



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 20

DEPARTMENTAL USE OF FIREARMS

November 2020

1. OBJECTIVE

To provide direction on the appropriate management, storage and safe, lawful and ethical use of firearms and ammunition by officers of the Parks and Wildlife Service and Biodiversity and Conservation Science.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to the management and use of all firearms held on the department's corporate firearms licence (CFL) on both lands and waters managed by the department, and on other lands and waters while firearms are in transit or being used for authorised operations.

This policy does not cover the use of firearms by external stakeholders such as other government agencies, professional shooters, volunteers, or recognised hunting organisations conducting approved activities on department-managed lands. The use of firearms by people undertaking Aboriginal customary activities on department-managed lands is also not covered by this policy.

3. CONTEXT

The department uses firearms to perform its legislative functions under the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*, *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* and *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Firearms are used for, but not limited to, the humane destruction of pest and dangerous animals, research activities and euthanasing injured/suffering animals.

The use of firearms is considered to carry a high level of risk because of the potential for injury or death to people, damage to property, adverse animal welfare outcomes, loss of public confidence and litigation. This risk is reflected with its inclusion in the department's corporate risk register. The consequence of a major breach of the department's CFL may be the potential loss of, or restrictions being placed on, the departmental licence.

4. LEGISLATION

The department holds two CFLs issued by the Western Australia Police Force in accordance with the *Firearms Act 1973* (the Firearms Act). One licence covers the Parks and Wildlife Service and Biodiversity and Conservation Science division of the department. Section 16(c) of the Firearms Act enables the department to authorise its employees to possess, carry and use the firearms and ammunition listed on that licence in the course of their work. The second licence covers the Zoological Parks Authority, which administers its own CFL, including security and training program.

The key legislation applicable to this policy comprises the following. A more complete list may be found in [Corporate Guideline No. 42: Departmental Use of Firearms](#).

- *Firearms Act 1973 and Firearms Regulations 1974;*
- *Dangerous Goods Safety Act 2004;*
- *Explosives and Dangerous Goods Act 1961;* and
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984.*

5. POLICY

The department will:

- 5.1 Implement governance structures and processes to ensure that firearms and ammunition are safely and effectively used in alignment with best practice to support the department's operations.
- 5.2 Maintain a corporate firearms licence available under legislation, and only authorise departmental employees under the licence that have a genuine need to use firearms in the course of their work.
- 5.3 Manage and use firearms and ammunition in compliance with relevant legislation and State Government policies.
- 5.4 Manage and use firearms and ammunition in accordance with the principles, framework and risk management process prescribed in the international standard ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management Guidelines (as revised or replaced), [Corporate Policy Statement No. 56: Risk Management](#), and industry best practice.
- 5.5 Deliver firearms training to departmental employees that support their authorisation under the department's CFL. The training will be at a standard that is acceptable to the Western Australia Police Force.
- 5.6 Require that the use of firearms when destroying animals complies with legislative requirements, ethical standards and departmental procedures.

6. STANDARDS

In addition to legislative requirements, the department will apply international standard ISO 31000:2018 – Risk Management Guidelines with its approach in firearms and ammunition management, storage and use.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 Guideline and Standard Operating Procedures

The policy implementation strategies are detailed in [Corporate Guideline No. 42: Departmental Use of Firearms](#), and supporting instructions will be included in standard operating procedures.

7.2 Responsibilities

The **Director General** is responsible for approval of this policy and ensuring that resources and authorities are in place to enable the policy to be implemented.

The **Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services** is responsible for development of policy, guidelines, and other key documents in regard to firearms and ammunition management and monitoring compliance across the Parks and Wildlife

Service and Biodiversity and Conservation Science. This includes ensuring that those employees involved in firearms and ammunition management, storage and use have the necessary competencies and resources to meet the standards required.

The **Corporate Firearms Officer** is responsible for administration of the department's CFL; conducting audits; developing and delivering approved firearms training aligned to national units of competency; assisting in the development and continuous improvement of firearms related procedures and processes; provision of technical advice associated with firearms; assisting with the investigation and analysis of firearms related incidents; contributing to the development and maintenance of firearms policies, manuals and standards; and promoting a culture of safety and best practice in firearms and ammunition management, storage and use across the department.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that individuals comply with legislative and departmental requirements for the safe, lawful and ethical management, storage and use of firearms and ammunition within their area of responsibility. The individual responsibilities of CFL holders are not diminished by the manager's role.

District Firearms Officers are responsible for the following activities within a district or section allocated to them – firearms and ammunition security, conducting/co-ordinating practice shoots for employees authorised on the department's CFL, maintenance of firearms, performing audits of firearms and ammunition, monitoring of firearms use, and promoting the safe, lawful and ethical use of firearms.

CFL holders are individually responsible for undertaking all firearms and ammunition management, storage and use in a safe, lawful and ethical manner; maintaining compliance with all associated legislation and departmental requirements; maintaining a high standard of professionalism in their firearms management and use; and are personally responsible for any breach that they commit under the Firearms Act and other relevant legislation.

8. CUSTODIAN

Executive Director Regional and Fire Management Services.

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's website and intranet.

10. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed no later than five years from the date of approval.

11. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved by



Mark Webb
DIRECTOR GENERAL

Effective date: 8 November 2020