

No. 705.1-AR

UNITED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE
REGULATION

**705.1-AR. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR PERSONS AUTHORIZED
TO USE WEAPONS**

Established to preserve a safe school environment for students and staff, school district security officers who are properly certified in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania may possess weaponry on their person upon approval of the Board of Directors. Therefore, the following rules and regulations shall be in effect for those officers who are authorized and approved to carry weapons.

The Board authorizes school district security officers (Officers) who are properly certified in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and are approved by the Board to possess particular weaponry on their person while exercising their duties.

The Superintendent or designee shall assume the responsibility for ensuring compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Training and Qualifications

Officers must be trained in the use of firearms and other weaponry according to Act 235, an Act that provides for the training and licensing of watch guards, protective patrolmen, detectives and criminal investigators, carrying and using lethal weapons in their employment.

The Officer is required or authorized to carry her/his weapon in the line of duty while on the school district premises.

Firearms/Tasers

Storage:

In the event that there is a need to store a firearm/Taser on the school premises, any firearm/Taser shall be emptied of ammunition and stored unloaded in a locked gun safe, which shall be provided by the district. Said safe shall be capable of safely storing the weapons in a manner so as not to jeopardize the safety and welfare of unauthorized persons. Access to the school safe shall be limited to the Officer, the Superintendent, and the principal where the safe is located.

Personnel authorized to carry firearms/Tasers shall have such weaponry under his/her control at all times. Firearms/Tasers shall be holstered, with safety on, except when in use by the officer. Firearms/Tasers shall be properly and routinely cleaned and maintained in proper working order.

Maintenance of Firearms/Tasers:

Officers are responsible to clean and lubricate firearms/Tasers after each use or whenever the firearm/Taser has been subjected to moisture or dirt. Firearms/Tasers with mechanical problems that cannot be corrected by routine cleaning must be taken out of service and sent to a qualified armorer for repair. Officers shall not make any modifications or changes to their duty weapon.

Deadly Force:

The decision to use deadly force is one of the most serious decisions an Officer shall ever make. Because of the far-reaching consequences of the use of deadly force, Officers shall be thoroughly familiar with the rules governing its use and consider beforehand the types of situations in which it may be required.

Officers may use deadly force if presented with a situation in which such force is required to protect lives. These Procedures are designed to serve as a straight-forward definition of the circumstances under which deadly force is appropriate so Officers shall be able to act swiftly, decisively, and correctly.

Officers need not wait until injury occurs to themselves or others before taking appropriate action to prevent it.

Use of Force Definitions:

A. Deadly Force

As used in these Procedures, “Deadly Force” is defined as that force which is intended to cause death or serious bodily injury or which creates some specified degree of risk that a reasonable and prudent person would consider likely to cause death or serious bodily injury.

B. Serious Bodily Injury

Serious Bodily Injury is defined a bodily injury which creates a substantial risk of death or which causes serious, permanent disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of function of any bodily member or organ.

C. Shoot to Stop

Officers shall NOT fire their weapons to kill, but rather to STOP and incapacitate an assailant from completing a potentially deadly act as described in the following sections of these Procedures. For maximum stopping effectiveness and minimal danger to innocent bystanders, the Officer should shoot at center body mass.

D. Defense of Life

An Officer may use deadly force to protect her/himself or others from what s/he reasonably believes to be an immediate threat of death or serious bodily injury.

E. Juveniles

No distinction need be made relative to the age of the intended target of deadly force. Self-defense and imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury to the Officer or others are the only policy guidelines for employing deadly force.

F. Warning Shots

An Officer shall NOT utilize his weapon to fire a “Warning shot.”

G. Risk to Innocent Bystanders

Officers facing the decision to use deadly force must be cognizant of any innocent third parties that may be present in or near the line of fire. Officers are prohibited from discharging firearms/Tasers when it appears reasonably likely that an innocent person may be injured unless failure to use deadly force would likely result in the immediate death or serious bodily injury of the Officer or another person.

H. Verbal Warning

If feasible, an Officer should give a verbal warning before using or attempting to use deadly force.

I. Holding Area

In the event that an individual needs to be detained until State Police arrive, individuals may be detained in the Principal’s Office. There is no official holding cell on school district property. Also, an individual will not be interrogated by school security officers.

J. Vehicular Chase

An Officer will not engage in a vehicular chase.

