



RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



201 East 18th Street • Rifle, CO 81650-3237

DATE: March 4, 2026
TO: Officer Alexx Rice
CC: City Manager, Patrick Waller
HR Director, Danielle Hogan
FROM: Chief Debra Funston
RE: Continued Performance Issues/ Final Decision Termination

Officer Rice,

On December 12, 2025 you met with me, HR Director Danielle Hogan and Sgt. Green concerning performance issues and policy violations documented by your supervisors. You were provided with a formal letter of reprimand and given two un-paid days off for discipline. You were made aware of policy violations (Rifle Police Department policies/ City of Rifle Employee Handbook policies) in the letter of reprimand. The policy violations outlined were:

Rifle Police Department Policy

322.5.70 Efficiency

- b. Unsatisfactory work performance including but not limited to failure, incompetence, inefficiency, or delay in performing and/or carrying out proper orders, work assignments, or the instructions of supervisors without a reasonable and bona fide excuse.

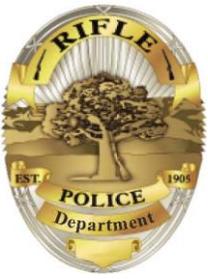
322.5.5 Attendance

- b. Unexcused or unauthorized absence or tardiness.

704.3.4 Security and Unattended Vehicles

Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging). Officers who exit a vehicle rapidly in an





RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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emergency situation or to engage in a foot pursuit must carefully balance the need to exit the vehicle quickly with the need to secure the vehicle.

Members shall ensure all weapons are secured while the vehicle is unattended.

City of Rifle Employee Handbook

4.5 Attendance

The City offers full municipal service to citizens and visitors. In order to do this in a tradition of high quality, our departments must be fully staffed. City of Rifle requires regular and punctual attendance by employees. You are expected to arrive at the workplace on time and ready to perform your job according to your departments established work hours. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Regular or consistent absences with no advance notice or that are unscheduled and not approved are not acceptable. Absenteeism detracts from service and causes an undue burden for those employees who must fill in for absent employees. Absenteeism will not be tolerated.

If you are not going to arrive at work or return from a break on time, you must yourself directly notify your Supervisor as soon as possible prior to your scheduled start time, or the time of expected return. If your Supervisor is not available, contact Human Resources.

If you must miss work due to an emergency or other unexpected circumstance, notify your Supervisor or Human Resources if supervisor is unavailable, as soon as possible. Notice should include the expected duration of your absence and your expected time or date of return. You may be required to provide documentation of the need for the absence, as permitted by applicable law.

If you become ill during your scheduled workday and need to leave before the end of your shift, notify your Supervisor immediately. If you are unable to perform your job at an acceptable level due to illness, you may be sent home until you are well enough to work.

Absences will be considered excused if you requested the time off in accordance with City policies and received the required approval for the absence. Absences will be considered unexcused if you are absent from work during scheduled work hours without permission and do not receive retroactive approval. This policy applies to all absences, including full- or partial-day absences, late arrivals, and early departures.

Planned absences, such as vacations or medical appointments, should be arranged as far in advance as possible and approved by your supervisor. If you need to be absent during the workday, attempt to schedule outside appointments or obligations so that your absence has the smallest impact possible on business operations.





RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



201 East 18th Street • Rifle, CO 81650-3237

The City reserves the right to apply unused vacation, sick time, or other paid time off to unauthorized absences when permitted by applicable law and according to policy. Absences resulting from approved leave, vacation, or legal requirements are exceptions to this policy.

If you fail to report to work for four or more consecutive days and have not provided proper notification, or responded to contact attempts by the City, the City may assume that you have voluntarily resigned your position and may proceed with the termination process.

You had a meeting with Lt. Mike Kuper the first week of January 2026 and spoke to him regarding difficulties you were having staying on task with respect to report writing. Lt. Kuper offered you an option of working with a training platform, Police One, to assist you with report writing. It is unknown if you made any effort to work on the issues you have had with respect to report writing. Lt. Kuper made the decision to move you to another shift, in hopes you could start fresh with new supervision. You were switched to Sgt. Flaten's team on January 16th, 2026. Lt. Kuper and myself met with Sgt. Flaten and Corporal Valadez to get an update on your progress.

They provided the following information including documentation of numerous violations of policy, several of which are repeated performance issues and violations of policy. These violations are The repeated policy violation incidents are as follows:

- **307.5(e) General Operations, Firearms, Safe Handling, inspection and storage.**

Members shall maintain the highest level of safety when handling firearms and shall consider the following:

- e. Members shall not place or store any firearm or other weapon on department premises except where the place of storage is locked. No one shall carry firearms into the jail section or any part thereof when securing or processing an arrestee, but shall place all firearms in a secured location. Members providing access to the jail section to persons from outside agencies are responsible for ensuring firearms are not brought into the jail section.

- o On 1-25-26 Sgt. Green found Officer Rice's Police Department locker unlocked and open with his loaded handgun and Rifle unsecure and in plain view inside. Officer Rice has been warned multiple times about securing his firearms by both Sgt. Pruitt and Sgt. Green.

