

BLM Colorado Requirements Governing the Management and Use of Firearms by Non-Law Enforcement Personnel

Training and Authorization Requirements

Prior to receiving, transporting, or carrying a BLM Colorado-issued firearm, employees must request, via their supervisor, and receive official written authorization from the State Director. Authorization will be dependent, in part, on successful completion of training requirements described herein, and must be reauthorized on an annual basis. This applies to Government-owned firearms. Personally-owned firearms will not be authorized for professional use. The following personnel **will not** be authorized to carry a firearm:

1. Convicted felons who have not had their right to carry firearms reinstated;
2. Employees who have been convicted of domestic abuse or are under a current restraining order or criminal charges related to domestic abuse;
3. Employees and volunteers under 18 years of age; and,
4. Volunteers.

Background investigations will be conducted on any employee requesting authorization to carry a firearm and must be updated every 4 years.

In order to obtain authorization to carry a firearm in the field, an employee must first complete the National Rifle Association (NRA) classroom training on firearms safety (or equivalent), be instructed on wild horse and burro behavior and proper euthanasia techniques by a veterinarian, and then pass a firearms proficiency test. The BLM Safety Manual Handbook H-1112-1 Chapter 37 and H-1112-2 Chapter 17 provide detailed guidance on the requirement for instructor certification, classroom instruction and proficiency testing. Instructor-led refresher training must be completed, at a minimum, every 2 years, and live-fire proficiency testing will be conducted annually.

Training will consist of the following minimum requirements:

1. Basic firearms safety and maintenance (Firearms Instructor);
2. Legal and moral aspects of firearms use (Firearms Instructor);
3. Shooting Range proficiency (Firearms Instructor);
4. Proper euthanasia of a horse using firearms (Veterinarian); and,
5. Henneke Body Condition Scoring (Veterinarian).

The BLM Safety Manual H1112-1 (Section 37.3) specifies that only the State Director may authorize a non-law enforcement employee to carry a firearm while on official duty. Upon an employee's successful completion of the prescribed training, background clearance, and proficiency testing, a letter of authorization from the State Director's office will be sent to the employee's manager and the State Firearms Manager. The manager will ensure a copy of the letter is delivered to the employee. The employee is then authorized to procure, transport and carry a firearm on official business for the purpose of humanely euthanizing injured or sick wild

horses or burros. The employee shall keep a copy of the authorization in their possession when transporting or carrying a firearm for official business.

Authorizations to carry firearms are effective for 1 year. Proficiency testing must be repeated prior to reauthorization each year.

The BLM Safety Manual H-1112-1 Chapter 37 specifies that the State Director is responsible for designating a State Firearms Manager to oversee the authorization of employees to possess, carry, or use firearms in the performance of their official duties; designating a Custodial Property Officer at each issuing facility to maintain custody and control of firearms and ammunition when they are issued to authorized employees; designating qualified employees to serve as authorized BLM firearms instructors; and designating one qualified instructor to serve as the State Firearms Training Coordinator to oversee and coordinate firearms training statewide.

Due to the statistically high level of danger associated with carrying and handling firearms, a Firearms Instructor shall refuse to certify an employee to carry a firearm if the employee demonstrates an obvious lack of situational awareness or appropriate level of caution with a firearm regardless of the employee's performance during the proficiency course.

Copies of all authorizations to carry firearms, training records, and written reports documenting discharge of a firearm for euthanasia, will be maintained by the Colorado Wild Horse and Burro Program Lead.

Storage and Security Requirements

The BLM Safety Manual Handbook H-1112-1 Chapter 37, para 37.D.6 and H-1112-2 (Section 17.6), requires non-law enforcement firearms not in active use to be stored in an unloaded condition with the action open, in a secure location, out of sight, and in an approved and secured safe. Access to the firearms storage container is limited to those employees designated and authorized to possess, carry or use firearms.

Each Field Office, or BLM facility with authorized personnel, will have a designated secure location for the storage of Bureau-issued firearms and ammunition. Non-law enforcement firearms **will not** be stored in law enforcement firearm vaults.

In order to further ensure the safety of our employees, their families, and the public, all BLM personnel responsible for Bureau-issued/approved firearms will also use an effective and fully engaged trigger locking mechanism on any firearm that is being stored or transported.

This requirement applies to any non-law enforcement firearm, regardless of the length of time it will be stored, or the distance it will be transported. The firearm will remain in the storage unit except for:

1. A firearm actively being carried for its intended purpose in a field situation;
2. For the purpose of qualifications and maintaining firearms proficiency;
3. When a situation arises that demands the destruction of a wild horse or burro; or

4. When there is a significant, potential need for euthanasia, such as during a gather, or within a BLM facility.

Lockable hard-sided cases and locking gun cabinets will not negate the requirement for trigger locking mechanisms under this policy.

Transportation

When traveling, the firearm will be trigger-locked and secured in a lockable, hard-sided, gun case approved by the State Firearms Officer. Firearms will be unloaded at all times, except when actually in use.

Firearms will not be left in a Government-owned vehicle overnight. When authorized personnel are away from their duty station, they will remove the firearm from the vehicle, apply a trigger lock, secure the firearm in a lockable, hard-sided case, and store it in a secure location. The key to the trigger locking device must, at all times, be in the secure possession of the employee that is responsible for the firearm. Firearms and ammunition must not be left unattended in motor vehicles or watercraft unless they are physically secured from theft and out of public view.

Restrictions on Public Carry.

It is important that members of the public do not mistake a non-law enforcement BLM-Colorado employee for a Law Enforcement Ranger or Special Agent. Non-law enforcement employees are not authorized to wear or carry a sidearm when dressed in a BLM uniform. Only warranted BLM law enforcement officials have the authority to interact with the public while carrying a sidearm and wearing a BLM uniform.

Uniformed non-law enforcement employees will not carry any type of firearm in locations where extensive or continuous contact with members of the visiting public is likely to occur, such as campgrounds. Firearms in such locations will be kept fully secured and out of sight in locked vehicle trunks and truck cabs, to be retrieved for use by the authorized employee if and when the need arises. For the purposes of this policy, the wearing of Wild Horse and Burro Program shirts and hats does not constitute a uniform.

Violations of this policy will result in the loss of the employee's authorization to carry a firearm and may result in disciplinary action. Threatening behavior toward other people involving a firearm is cause for disciplinary and legal action.