Discharging of Firearms/Taser:

Firearms/Tasers may be discharged only during times when the life of the Officer or life of another is threatened or in jeopardy of serious bodily injury or death.

Use of Force Considerations:

When determining whether or not to apply a use of force and evaluating whether an Officer has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration, including, but not limited to:

- a. The immediate threat to safety
- b. Potential for injury to an Officer or others
- c. An Officer’s ability to disengage
- d. The circumstances existing at the moment force is used
- e. Any other exigent circumstances

The Officer, the Superintendent and/or designee, and the Pennsylvania State Police should be notified immediately.

A written report of said incident shall be prepared and submitted immediately to the Superintendent or designee.

Procedures for Loss, Theft, and Disposal of Weapons:

Officers must report, by telephone or in person, the loss or theft of weapon to the Superintendent or designee immediately upon discovery of the missing weapon.

A written report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the loss or theft. The written report will describe the circumstances surrounding the loss or theft of the weapon.

The Officer should take immediate reasonable action to recover the weapon and to obtain all information available to aid in the investigation and recovery of the weapon. Officers must notify the appropriate law enforcement agency as soon as possible.

Firearms Qualification:

An Officer must qualify with his assigned firearms on an annual basis utilizing an approved course. Firearms training should include comprehensive instruction of:

- a. Policy on the use of deadly force
- b. Legal requirements
- c. Firearm safety
- d. Firearm proficiency

All aspects of firearms training will include the Officer's on-duty weapon. Should an Officer fail to meet qualification standards, the authority to carry the weapon shall immediately be revoked by the United School District until such time as standards are met.

Officers may fire to qualify twice within the same day, if needed. Officers who qualify on the first attempt shall not fire the course a second time. Officers who do not qualify on the first attempt shall be given every opportunity by the Firearm Instructor to immediately complete a second attempt. Officers who fail to qualify on the second attempt will be required to complete four-hour training with the Firearm Instructor within two weeks of not qualifying. The Officer may then attempt to re-qualify within two weeks of completing the four-hour training.

Firearm Certification Records:

The District shall maintain a permanent Certification Log for every Officer authorized to carry firearms. The Log shall contain, as a minimum:

- a. Officer's name
- b. Date/time/location of Qualification
- c. Certified on-duty weapon's make, model, caliber, serial number, and the ammunition used for on-duty use
- d. Firearm instructor's name

Department Investigative Process for Discharge of Weapons:

An Officer, except for target practice and qualification, shall use the following procedures to investigate every incident of weapons discharge.

- A. Involved Officer – Whenever an Officer discharges her/his weapon, either accidentally or officially, s/he shall IMMEDIATELY:
1. Determine the physical condition of any injured person and render first aid when appropriate.
 2. Request necessary emergency medical aid.
 3. Notify Indiana County Emergency Management Service (911) of the incident and location.
 4. Remain at the scene (unless injured) until arrival of the appropriate investigators.
 5. Notify the Principal and Superintendent by the most expeditious means available.
 6. Protect said weapon and submit it to the appropriate investigator, if applicable.
 7. The Officer will prepare a detailed written report of the incident. The written report shall include the exact location and time of the incident, name and address of any witness, reason the weapon was fired, and any other information that may be necessary in the understanding and investigating the incident. The Officer shall not discuss the incident with anyone except supervisory personnel and the Officer's attorney.
 8. The Officer will make her/himself available for administrative interviews and statements regarding the case.
 9. The Officer, the Officer's attorney, and the United School District shall refrain from providing any interviews or statements to the media.
- B. Administrative Interview – The Officer will be advised that a post-shooting administrative interview involves certain rights. These rights include:
1. That the investigation is narrowly defined to a specific shooting incident.
 2. If the administrative review concludes that the Officer's actions constitute misconduct, this is grounds for administrative action, including suspension and/or dismissal.
 3. The results of any administrative investigation will not be used against the Officer in any subsequent criminal prosecution.
- C. Criminal Investigation – A criminal investigation will be conducted into every shooting by an Officer. The investigation will be conducted at the request of the Officer. The Police Department have jurisdiction will conduct the investigation after consultation with the Indiana County District Attorney.
- D. Legal Representation – The Officer's private attorney may be immediately notified of any officer involved in a shooting incident. The attorney may proceed to the Officer's location and establish a lawyer/client relationship with the Officer. The attorney may assist the Officer in drafting a formal statement as to the underlying facts and reasonableness, as perceived by the Officer, justifying her/his use of deadly force.
- E. Psychological Services for the Officer – In all cases, as a result of a firearm discharge by an Officer, the involved Officer shall be required to undergo an emotional debriefing with

a psychologist furnished by the United School District within five (5) days of the incident.

