge of a firearm at another shall be reviewed and evaluated by local law enforcement.

- b) All other incidents shall be reviewed and evaluated by a Departmental review team comprised of the Director, and the use of force instructor.

### 13. Reporting of Discharges of Firearms; Post-violence Trauma:

It is the policy of this Department to report the discharge of the firearm on & off duty, with the exception of training and practice.

- A. Any Officer who discharges their firearm while on-duty, whether intentionally or accidentally, shall immediately report the occurrence and circumstances to their immediate Supervisor. This does not include discharge during authorized training. The Supervisor will then contact the appropriate officials and report the incident.
- B. The Department recognizes the complex psychological trauma law enforcement Officers experience after the use of deadly physical force, no matter how justified, and shall make all practical efforts based on current research to assist the Officer to successfully cope with the recognized trauma they may experience. This may include, but is not limited to, mandatory paid administrative leave, post violent event trauma counseling and other measures.
- C. Whenever an Officer discharges a firearm at another person, whether intentional or accidental, whether or not injury or death results, said discharge must be investigated. Immediate notification shall be made to the appropriate Supervisor, appropriate officials and to the Columbia County Sheriff by the immediate Supervisor of the involved Officer.
  - a) Appropriate officials shall be assigned to investigate the incident.
  - b) The investigation shall be initiated as soon as practical following the occurrence.

### 14. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- A. All officers involved in firearms qualification or training are required to use personal protective equipment at any time firearms are being discharged or

at any time the range environment is being disturbed to the extent that lead particles may become airborne.

- B. Ballistic vest shall be worn by all Officers present at an active firearms range.
- C. ABSENCE OF REQUIRED PPE BY AN OFFICER WILL PREVENT THE MEMBER FROM PARTICIPATING IN OR BEING PRESENT FOR FIREARMS TRAINING WHERE FIREARMS ARE BEING DISCHARGED.
- D. Noise Exposure - All Officers are presumed to be exposed to a noise level that exceeds the level permitted under OSHA rules (an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level of 85 decibels measured on the A scale (slow response)), or the equivalent, whenever the Officer is present on a firing range that is in use, and all Officers are so notified. All Officers that participate in firearms training will be given a baseline audiogram followed by annual audiograms. All audiograms will be conducted in compliance with OSHA guidelines and will be provided at no cost to the employee. Annual Hearing Conservation Training will be provided to all Officers who carry or use a firearm as part of their duties. This training will include the following subject matter: The effects of noise on hearing; The purpose of hearing protectors, advantages, disadvantages, attenuation of various types and instructions on selection, fitting use and care, and; The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures.
- E. Noise Protection - All Officers present when firearms are being discharged for qualification or training shall employ hearing protection devices whenever firearms are actually in use. The recommended method of hearing protection is to employ earplugs that are compressed and inserted into the ear while also using earmuff style ear protection. Ear plug hearing protection alone is not authorized, however, earmuff hearing protection alone is authorized.
- F. Lead Exposure - All Officers are presumed to be at risk of exposure to airborne and surface (settled) lead particles whenever the employee is present on a firing range that is in use, either active or inactive, and all employees are so notified. Any Officer that is involved in repeated potential exposure to airborne lead particles (Rangemaster, Instructor, etc.) will be

provided with initial and annual medical testing for lead exposure. This testing will be conducted at no cost to the Officer and will be conducted in compliance with OSHA guidelines. All Officers will be provided with annual Lead Exposure training. The training will include the following subject matter: How lead enters the body; The effects of lead on the body; What types of precautions should be taken at the range, and; Other materials as required by OSHA.

- G. Lead Protection - All Officers present when firearms are being discharged for qualification or training shall employ protection to avoid contamination from airborne lead particles resulting from the firearm discharge. The minimum required protection from airborne lead exposure is long sleeves; long pants; hat; eye protection. Breathing protection by use of a filter mask is required whenever a member is engaged in cleaning the berm used to capture discharged rounds or is otherwise disturbing the range environment sufficiently to cause lead dust to become airborne. The appropriate mask for lead dust is either a filter mask with P100 or N100 filters or a paper mask with equivalent ratings. No food or drink is allowed when firearms are being discharged. No application of makeup, lipstick, or chapstick type of product may be used when firearms are being discharged.

Officers shall cleanse exposed surfaces (hands / face) following the discharge of firearms for qualification or training purposes. Cleansing facilities will be available at the range, including an emergency eye-wash station. Officers are advised that lead particulate may adhere to clothing and shoes and may pose a risk of contamination to family members and the home environment. Please take appropriate precautions.

Officers who are pregnant may be at greater risk of contamination in the firearms range environment and should seek medical advice from their health care provider before engaging in firearms qualification or training where firearms are discharged. The Department will work with individual members during pregnancy to develop a reasonable accommodation regarding qualification and training requirements.



### 15. Carrying Firearms Out of State

Under current federal law, as provided for in the Law Enforcement Officer Safety Act of 2004 & Law Enforcement Safety Improvement Act of 2010, qualified, active, full-time Officers of the Department are authorized: 1) to carry a duty firearm in all other states while conducting official Columbia County business; or 2) to carry a personal firearm in all other states while off duty subject to the following conditions. Columbia County Parole & Probation Officers have been determined to meet the statutory requirements outlined in this law as it pertains to the definition of "law enforcement officer", which is based on qualifying law enforcement duties and powers of arrest.

This law further requires officers to meet a firearms proficiency standard in order to be considered a fully "qualified" law enforcement officer. The purpose of this policy is to provide further clarification on these additional eligibility requirements, and outline the process by which Parole & Probation Officers may qualify to carry a concealed firearm in any state under the provisions of 18 USC 926B.

Active-duty Columbia County Parole & Probation Officers are considered "qualified" under 18 USC 926B when the following requirements have been met:

- A. The officer carries County identification as a Law Enforcement Officer;
- B. The officer is certified by DPSST; and
- C. Is authorized by the department to carry a firearm;
- D. Meets the department's firearms qualification requirements;
- E. Is not the subject of any disciplinary action by their employing agency;
- F. Is not under the influence of drugs or alcohol; and
- G. Is not prohibited by federal law from possessing a firearm.