



Sheriff

Hobart Lewis
Greenville County Sheriff's Office

Councilmembers,

On July 29th, during a SWAT training exercise at a vacant building on Wade Hampton Boulevard, two Greenville County deputies were injured when breaching rounds were mistakenly loaded into a bean bag shotgun and discharged during a scenario. Both deputies were treated at Greenville Memorial Hospital and later released.

One deputy has since returned to light duty. The other continues to recover and has a follow-up appointment scheduled for late September to determine when he may be able to return to work on a limited basis.

Our internal review determined that the rounds in question were improperly stored and not adequately verified before use. Procedural failures in ammunition handling and safety checks contributed to this incident. A full investigation was immediately initiated to establish accountability.

I want to assure you that my executive command staff and I have worked diligently to implement new practices to prevent such an incident from occurring again. These policies and procedures are now in effect:

Ammunition Storage: All ammunition—including blanks, dummy rounds, bean bags, less-lethal, and live rounds—must be stored separately in clearly labeled containers. No loose ammunition may be stored in desks, offices, the range house, or classrooms except during active training.

Post-Training Disposal: Ammunition issued for training, testing, or demonstrations must be returned to the Training Center Lieutenant (or designee) for proper disposal unless retrieved by the vendor.

SIMS Equipment: SIMS weapons and ammunition may only be issued to a SIMS-certified instructor and must be returned after training.

Blank Ammunition Use: Blanks must be fired only from a dedicated SIMS or blank-only weapon, or a firearm fitted with a SIMS bolt. All weapons must undergo a self-check, buddy check, and safety officer check before use.

Controlled Storage: All SIMS ammunition, bolts, weapons, and magazines will be stored at the Center for Advanced Training (CAT) and must be returned within five working days of training.



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Training Plans: Plans must be submitted to the Major at least five days in advance. The SWAT Commander or designee is responsible for planning, oversight, execution, and documentation.

Role Players: The use of volunteers is prohibited unless approved by the Major. Only SWAT members and CAT staff may serve as role players. Observers must be clearly identified and wear protective equipment.

Training Locations:

Non-county-owned property: A signed Training Access Agreement must be submitted with the training plan.

County-owned property (other than CAT): An acknowledgment email from the responsible employee must be submitted with the training plan.

For public areas or property: Residents, businesses, and organizations nearby must be notified in advance whenever possible.

These measures represent a significant tightening of our training and ammunition protocols. They are designed to safeguard our deputies while maintaining the readiness our community expects.

I remain committed to full transparency with this Council, with our deputies, and with the citizens we serve. I will continue to provide any relevant updates and any additional measures that need to be taken.

Thank you,

Sheriff Hobart Lewis

