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Smith & Wesson® Addresses California Microstamping Legislation

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (January 23, 2014) --- Smith & Wesson Corp. announced today that although it continually seeks ways to refine and improve its firearms so that consumers have access to the best possible products, the State of California is making that impossible when it comes to California consumers.

Under California’s “Unsafe Handgun Act,” any new firearm introduced into that state must comply with microstamping laws. In addition to new firearms, the California DOJ asserts that any change to an existing firearm, other than a purely cosmetic change, subjects that firearm to microstamping as well.

Smith & Wesson does not and will not microstamp its firearms. Microstamping is unreliable, serves no safety purpose, is cost prohibitive and, most importantly, is not proven to aid in preventing or solving crimes. The microstamping mandate and the company’s unwillingness to adopt this so-called technology will result in a diminishing number of Smith & Wesson firearms available for purchase by California residents.

This is not a problem unique to Smith & Wesson. The microstamping legislation creates the same challenge for all firearm manufacturers, since presumably all of them refine and improve their products over time.

Smith & Wesson currently produces a California-compliant version of its M&P Shield and SDVE pistols. Both models are expected to remain on the California Roster of Handguns Certified for Sale as long as no changes are made to those models and the company does not plan to make changes to them for this reason. All other Smith & Wesson handguns will eventually fall off the roster as improvements are made. The company expects that its revolvers will be re-tested and returned to the roster, since microstamping does not apply to revolvers. Without some change in legislation by California, however, any semi-automatic pistols (other than the California-compliant models referenced above) that are removed from the roster will not be returned and citizens will not be permitted to buy them from a licensed dealer in California.

James Debney, Smith & Wesson President & CEO, said, “As our products fall off the roster as a result of California’s interpretation of the Unsafe Handgun Act, we will continue to work with the NRA and the NSSF to oppose this poorly conceived law which mandates the unproven and unreliable concept of microstamping and makes it impossible for Californians have access to the best products with the latest innovations. At the same time, we will do our best to support our customers in California with state-compliant products, enabling them access to at least a portion of the firearms to which we believe all citizens are entitled. In these challenging times, we hope you will support Smith & Wesson, and all gun manufacturers, in our fight to make the Unsafe Handgun Act about safety. We also encourage you to support the NSSF’s lawsuit and other efforts to stop microstamping, before it impacts your protected, Constitutional rights.”

Unless California changes its position, all M&P pistols other than the M&P Shield, will fall off the roster by August, 2014, due to performance enhancements and other improvements we have
made to those firearms. Other models already have fallen off and will continue to fall off for the same reason. The M&P9c already has fallen off and several other M&P models will fall off by the end of this month. Visit http://oag.ca.gov/sites/oag.ca.gov/files/pdfs/firearms/removed.pdf each week for a list published by the California Department of Justice of the handguns no longer on the roster.

California firearms dealers should check the official California roster of Handguns Certified for Sale frequently, to determine which handguns are certified for sale in California. This list can be found at http://certguns.doj.ca.gov/.

About Smith & Wesson
Smith & Wesson Holding Corporation (NASDAQ Global Select: SWHC) is a U.S.-based leader in firearm manufacturing and design, delivering a broad portfolio of quality firearms, related products and training to the consumer, law enforcement, and military markets. The company's brands include Smith & Wesson®, M&P® and Thompson/Center Arms™. Smith & Wesson facilities are located in Massachusetts and Maine. For more information on Smith & Wesson, call (800) 331-0852 or log on to www.smith-wesson.com.