WEAPONS POLICY

Purpose/objective

The "Safe Carry Protection Act, " O.C.G.A. §16-11-173, authorizes counties to "regulate the transport, carrying, or possession of firearms by employees of the local unit of government, or by unpaid volunteers of such local unit of government, in the course of their employment or volunteer functions with such local unit of government."

Because Cook County is potentially liable for the actions of its employees whereas government typically has no liability or responsibility for the actions of citizens who are not formally connected to the county, there are policy reasons for prohibiting county employees from carrying on premises that do not exist with respect to the typical citizen.

Definitions

"County constitutional officer" means the Cook County Sheriff, the Cook County Superior Court Clerk, the Cook County Tax Commissioner and Cook County Probate Judge.

"County Premises" for purposes of this Weapons Policy shall mean any building, together with its land and outbuildings, owned, controlled, maintained or operated by Cook County.

"Dangerous Weapon" for purposes of this Weapons Policy shall have the same meaning as provided for in the version of O.C.G.A. § 16-11-121 in effect at the time of this Policy's enactment.

"Employee" for purposes of this Weapons Policy shall have the same meaning as provided for in Section 2 of the Cook County Procedures and Policy Manual. It shall not include individuals performing activities while in the course and scope of working or volunteering for a county constitutional officer.

"Firearm" for purposes of this Weapons Policy means any handgun, rifle, shotgun, stun gun, taser, or dangerous weapon.

"Personal vehicle" for purposes of this Weapons Policy means any vehicle not owned by Cook County that is owned, leased, rented or legally possessed by an employee or unpaid volunteer.

"Unpaid Volunteer" for purposes of this Weapons Policy shall mean an individual who performs hours of service on behalf of Cook County for civic, charitable, or humanitarian

reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered. An unpaid volunteer who is engaged in volunteer functions shall be deemed to be acting in the course and scope of county employment as that phrase is used herein.

Applicability

No employee or unpaid volunteer while in the course and scope of county employment shall carry or possess a firearm regardless of whether the employee or unpaid volunteer is on or off county premises.

Exception

The portion of this Weapons Policy prohibiting employees and unpaid volunteers from carrying or possessing a firearm while in the course and scope of county employment shall not apply to any employee or unpaid volunteer who currently holds a peace officer certification from the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council (P.O.S.T.).

Personal vehicles

To the extent that an employee or unpaid volunteer is required to drive a personal vehicle while in the course and scope of county employment, nothing in this policy shall prevent the employee or unpaid volunteer from possessing, carrying or transporting a firearm in the personal vehicle.

Nothing in this Weapons Policy shall prevent employees or unpaid volunteers from storing a firearm in their locked personal vehicles while parked on or off county premises provided that (1) the firearm is locked out of sight within the trunk, glove box, or other enclosed compartment or area within such privately owned motor vehicle and (2) the employees or unpaid volunteers are not legally disqualified from obtaining a weapons carry license.

Penalty

A first violation of this Policy may result in immediate discharge consistent with the Cook County Procedures and Policy Manual.