

FIREARM SAFETY

(Reviewed 09/27/2007)

A. Introduction:

1. Firearm use to collect biological specimens has played an important role in conduct of research throughout the history of KFS. This chapter summarizes policy for certifying employees to carry and use firearms while on official duty and sets forth Center policy on firearms on Center grounds

B. Use or Possession of Firearms While on Official Duty:

1. No employee shall carry a government-owned or personally-owned firearm without authorization while on official duty.
2. Only commercially loaded ammunition will be used in a government-owned firearm or in a personally-owned firearm while on duty.
3. Ammunition must be stored in its original package (i.e., ammunition cannot be unpacked and stored in an unmarked container).
4. For firearms that have a mechanical safety, the safety will remain on at all times except during firing.

C. Authorization to Use or Possess Firearms on Official Duty:

1. Training requirements:

- a. For specimen collection, employees must successfully complete either:

The 8-hr *USGS Basic Firearms Safety Course for Specimen Collection*, including the range module(s) for the firearm type(s) (rifle, shotgun, or handgun) to be used, or,

The 24-hour *USGS Basic Firearms Safety Course For Defense Against Wild Animals*.

- b. For defense against wild animals, employees must successfully complete the 24-hour *USGS Basic Firearms Safety Course For Defense Against Wild Animals*.

- c. Refresher training

1) For specimen collection: Recertification requires an annual 4-hour refresher course, which may be waived by the employee's supervisor if the employee documents safe use of firearms for specimen collecting the previous year.

2) For self-defense: Recertification requires an annual 8-hour refresher course in the firearm type carried by the employee. The employee must retake the 24-hour basic course if he: a) fails the refresher training; or b) fails to take the refresher for 2 years.

d. All firearm safety training shall be documented by completion of training Form SF-182.

2. Documentation of authorization to carry a firearm on duty:

a. Certificate of Need

1) A Certificate of Need shall be completed for each employee authorized to use or carry a firearm as part of his or her official duties. It shall be issued only for the time frame required. At no time will a certificate be issued covering more than one year.

2) Approval of the certificate shall be by a supervisor who has direct knowledge of the employee's skills and training in firearms safety.

3) The Certificate of Need will be maintained by the employee's supervisor, with a copy to the KFS Safety Officer.

b. Qualifications Inquiry

1) 18 U.S.Code 992(g)(9) makes it a felony for anyone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence to possess a firearm or ammunition. Employees shall fill out a Qualifications Inquiry self-certifying that they have not been convicted of such crimes prior to approval of the Certificate of Need. A new Qualifications Inquiry shall be submitted for each new Certificate of Need.

D. Use of Personally-Owned Firearms on Official Duty

1. Personally-owned firearms may be used on duty at the discretion of the supervisor. For the protection of the employee, it is strongly recommended that the employee record make, model, and serial number of each authorized personally-owned firearm on the Certificate of Need.

2. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that all personally owned firearms used on official duty are in safe, serviceable condition. However, supervisors are urged to examine personally owned firearms for soundness and damage before authorizing their use.

3. State Concealed Weapons Permits are not recognized by the USGS. Possession of a CWP does not constitute authorization to carry a firearm on duty.

E. Use of USGS Owned Firearms

1. Firearms will be checked out only to employees with a current Certificate of Need.
2. Firearms will be returned to the Center immediately upon conclusion of collecting activities. Firearms will be cleaned and oiled lightly before being returned to the armory and any problems with the firearm will be reported in writing.

F. Security

1. All firearms and ammunition kept at the Center shall be stored in a secure area under lock and key.
2. Any firearm (government or personally owned) used by a USGS employee shall be under lock and key when: a) not being used in the field, b) in transit, or c) not under the direct control of the cognizant employee. The concept of "being locked" implies that the firearm is stored in a locked hard case or stored in a soft case and with a trigger lock employed.

G. State and Local Regulations

1. Hawaii State law requires a hunting license to transport a personally owned firearm and/or ammunition in a vehicle.
2. A special hunting license for Hawaii Volcanoes National Park may be obtained, or a valid State of Hawaii hunting license may be used for special public hunting events at HAVO (e.g, Kahuku special public hunt).
3. A personal firearm may be stored in a Hawaii Volcanoes National Park residence in a gun safe, but ammunition must be stored separately. Ammunition must be stored in the original package in which it was purchased.