- **703.5 Vehicle Maintenance, Washing of vehicles**

All units shall be kept clean at all times and, weather conditions permitting, shall be washed as necessary to enhance their appearance.

Officers on patrol shall advise dispatch before using the car wash. It is preferred that only one "on-duty" marked unit should be at the car wash at a time.





RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



201 East 18th Street • Rifle, CO 81650-3237

Employees using a vehicle shall remove any trash or debris at the end of the shift. Confidential documents should be removed and placed in appropriate file or shredded.

- On 1-25-26 Officer Green was told by Officer Hamilton, who shares a patrol vehicle Officer Rice, that Officer Rice left a mess in the vehicle, 4v38. Officer Rice drove that vehicle on night shift and it was handed over directly to Officer Hamilton at shift change. Officer Rice was also reported to have left his department cell phone, flashlight, and clipboard in the vehicle. When I told Officer Rice about this policy violation he said that the food wrappers were not his.
- On 3-15-25 Sgt. Pruitt placed Officer Rice on a performance improvement plan and one of the issued cited was Officer Rice leaving his assigned vehicle in a filthy and unorganized condition and he was to keep his vehicle clean and orderly including removing all trash at the end of a shift.

- **704.3.4 Security of unattended vehicles.**

Unattended vehicles should be locked and secured at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine safety, equipment charging). Officers who exit a vehicle rapidly in an emergency situation or to engage in a foot pursuit must carefully balance the need to exit the vehicle quickly with the need to secure the vehicle.

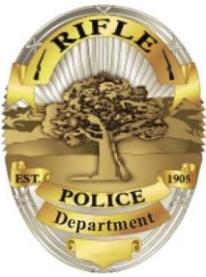
Members shall ensure all weapons are secured while the vehicle is unattended.

- On the morning of 01-27-26 Sgt. Green found Officer Rice's assigned patrol vehicle, 4v38 unlocked in the parking lot of the Rifle Police Department. Officer Rice worked night shift the night before.
- Officer Rice's failure to secure his patrol vehicle was cited as one of Officer Rice's issues in his performance improvement plan issued by Sgt. Pruitt on 3-15-25.
- On 10-18-25 Corporal Green documented 6 different times in October 2025 that Office Rice's was in violation of this policy by leaving his patrol vehicle unlocked. Chief Funston issued Officer Rice a letter of reprimand on 12-22-25 for violations of this and other policy violations.

- **1020.2 (j) Police uniform regulations, Wearing and condition of uniform and equipment**

Police employees wear the uniform to be identified as the law enforcement authority in society. The uniform also serves an equally important purpose, which is to identify the wearer as a source of assistance in an emergency, crisis or other time of need.





RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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j. If the uniform is worn in transit when driving other than a marked vehicle, an outer garment should be worn over the uniform shirt so as not to bring attention to the employee while off-duty.

- On 1-24-26 Officer Rice arrived at work wearing his uniform shirt without an outer garment over his uniform shirt. When I asked Officer Rice about this he said he just wore his uniform home to wash it and did not make any stops in between. This was a policy that Officer Rice violated during field training and I spoke to him about (Sgt. Green).

- **324.6 Report Preparation**

Reports should be sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission and approval. It is the responsibility of the member to complete and submit all reports taken during the shift before going off-duty unless permission to hold the report has been approved by a supervisor. Generally, reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody should not be held.

All reports shall accurately reflect the identity of the persons involved; all pertinent information seen, heard, or assimilated by any other sense; and any actions taken. Members shall not suppress, conceal, or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor shall any member make a false report orally or in writing. Generally, the reporting member's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such.

- Officer Rice has consistently failed to submit reports sufficiently detailed or free of errors.
- 2024 Officer Rice submitted 32 case reports and 4 cases were returned for corrections.
- 2025 Officer Rice submitted 40 case reports and 21 of them were returned for corrections. 6 of those reports returned were returned twice back to Officer Rice and one report was returned 4 times before it was approved by a supervisor.
- 2026 Officer Rice has submitted 11 case reports for review and 10 of those reports have been returned for corrections. One of the reports was returned twice for corrections.
- January 2026 Officer Rice wrote the wrong court date or time on 4 summonses.
- The above information indicates a significant decrease in report quality since he began working as a Patrol Officer in 2024.





RIFLE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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In the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics it spells out our fundamental duty to serve our community. It also acknowledges our own responsibility for our own standard of professional performance and our personal duty to take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve our own level of knowledge and competence.

The Rifle Police Department has offered every opportunity for you to improve your performance. You have been counseled and coached by supervisors, switched to a different team all together and provided with options for improvement. You were advised in your letter of reprimand (12-22-25) that “Changes in these behaviors and your performance are expected immediately and must be maintained throughout your employment. Any future instances of this lack of ability to perform your position may lead to additional disciplinary action up to and including termination.”

At this point, you are not meeting the performance standard of a basic police officer. The supervisors have exhausted all available options to improve your performance but have not been successful.

This has been a difficult decision to make, however, continued of violations of policy and failure to perform satisfactorily cannot be overlooked. Your position with the Rifle Police Department is terminated, effective immediately.

I wish you the best in your future endeavors.

Chief Debra Funston

