



Policy Number: 327 – Weapons Storage Facility (Armory)

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Approved By: Denis Otterness, Chief of Police

327.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the operation of the Montana State University Billings Police Department (Department) Weapons Storage Facility (Armory). The Armory was established to create a central repository for all weapons requiring safekeeping on University owned property. The Armory, located within the University Police Department, is available for use by students, faculty and staff.

327.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this Department to operate the Armory in a manner that complies with Montana State University Billings regulations, federal, state, and local regulations, and safeguards the weapons being stored, allowing access as needed, by the weapon owners. The procedures found in this policy will be strictly followed to ensure the safety of all involved, as well as the safekeeping and security of the stored weapons. Students, faculty and staff maintain the option to store their weapons(s) in an off-campus storage facility.

For purposes of this policy, the term “weapons” includes legally possessed handguns, rifles, shotguns, and bows. Ammunition (except arrows) is prohibited from being stored on University property. Any weapon owner who fails to follow the weapon storage procedures herein may lose the privilege of storing a weapon on campus, subject to approval by the Chief of Police, or their designee. If a weapon owner loses the privilege to store their weapon at the Armory, the weapon owner will be required to store all weapons off campus for the remainder of the semester, or longer, as determined by the Chief of Police. Weapon storage records will be maintained for three years.

327.3 WEAPON INTAKE PROCEDURES

The following procedures are required and will facilitate the orderly intake of weapons being stored at the Armory:

327.3.1 WEAPON OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITY

The weapon owner requesting to store their weapon(s) should contact the University Police Department at 406-657-2147. The weapon owner should be aware that there are times when after-hours emergency and urgent police business may delay the arrival of Department staff at the Armory.

Persons requesting to store their weapon at the Armory must complete an Armory Use Application at the Department. This information is for law enforcement use only.

Firearm owners shall, when approaching the Department, transport their firearm inside a closed case. Inside the case, all firearms shall be unloaded, with the action open. Bows, without arrows, may be carried to the facility without a case.

Owners requesting to store a weapon in the Armory are required to do the following:

1. Provide the officer(s) with a valid government issued photo identification.
2. Read, acknowledge and sign both the Contract and Receipt Form and Firearms Transfer Statement.
3. When permanently removing a weapon from the Armory inform the officer, and sign acknowledging permanent removal from the Armory.

327.3.2 DEPARTMENT STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Department staff are required to follow these guidelines:

1. Only authorized personnel are allowed access to the Armory.
2. Only sworn officers are authorized to remove a firearm from its case.
3. Immediately upon receiving a firearm, officers will confirm the firearm is unloaded.
4. All weapons cases will be retained by the student.
5. Verify the identification of the applicant and make a photocopy of the government identification to be attached to the students Armory file.
6. Upon being presented a firearm and the Armory Use Application, the firearm will be checked through the NCIC database.
7. Acknowledge and complete the Contract & Receipt Form.
8. Initiate a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) entry in the Department's Automated Records Management System (ARMS) listing the student information and brief synopsis of information surrounding the transaction.
9. Create an Armory file for the associated paperwork.
10. Fill out a property tag with the students name and attach it to the weapon.
11. Assign a storage rack number within the Armory.
12. Provide the weapon owner with a copy of the Contract & Receipt
13. File the corresponding paperwork and file folder in the Armory filing cabinet.

327.4 WEAPONS RELEASE PROCEDURES

The following procedures relate to the release of weapons stored in the Armory:

327.4.1 DEPARTMENT STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Verify the identification of the individual requesting release of the weapon.
2. No weapon will be released to individuals displaying signs of impairment, or who, in the opinion of an officer from this Department, may be an imminent risk to themselves or others.

3. Note the release transaction on the Weapons Register (Chain of Custody Form) and have the weapon owner sign for receipt of the weapon.
4. Remove the property tag from the weapon and place it into the owner's Armory file.
5. Place the firearm in an approved case provided by the owner.
6. Release the weapon to the owner.

327.4.2 PERMANENT REMOVAL OF FIREARMS

1. Note on the Weapons Register (Chain of Custody Form) that the weapon is being permanently removed.
2. Have the owner acknowledge the transaction with a signature.

327.4.3 WEAPONS RETURNED TO THE ARMORY

1. Immediately upon receiving a firearm, make certain the firearm is unloaded.
2. Examine the weapon for any notable damage that may need documentation.
3. Reattach the property tag from the Armory file to the weapon.
4. Return the weapon to its assigned rack within the Armory.

327.5 RETENTION OF UNCLAIMED FIREARMS AND FIREARMS RECORDS

The Chief of Police, or their designee, will ensure the Armory is inventoried each year. Unclaimed weapons, where the student, faculty or staff member has not been granted an extension, will be retained in the Armory for the balance of the academic year it entered the Armory, plus one year. Any unclaimed weapons are then subject to removal through the University Police Lost and Found Property Procedure.

Armory files shall be deemed inactive after a period of one year following a weapon being permanently removed from the Armory. Each year the Chief of Police, or their designee, will purge all inactive files.