

**STOCKTON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**GENERAL ORDER**

**HANDLING FIREARMS**  
**SUBJECT**

**DATE:** January 17, 2006

**NO:** Q-7

**FROM:** CHIEF ERIC JONES

**TO:** ALL PERSONNEL

**INDEX:** Handling of Firearms within  
Police Facilities  
Slugmaster Unloading Stations  
Handling of Firearms in the Field

**I. POLICY**

- A. Members of the Stockton Police Department will handle firearms in accordance with the procedures set forth in this General Order.
- B. Personnel will render all firearms safe prior to transporting, booking, bringing to court, and/or releasing to a citizen. When handling firearms, personnel will render the firearm safe as soon as practical.
- C. Personnel will use the Slugmaster Unloading Station, located at the North Police Facility outside of the door leading to the Locker Room hallway, the Stewart-Eberhardt Building in the sally port area, or at the bottom of the stairwell in the rear lot of the Main Police Facility, when handling firearms in/or around any Police Facility.
  - 1. The Slugmaster Unloading Station is designed so the bullet will lose most of its energy upon initial impact of the curved primary plate. The large chamber will easily contain the expanding gases and fragments caused by the discharged ammunition. The angle of the muzzle cone will guide any misdirected shots into the chamber and will stop any fragments from exiting the Unloading Station.
- D. Civilian personnel, including Community Service Officers (CSO), Facility Aids, Evidence Identification Technicians (EIT) other than those who have been properly trained, Property Clerks, etc., will not handle any firearm until they are rendered safe by a sworn officer.

**II. PURPOSE**

- A. These procedures are established for the purpose of:
  - 1. Preventing accidental discharge or malfunction of all firearms and BB/Pellet guns handled by Department personnel.
  - 2. Guaranteeing the safekeeping of weapons.
  - 3. Preventing injury to Department personnel and the public.
    - a. Warning: Often, weapons handled by police personnel are old and in disrepair. They should be handled with caution. Weapons should be pointed in a safe direction at all times. An officer who is unfamiliar with a weapon should contact a patrol sergeant. If the patrol sergeant is unfamiliar with the weapon, the watch commander should be contacted. If the watch commander is unfamiliar with the weapon, it should be tagged "DANGEROUS" and taken immediately to the Police Range. If the weapon is to be left at the Range, the officer shall document the disposition of the weapon in the appropriate ARS report.

**III. PROCEDURES**

- A. The Safety Clearing Barrels shall be used by officers whenever loading, unloading, or checking the condition of a firearm when in or around any Police Facility. This includes all Department issued

firearms, second weapons, and all firearms recovered and held for safekeeping. The only exception to this procedure is for patrol shotguns/rifles.

1. No firearm shall be brought into or handled in or around any Stockton Police Facility until it has been checked and rendered safe. This includes Department issued shotguns/rifles being checked out of storage or any upholstered firearm. Officers' firearms are exempt from this procedure if they are to remain holstered or otherwise secured within the police facility.
  2. When going off duty, officers may move their firearms from one holster or secured position to another in the locker rooms without using the Safety Clearing Barrel if the movement can be done without having to load or unload, chamber or unchamber a round of ammunition, and/or cock or decock the firearm. If any of these procedures are required, the Safety Clearing Barrel must be used.
- B. Whenever an officer takes possession or confiscates any firearm or BB/Pellet gun for any reason, it should be rendered safe as soon as practical. If this occurs at any Police Facility, the weapon shall be rendered safe at the Safety Clearing Barrel. If at a location other than a Police Facility, the weapon should be rendered safe prior to further handling or transportation, whenever possible.
1. To render a firearm safe, keep fingers and other objects away from the trigger and out of the trigger guard. Always ensure the barrel is pointed in a safe direction. Engage the safety, if the weapon is so equipped. Remove the magazine, if so equipped. Open the action or cylinder, remove any ammunition, and lock the weapon open by using a flex tie.
- C. Types of handguns:
1. Revolvers:
    - a. Swing out cylinder models – Cylinder will be open, ammunition removed, and the weapon handled/transported in the open position.
    - b. Top break models – Revolver will be open, cylinder exposed, ammunition removed, and the weapon handled/transported in the open position.
    - c. Solid frame models – The loading gate (if so equipped) will be open, ammunition removed and when practical the cylinder will be removed. The weapon will be transported with the cylinder separate from the frame, if possible.
  2. Semi-automatic Pistols:
    - a. Many brands, designs, calibers, and shapes of semi-automatic pistols exist. The majority of functions are the same, the slide operating on the frame, moving back to cock the weapon, and at the same time ejecting any spent cartridge. As the slide moves forward, a fresh cartridge is brought into the chamber from the magazine.
      1. Precautions – Various types of safeties exist and some weapons do not have a safety mechanism.
        - (a) Remove the magazine, pull the slide to the rear (lock open if possible) and visually check the chamber to determine if it is clear. These types of pistols should be transported with the slide open and the magazine removed.
        - (b) If the slide cannot be held open, insert a pen, pencil, or other similar object into the ejection port and transport the weapon in that manner.
- D. Types of shotguns/rifles:
1. Bolt action models – Activate any safety, remove the magazine (if so equipped), open the action and remove any ammunition.

