15-21 - Firearm Magazines

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
NEWSLETTER
Field Operations Support Services, (323) 890-5411

FIREARM MAGAZINES

Following several recent deputy-involved shootings, investigators discovered some deputies have failed to load magazines to capacity, loaded ammunition other than approved duty ammunition, and/or have used magazines that are not approved by the LASD Weapons Training Unit. In response, this newsletter discusses the importance of using Department-authorized equipment and the proper loading of duty magazines.

AUTHORIZED MAGAZINES

Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) section 3-03/210.05, Revolvers/Semi-Automatic Pistols (On and Off Duty), states:

"Only those magazines specially designed and advertised by manufacturers as standard equipment may be used in Department-approved pistols. Extended magazines increasing the round capacity beyond that which was originally intended or advertised by the manufacturer are not authorized, except with specific written approval of the concerned Division Chief or Division Director."

Prior to authorization for use by deputy personnel, handguns and the provided factory magazines are thoroughly tested with tens of thousands of rounds to ensure proper function and durability. While other manufacturers may produce quality magazines, many aftermarket magazines have been found to have serious functional inconsistency. Only factory magazines have been tested and authorized by the Weapons Training Unit.

Magazine extension kits are available which increase the round capacity of factory magazines. As stated in the above referenced MPP section, magazine extension kits alter the capacity and increase round capacity beyond that which was originally intended or advertised by the manufacturer and thus are not authorized. Magazine extension kits have not been tested to ensure consistent reliability and durability. In addition, some aftermarket magazine extensions have been found to break or inadvertently disassemble during use. The use of unauthorized, non-factory magazines, or magazines that have been altered could result in a risk to officer and public safety.

LOADING MAGAZINES TO THE MANUFACTURER'S SPECIFIED CAPACITY

The manufacturers of Department-authorized handguns have designed the factory magazines to function reliably when loaded to the advertised capacity. Loading a handgun magazine to less than full capacity does not increase reliability or longevity. It reduces the amount of ammunition that is available in the event of a shooting incident. The MPP section 3-03/210.05, Revolvers/Semi-Automatic Pistols (On and Off Duty), states that Department members shall carry any authorized semi-automatic handgun used on duty, off duty, or as a secondary weapon loaded with a round in the chamber, and with the magazine loaded to the manufacturer's specified capacity. MPP section 3-03/120.00, Ammunition, states that sworn members assigned to uniformed duty in the field shall carry their prescribed firearm fully loaded.

Deputies must inspect their equipment to ensure the magazine inserted in the firearm as well as any additional magazines are loaded to the appropriate capacity. Magazines are generally marked with the maximum capacity and feature cutouts on the side or rear of the magazine in order to visually confirm when the magazine is fully loaded. In the event of a deputy-involved shooting, it is imperative to be able to easily determine how many rounds were fired. This ensures the safety of the public by accounting for all rounds fired. In addition, the investigative process is aided significantly when the number of rounds fired by deputy personnel is not in question.

DEPARTMENT-AUTHORIZED AMMUNITION

Deputies must ensure their handguns and spare magazines are loaded with Department- authorized ammunition. This ammunition increases ballistic effectiveness compared to full-metal-jacket practice ammunition and also reduces the potential for over-penetration, thus enhancing officer and public safety.

See MPP section 3-03/120.00, Ammunition, regarding Department Approved ammunition.

Please contact the Biscailuz Center Armory at (323) 267-2730 or the Pitchess Detention Center Range at (661) 295-8856, if you have any questions regarding your equipment.

Information regarding the content of this newsletter may be directed to Field Operations Support Services at (323) 890-5411 or foss@lasd.org.

References

MPP 3-03/210.05 Revolvers/Semi-Automatic Pistols (On and Off Duty)

MPP 3-03/120.00 Ammunition