



**City of Philadelphia
Office of the City Controller**

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Contact: [Genevieve Greene](#), 215-300-1071

**Controller's Office Completes Investigation into Sheriff's Office Gun Inventory;
Finds 101 Service Firearms and 109 PFA Weapons are Missing**

Philadelphia, PA – City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart, joined by Philadelphia Sheriff Rochelle Bilal, announced the results of her office's investigation into the gun inventory maintained by the Philadelphia Sheriff's Office. After receiving a complaint alleging that 15 rifles and shotguns had been missing from the Sheriff's Office gun inventory since 2016, the Controller's Office opened an investigation into all firearms under the purview of the Sheriff's Office.

The investigation found that 101 service firearms and 109 PFA weapons were missing from the Sheriff's Office inventory. The review also identified other issues with the overall management of the Sheriff's Office gun inventory. In response to the review, Sheriff Bilal expressed her willingness to improve the management of her office's gun inventory and to implement recommendations outlined in the report.

"It's unacceptable that more than 200 guns that should be in the Sheriff's Office custody cannot be located," said Controller Rhynhart. "The public needs to trust that the Sheriff's Office is a reliable steward of its own property, as well as the personal property given to the Sheriff's Office for safekeeping. I want to thank Sheriff Bilal and her office for their cooperation during this investigation. While many of the issues identified pre-date Sheriff Bilal's administration, I hope that she will take quick action to track down the missing guns, if possible, and ensure proper maintenance of the gun inventory moving forward."

The investigation included an on-site inspection of all firearms maintained by the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office gun inventory consists of service firearms – firearms carried by Deputy Sheriff Officers while executing their official duties – and PFA weapons – firearms and other weapons temporarily relinquished to the Sheriff's Office for safekeeping by individuals subject to the Protection from Abuse Act. Investigators also reviewed all policies and procedures related to the Sheriff's gun inventory; conducted interviews; and reviewed and analyzed all recordkeeping data maintained by the Sheriff's Office related to firearms.

Many of the issues identified in the report are due to a lack of detailed, written policies and procedures to guide the Sheriff's Office Armory employees in their daily responsibilities.

Specifically, the investigation found:

- **Recordkeeping for service firearms and PFA weapons was inadequate and incomplete** – Outside of the registration cards used for tracking service firearms and the various lists provided to the Controller’s Office, the Sheriff’s Office lacked a comprehensive and centralized tracking system for service firearms. To investigators’ knowledge, the Sheriff’s Office has never compiled a master list of all service firearms and its service firearms are not tracked by any other City agency. Additionally, the logbook used for tracking PFA weapons had numerous deficiencies and serial numbers have not been recorded in the logbook since 2009. Prior to the investigation, the Sheriff’s Office had not performed a thorough inventory of service firearms or PFA weapons.
- **The Sheriff’s Office lacks formal procedures regarding inventory management** – The Sheriff’s Office has no comprehensive, formal policies or procedures regarding how weapons should be stored, what information should be recorded for tracking purposes, or when and how to dispose of weapons for both service firearms and PFA weapons. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office does not have formal policies for returning service firearms upon separation from service. Of the 101 missing service firearms, 25 were still assigned to former DSOs and there are no records of these service firearms being returned. This lack of policies increases the likelihood of potential theft, waste or mismanagement of firearms, and could compromise Armory staff’s safety.
- **The Armory was disorganized and lacked policies and procedures** – Investigators found firearms piled on the floor and haphazardly stored in various boxes, cabinets and barrels. A service firearm was found co-mingled with the PFA weapons, and a PFA weapon was found in the service firearm room of the Armory as well. Some weapons were stored still loaded, which is against common practice firearm storage procedures for both individuals and law enforcement agencies.

As part of the investigation, the Controller’s Office provided several recommendations for improving the management and oversight of the Sheriff’s Office gun inventory, including establishing comprehensive policies and procedures for tracking and maintaining its inventory of service firearms and PFA weapons.

Read the full report [here](#). Fraud, waste, abuse and corruption in City government can be reported to the Controller’s Office [here](#).