Conditions Affecting the Ability to Carry a Weapon:

Officers shall notify the Administration of any physical, emotional/mental, or pharmacological condition causing physical and/or emotional/mental impairment. Impairment shall be defined as a condition which can affect judgment, reaction time, or other skills, as it may affect the ability to handle a weapon safely. At any time, the Administration has the authority to remand weapons.

In those instances where an Officer believes and/or medical personnel indicate that a physical condition, emotional/mental health condition, or that any medication may affect judgment and/or reaction time, authorization to carry a weapon shall be suspended. Authorization shall be reinstated upon the cessation of the physical or emotional/mental health condition, or upon cessation of the medication and its effects or with a physician's ruling that the medications or existing health condition's potential contraindications would not be averse to handling a weapon safely and proficiently.

Searches

School security Officers will not conduct searches of a person. Officers will conduct minimal searches of personal items of school visitors, if metal detecting wands are utilized. If reasonable suspicion exists concerning individuals, additional personal property, or school property, the Officer will immediately notify the administration at which time a pat down may be conducted by the Officer.

Detention/Interrogation

School Security Officers may only detain individuals to assist administration and/or until the appropriate police are notified and arrive at the scene. Although no formal detention center exists, School Security Officers may assist with the detention of individuals within the Main Office of each school. The administration must be notified immediately of any individual being detained.

Hot Pursuit

School Security Officers will not participate in hot pursuit. If School Security Officers have a concern, the State Police will be contacted. In addition, the administration will be contacted.

Transporting Individuals

School Security Officers will not transport prisoners, individuals who are believed to be in violation of the law, or individuals in need of emergency medical treatment. If it is believed that

an individual may need transported for such reasons, 911 emergency dispatch will be notified so that the appropriate first response team or State Police department may be dispatched to the premises. This includes individuals who are believed to be intoxicated, individuals who are believed to be suffering from mental illness or impairment, individuals who are infected by communicable diseases or individuals who require emergency medical attention.

Medical Emergency Plan

In the event of a medical emergency, Officers should immediately contact 911 Emergency Dispatch to alert the appropriate emergency first team, and notify the administration. The Officer shall render aid to injured person(s) until emergency medical assistance arrives.

Handcuffs

Storage:

Officers authorized to carry handcuffs shall have such under her/his control at all times.

Handcuffs shall be regularly cleaned and maintained in proper working order.

Use:

Officers may use handcuffs to restrain and control persons who constitute a threat to the Officer or other persons who may be present on school premises at the time of said arrest.

Authorized personnel may use handcuffs to restrain and control persons and/or to control and/or detain a person until local law enforcement and/or other appropriate authorities arrive to take possession of the detainee.

Officers must report, by telephone or in person, the loss or theft of issued handcuffs to the Administration immediately upon discovery of the missing item.

A written report must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the loss or theft. The written report will describe the circumstances surrounding the loss or theft of the handcuffs.

The Officer should take immediate reasonable action to recover the handcuffs and to obtain all information available to aid in the investigation and recovery of the handcuffs. Officers must notify the appropriate law enforcement agency as soon as possible.

Endorsement of School Security Officer

This administrative regulation shall be periodically reviewed and any necessary changes shall be made. The District shall be covered by the appropriate liability insurance at all times for all

duties and obligations contained in this administrative regulation. In the event it is necessary, all such authorized Officers who are subject to the rules and regulations of this regulation shall be represented by legal counsel at the sole cost and expense of the District, except in the event that the officer commits a willful, intentional, and grossly negligent act with said weapon while on duty.

The Officers will provide their own handguns and handcuffs. The remaining costs and expenses necessary for the implementation of this policy shall be borne solely by the District which shall include the required periodic training of Officers and other authorized personnel.

In the event that the Officer fails to complete the necessary training to maintain her/his status as a certified school security officer, the Officer shall immediately notify the Principal and Superintendent.

The Officer shall provide the District with a copy of the appropriate certifications within three (3) days of the receipt of same.

It is the responsibility of the Officer to conduct her/himself with the highest standards of professionalism while on or off duty.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510.1, 778

Municipal Security Officers and Training Act – 53 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 2161 et seq.