

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

WS Directive

2.615 05/03/02

WS FIREARM USE AND SAFETY

1. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of firearms in the conduct of official duties and to prescribe standard training requirements.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises ADC Directive 2.615 dated 06/04/94.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this directive, handguns, rifles, and shotguns are considered firearms. This policy also covers pyrotechnics pistols, net guns, paint ball guns, dart guns, air rifles, arrow guns, and crossbows.

Wildlife Services (WS) personnel are considered to be all employees, including State or official volunteers supervised by WS.

4. POLICY

WS personnel are authorized to transport, carry, and use firearms necessary to perform assigned WS duties. Use and possession of firearms must be in accordance with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations. Because laws governing firearms vary geographically, WS personnel must become familiar with the laws of the State and locality in which they work and travel.

All firearms (i.e., handguns, rifles, and shotguns) used in the performance of official duties will be furnished with a locking device. Firearms are to be stored unloaded, and locking devices must be attached to stored weapons, whether in the employee's home, duty station, or Federal facility, if they are not stored in a locked firearm storage cabinet. Pyrotechnic pistols, net guns, paint ball guns, dart guns, air rifles, arrow guns, and crossbows will be stored unloaded in a locked, secured location.

When firearms are not in use in the field, they are to be unloaded and secured in a manner prescribed by local statute. When firearms are not in use in the field, they will be transported and stored in a location out of public view and not in window racks of Government-owned, leased, or privately-owned vehicles leased or used for official Government business. Firearms left or stored in unattended vehicles must be placed out of sight and the vehicle locked. Firearms may be carried in a more accessible manner when immediate use is necessary or likely. Firearms shall not have a cartridge in the chamber while being transported in a motor vehicle.

WS personnel will not carry concealed firearms on their person while on official duty unless authorized by the State Director or Field Station Leader and the appropriate regulatory licensing authority. Firearms will not be worn, carried, or used in an irresponsible, unsafe, or unprofessional manner.

Access to firearms stored in locked safes, gun vaults, or cabinets in Government Offices and other facilities will be limited to the State Director or Field Station Leader and/or their designees.

WS personnel who use firearms are subject to random drug testing as administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

All persons acting on behalf of WS who are required or requested to use firearms are subject to the Lautenburg Domestic Confiscation Law and are required to immediately inform their supervisor if they can no longer comply with the Lautenburg Domestic Confiscation Law.

Ammunition will be stored in a locked, secure location.

5. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Each employee, regardless of employment status, and official volunteers required or requested to use firearms in conduct of official duties will be provided safety and handling training as prescribed in the WS Firearms Safety Manual. New employees must be provided such training or have completed a State hunter safety course or other approved firearms safety training course within the last year prior to using firearms on the job. Continuing education training on firearm safety and handling will be taken biennially by all employees who use firearms. State Directors and Field Station Leaders are responsible for ensuring that employees receive firearms safety and handling instruction as prescribed in the WS Firearms Safety Training Manual. Training must be documented using an SF-182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training, or similar training form.

Aerial gunner training will consist of instruction from the WS Firearm Safety Training Manual as well as other specialized instruction that may be contained in the WS Aviation Operations Manual, the WS Aviation Safety Program Manual, and the WS Aerial Operation Crew Member Training Manual.

6. REFERENCES

President Clinton's Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns (03/05/97)

APHIS Safety and Health Manual (02/27/98 rev.)

MRP Drug Free Workplace Program Handbook, MRP 4792.1 (April 2001)

Lautenberg Domestic Confiscation Law (18 U.S.C. 922)

WS Firearms Safety Training Manual

WS Aviation Operations Manual (04/09/01)

WS Aerial Operations Crew Member Training Manual

WS Aviation Safety Program Manual

Deputy Administrator