- a. On some bolt action rifles, the action cannot be opened when the gun is cocked and the safety is on. In those cases, put the safety in the off position and then open the action.
  2. Break action models – Activate any safety, open the action and remove the ammunition. If the action will not open with the safety on, then put the safety in the off position and open the action.
  3. Pump (Slide) action models – Activate any safety, open the action and remove the ammunition.
  4. Semi-automatic models – Activate any safety, remove the magazine, open the action and remove any ammunition. Lock the action to the rear. If the action cannot be locked back, place a pen, pencil, or other similar object in the ejection port to hold it open.
  5. Lever action models – Put the safety on (if so equipped), open the action and remove any ammunition. Leave the action open.
    - a. Most lever action rifles are unloaded by working the action, open and closed. However, it is not necessary to completely close the bolt when working the action in order to pick up and eject a loaded cartridge.
  6. Types of magazines for rifles:
    - a. Detachable Box Magazine (CLIP). This should be removed before the action is opened.
    - b. Non-Detachable Box Magazine. Some of these models may require the action to be worked open and closed in order to remove the ammunition. It is not necessary to completely close the action in order to pick up and eject a loaded cartridge.
    - c. Tube Magazine – Non-Detachable. Some tube magazines are under the barrel, others are in the butt stock. All use some type of spring loaded follower. Remove the follower and slide the ammunition out of the tube. These types are usually found on .22 caliber rifles and some older or “antique” rifles.
- F. Types of BB guns and pellet guns:
1. Spring loaded or single cocking models:
    - a. This type of gun is safe if not cocked. It should be secured by using a plastic tie (flex cuff type) wrapped around the lever or pump action to prevent cocking.
    - b. The basic means of determining this weapon is not cocked is by pulling the trigger, this discharging the weapon in a safe and judicious manner. At any Police Facility, this will be done in the Safety Clearing Barrel.
  2. Pump action models:
    - a. This type of weapon should be deactivated, if loaded and cocked, by firing it in a safe and judicious manner and then left uncocked. The magazine should be unloaded, if practical. If not practical, the action should be held open with a plastic tie.
  3. Co2 cartridge models:
    - a. This weapon may be either a single shot, repeater, semi-automatic, or revolver type. To render it safe, put the safety on, if so equipped, then the Co2 cartridge should be released by unscrewing the retaining lug.
      - (1) This should be done slowly to allow the gas to escape without danger.
    - b. After the Co2 cartridge is removed, check to make sure there isn't a chambered BB/Pellet by attempting to discharge the weapon in a safe and judicious manner. It is not necessary to remove any remaining ammunition once the Co2 cartridge

has been removed and any remaining gas charge has been discharged by pulling the trigger.

4. Freon powered automatic BB machine guns:

- a. This is a fully automatic BB machine gun. It can be deactivated by unscrewing the can of Freon, thus rendering it safe. It is not necessary to remove the BB's.

G. Means of discharging BB and Pellet guns:

1. A Safety Clearing Barrel shall be used to discharge BB and pellet guns that cannot be safely discharged in the field.

- a. Since most BB guns have no safety device, the usual means of guaranteeing one is rendered safe is by discharging the weapon safely and judiciously.
- b. Discharging pellet guns requires greater safety and caution than BB guns due to their higher velocity, greater penetration, and extended range.

2. Prior to transporting a BB/pellet, it should be discharged, if cocked. A safe method is to discharge the weapon into soft earth, lawn, sand, or into absorbent material thus preventing the possibility of a ricochet.

- a. This latter policy DOES NOT apply to any other type of firearms.

H. Procedures for securing firearms with plastic ties (flex cuff type):

1. All firearms confiscated by members of this department shall be rendered safe and unfireable by use of a plastic tie prior to being booked, taken to court, or released. Tying or securing the firearm to the storage box alone may not render a firearm safe.

- a. Plastic ties placed down the barrel of a firearm can destroy trace evidence. Plastic ties should not be placed down the barrel of a firearm except as a last resort.

2. The following options should be followed when securing firearms with plastic ties:

a. Revolvers:

- (1) Place a tie around the cylinder and frame immobilizing the cylinder.
- (2) Place a tie under the hammer and around the frame.
- (3) Place a tie through a cylinder or place a tie around the trigger and the hammer so that neither can move.

b. Semi-automatic pistols:

- (1) Place a tie through the frame and ejection port, holding the action open.
- (2) Place a tie through the ejection port and barrel (use this method only as a last resort).

c. Rifles:

- (1) Bolt action – Open the action and place a tie around the open bolt, run the tie behind the trigger and secure.
- (2) Pump action – Open the action and place the tie through the magazine port and through the ejection port and secure.
- (3) Automatic – Open the action and place the tie through the magazine port and through the ejection port and secure.
- (4) Lever action – Open the action and place a tie around and through action when possible. This procedure is not practical with all lever

actions due to varying types of construction. If impractical, the tie can be placed through the lever and around the receiver thus holding the lever open.

- (5) Shotguns – Place a tie around the receiver (frame) and beneath open barrel and behind the trigger.