

UAF Policy 02.09.020

Original Adoption: May 1, 2018

Updated: September 4, 2026

Responsible Chancellor's Cabinet Members: Vice Chancellor for Research; Provost; Vice Chancellor for Rural, Community and Native Education; Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services.

Responsible Department/Office: Research Institutes and Academic Units that sponsor field research or courses; Environmental Health, Safety, & Risk Management; Police Department.



Field Firearms Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this document is to mitigate unintended risk, consistent with University of Alaska Board of Regents' Policy and Regulation, regarding the use of firearms during field courses or sanctioned field research activities.

This policy establishes the requirements for Chancellor approval of firearms during field activities. Specific research or academic units may have more restrictive guidance in place, including banning possession of all firearms.

2.0 BACKGROUND & JUSTIFICATION

Board of Regents' Policy 02.09.020 - Possession of Weapons, provides that "...possession or carrying of firearms in buildings or parts of buildings owned or controlled by the university, on developed university land adjacent to university buildings, or at university sporting, entertainment or educational events, is a violation of regents' policy and may result in administrative sanctions." UAF field courses and field research are university educational events governed by this policy. However, the UA President has authority to and has provided for exceptions in University Regulation.

In the field, the use of firearms are used to ensure the safety of personnel, primarily as defense against wildlife, and can be necessary to collect specimens, or as a planned discharge of a firearm or projector (dart-gun) during the course of conducting approved UAF research. This policy applies to all university-sponsored field courses and university-sponsored research activities as defined below.

3.0 EXCEPTIONS

University Regulation 02.09.020.B Possession of Weapons provides for Chancellor or Chancellor's designee approval of exceptions: "Activities involving firearms, explosives and/or reloading activities may be carried on at the university only under supervised educational,

recreational, professional or research programs where such activities are expressly authorized in advance by the appropriate Chancellor or Chancellor's designee.

The Chancellor has granted an exception to the R/V Sikuliaq, which has its own policies for the safe storage and use of firearms.

Additional exceptions to this policy may only be granted by the Chancellor or designee.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

ADF&G: Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Base camp: The main encampment containing shelter and supplies for those involved in the larger field activities.

EHSRM: Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management

Field: See UAF Field Safety Plan for definition.

Field Lead: See UAF Field Safety Plan for definition.

Firearm: A legal rifle, pistol, or shotgun that is in proper working order and appropriate for its intended use.

Firearm Applicant/User: It is the responsibility of the firearm applicant to agree with and be comfortable carrying a firearm, to report changes in personal background that might affect legal possession of a firearm, and utilize the firearm according to this policy and all regulations.

Individual associated with a UAF field activity: Anyone so-designated by the supervisor of the activity. This includes, but is not limited to, students, faculty, or staff from other universities who participate in UAF field research, sharing campsites or transportation with UAF employees and students in remote areas.

NRA: National Rifle Association

Field Activities Supervisor: The course instructor, lead supervisor, principal investigator, research project coordinator, or field safety officer, as appropriate.

5.0 REFERENCES RELIED UPON

Board of Regents' Policy P02.09.020 - Possession of Weapons, and University Regulation R02.09.020 - Possession of Weapons.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

All UAF faculty, staff and students and all individuals associated with a UAF field activity are responsible for following the policy. Individuals and organizations are responsible for adherence to federal, state, and local firearm laws and policies during the conduct of UAF activities.

The responsibility for enforcing the provisions of this policy lies with the field activities supervisor, dean or director of the specific unit that is sponsoring the pertinent field course or field research activity, or that is storing university-owned firearms.

7.0 NON-COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action by the university.

8.0 PROCEDURES

1. Approval Process: In order to possess or use a firearm in the field, the following steps must be taken:
 - a. The applicant submits Application for Firearms Use form to the supervisor, including the make and model of the firearm, the ammunition being taken to the field, and the rationale for possession of the firearm.
 - b. Applications should be submitted at least 30 days in advance of the field activity to ensure that the approval process can be completed. Applicants should be aware that the required training can be difficult to obtain on short notice. Every reasonable effort will be made to expedite applications in emergencies, e.g., changes in field personnel due to injuries.
 - c. Applicants should be aware that if their request is for a firearm to protect against wildlife, the make, model, and ammunition must be suitable for that purpose and that applications for unsuitable firearms and ammunition will not be approved.
 - d. The supervisor approves and submits a completed Application for Firearms Use form to the dean/director along with the basis for approval of specific firearms indicated. The supervisor is responsible for providing proof of training with the application (as described in (2) below). The supervisor or designee is responsible for informing all individuals involved as to the number of firearms that will be present for a specific field activity, and for communicating other firearm safety protocols as outlined in (4) below. The supervisor should inform any applicants

whose applications were denied and provide the rationale. Applicants who are denied by the supervisor may appeal to the dean/director.

- e. If approved, the dean/director submits the request/s to EHSRM. The dean/director should inform any applicants whose applications were denied and provide the rationale. The decision of the dean/director is final.
 - f. EHSRM may request more information during the application process. Once approved, EHSRM submits the request/s to the Chancellor or Chancellor's designee for final approval. The Chancellor or designee should inform any applicants whose applications were denied and provide the rationale.
 - g. Individual approvals are valid for one calendar year from the date of approval by the Chancellor or designee, unless otherwise specified, provided that the individual continues to engage in field activities consistent with the rationale submitted in the original application.
 - h. If the formerly approved individual becomes unable to legally possess a firearm, their UAF approval is immediately null and void. The individual must notify their supervisor of the change in legal status, and the supervisor shall notify the dean or director, who shall notify the Chancellor or designee.
2. Required Training: For safety purposes, any individual applying for the use of a firearm in the field must be trained in its use. All training shall include a classroom portion plus live fire training at the range. The applicant must show proficiency with the firearm in order to be issued a certificate of completion. The applicant also must be legally able to possess a firearm. The applicant will be required to attest to their status and this will be confirmed through the University Police Department (UPD). This includes visiting collaborators who wish to carry a firearm during a UAF sponsored field activity
- a. The applicant must complete an approved practical firearm safety training course every two years and provide documentation of this completion. Accepted trainings include:
 - i. UAF firearms training overseen by EHSRM. This UAF training is recommended if available.
 - ii. Training from a national or state-certified firearms training organization (ADF&G, NRA, etc.).
 - iii. EHSRM approved course covering classroom topics such as Firearms Safety Rules, Operation and Safe Handling, Transportation and Storage, applicable Laws and Range Practice (four hour minimum).

- iv. Higher-level EHSRM approved training such as firearms safety instructor certification.
- b. Applicants must take the Firearm Safety Awareness Training. Practical (live fire) training is required every two years and replaces the Firearm Safety Awareness Training when taken.
- c. The applicant must self-declare that they:
 - i. May legally possess a firearm and that the firearm is in proper working order;
 - ii. Understands that possession of a firearm while impaired by drugs or alcohol is a Class A misdemeanor under Alaska law (AS 11.61.210(a)(1), agree that they will not possess a firearm while impaired, and know that such possession will be grounds for immediate removal from camp and disciplinary action.
- d. Participants in the field that do not have custody or control of the firearm are required to take the Firearm Safety Awareness Training.

3. Transport**, Storage, and Maintenance

Storage and transportation of personal or university-owned firearms used for field work have to follow this policy when on campus or at other UAF locations.

- a. Approved field firearms and ammunition may only be present on campus outside of secure storage for purposes of transport directly to or from authorized activities or return to secure storage.
- b. Firearms must be unloaded and both firearms and ammunition must be placed in a secure carry case(s) for transport to and from field locations where their use may be necessary.
- c. When offsite or in the field, when not in use, firearms must be unloaded, and both firearms and ammunition must be secured. Depending on the need for accessibility of the firearm, a trigger lock may be required. The Field Lead determines the protocol for the specific activity.
- d. UAF-owned firearms must be cleaned before being returned to UAF storage facilities, even if they have not been used. Any known problems with condition or operation must be reported to the supervisor of the unit that owns the firearm.
- e. Deans/Directors are responsible for ensuring field firearms and ammunition are securely stored on campus or at authorized off-campus facilities when not in use.

This must be coordinated with EHSRM, who will include UPD input, and maintain a record of all locations on campus where firearms are stored and all departments that have an active exception from the UAF Chancellor. Field firearms may be securely stored with the University Police Department in its central weapons storeroom.

- f. All UAF-owned firearms must be inspected by a certified armorer or gunsmith on an annual basis. Any maintenance or repairs that are needed must be completed by a certified armorer or gunsmith. Documentation of the inspections and repairs must be maintained by the responsible department head or their designee.

****International transport of firearms requires approval of UAF's export control officer within the Office of Research Integrity at a minimum of 30 days before leaving the country. The export of firearms under the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) generally requires a license for export issued in accordance with the AECA and the regulations promulgated thereunder. The Department of State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC) administers AECA export controls and licensing for defense articles enumerated on the U.S. Munitions List (USML) in the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). The Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) administers export controls for items on the Commerce Control List (CCL).**

4. Communicating Firearm Safety Protocols

At the beginning of a field activity, the Field Lead will communicate the following items to the field crew:

- a. Who has a firearm, its make and model.
- b. How firearms are being transported.
- c. Where in base camp firearms are being stored.
- d. What the procedures are for firearm use.
- e. Who is authorized to use the firearm.
- f. When access to firearms is not permitted, (e.g., when under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants, or when not trained for use).
- g. Participants will be assured and provided access to communication devices to allow the private reporting of firearm safety concerns.

5. Discharging a Firearm in the Field: The discharging of a firearm, for any reason, outside of expected procedures covered in approved UAF research, must be reported to the

supervisor and EHSM immediately. The supervisor is responsible for reporting the discharge, in writing, to the appropriate dean/director, describing the circumstances of discharge, and may be responsible to enter an incident report. Depending on the type of animal, other government agencies may also need to be notified. Target practice at an official shooting range is not subject to this requirement.

POLICY APPROVED BY:



Larry Hinzman, Interim Chancellor
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Sept 9, 2026

Date