

Use of Weapons for Theatrical, Artistic and Research Purposes			
Policy...	Code of Practice...	Guidance✓	Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...	
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee			
Chairman Eliot Glover	Date	July 2022	Review date 2025
The purpose of presenting this documents to the University Health and Safety Committee			
Standard 3 year re-fresh... Changes in practice and/or legislation✓ New Policy...			

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## **1 Introduction**

The danger associated with weapons and the use of weapons can culminate in serious injury and at times death. The criminal law makes it an offence to possess guns, knives and other offensive weapons that come under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and Offensive Weapons Act 1996.

Current legislation also places a duty of care upon employers to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of their employees and those affected by their activities. As a result, weapons of any kind are not normally permitted on Brunel University London owned / controlled property and land unless there is a justified and a lawful explanation.

Such circumstances where weapons may be required are for example; theatre production, filming or research purposes. Under these circumstances the following procedures should be followed in order to ensure the safety of all involved (including third parties) and in order to comply with the law.

## **2 Scope**

This guidance applies to staff, students and visitors to the University. Outside the scope of this policy are University catering operations, building contractors and maintenance operatives' carrying to work on University owned, let and/or leased properties. It is expected that such operations shall have controls in place to guard and account for the use of knives that are a justifiable reason required to them to deliver their service. .

## **3 Principles and Definitions**

### **3.1 Principles**

The presence, possession, ownership or keeping of any firearms and/or offensive weapons is strictly prohibited in all University owned or let residences, grounds, car parks, buildings unless a lawful and justified explanation can be provided.

### **3.2 Firearms**

The legislation relating to firearms is complex. The term "firearm" means "a lethal barrelled weapon of any description from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged" includes any item such a CS or Pepper spray or any item that propels a noxious substance. Key policy relating to firearms is contained within the Firearms Act 1968.

### **3.3 Offensive weapons**

Offensive weapon are defined by the Offensive Weapons Act 1996 as a "knife, knife blade, razor blade or axe or any other article, which has a blade or is sharply pointed, made or adapted for causing injury." The Knives Act 1997 uses the term "suitable for combat" and defines this as anything that can be used as a weapon to cause injury. These Acts, together with others, make it an offence to sell such implements to young people under 18, for any person to take such items into school premises and for people to carry items concealed upon their persons that could be used to cause injury.

## **4 Responsibilities and Arrangements**

### **4.1 Weapons and Firearms Awareness Group (Part of the Security Liaison Group)**

This group monitors the content of all Weapons and Firearms Awareness Forms submitted by Supervisors of any activity involving the use of weapons, whether on or off-campus. This is to ensure compliance with legislation and the University Health and Safety Policy. The Weapons and Firearms Awareness Group comprises of:

- University Police Liaison Officer
- Health and Safety Office
- Security Services

The Procedural flow chart (Appendix 1) should be followed to ensure that health and safety controls are put in place and that WAFAG are notified in a timely fashion with regards to the project. The Weapons and Firearms Awareness Form must be completed and submitted at least 4 weeks prior to the project / event taking place; this must be submitted to the [healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@brunel.ac.uk) and [terry.vass@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:terry.vass@brunel.ac.uk)

#### **4.2 Use of Firearms and/or Offensive Weapons in Teaching and Research**

Anyone participating in work or study involving firearms **must** comply with the legal requirements under The Firearms Act 1968; in particular Regulation 19 concerning carrying a firearm in a public place:

*A person commits an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse (the proof whereof lies on him) he has with him in a public place*

*a) a loaded shot gun,*

*b) an air weapon (whether loaded or not),*

*c) any other firearm (whether loaded or not) together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm, or*

*d) an imitation firearm*

It is permissible under Regulation 12 of the Firearms Act for a person to have a firearm in their possession for the purpose of a film or theatre production (including rehearsal).

#### **4.3 Manufacturing**

Regulation 37 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 allows for the production of imitation firearms for the purpose of theatre and film production. However it is an offence under Regulation 4 of the Firearms Act 1968 to convert an imitation weapon into a live firing weapon. Anyone with concerns regarding a project proposal that appears to be illegal or of a suspicious nature should contact Campus Security immediately.

### **5 Control measures**

#### **5.1 Risk assessment**

This must show that the risks to health and safety have been assessed for all involved including others who may be affected by the activities. The risk assessment **must** detail the control measures necessary to avoid

the risk or reduce it to acceptable levels. The risk assessment should consider all aspects of the project including how third parties may be affected by the activity.

Risk assessments shall only be complete when:

- The project/ event is coordinated safety
- Assessments have been made regarding the direction of staged/ filmed sequences and action sequences
- Information has been exchanged with others, including the University Police Liaison Officer, person in control of the weapon/firearm and other colleagues, staff, premises managers etc.
- A Weapons and Firearms Awareness Form has been completed and submitted to WAFAG
- The risk assessment is signed off by the Head of Department or delegated person/ tutor, communicated to all involved to ensure they have read and understood the risk assessment and the acknowledgment form signed
- The University reserves the right to confiscate items that can cause harm and have not been adequately risk assessed

## **5.2 Transport and Storage**

Transportation of any weapons (including ammunition) used in relation to University business (including student projects and productions) and stored on University property, must be conducted in accordance with the following criteria:

- Weapons and ammunition to be transported in a suitable, secure case. Ammunition must be transported separately in adequate storage. Consider the potential alarm that could be caused to others should the weapon or ammunition become visible in a public place
- The weapon and any ammunition should be stored on site in a suitable locked and secure storage cabinet separately.
- A responsible person nominated to be in control of the storage of all weapons and ammunition
- All weapons and ammunition are to be signed for when issuing and returning
- A procedure to notify the nominated person for any lost or unaccounted for weapons and ammunition

## **5.3 Record Keeping**

The Health and Safety Team shall maintain a record of all data gathered.

## **6 Community and Social Activity on Campus**

The criminal law makes it an offence to possess guns, knives and other offensive weapons in certain circumstances. To emphasise this University promotes a “No Weapons” approach throughout its owned, leased or let properties and grounds, unless that there is a justifiable reason for possession.

Where the University suspects that this approach is being compromised through intelligence or visibility of such items, the Community Policing and Security Department must be contact immediately.

Personal responsibility to report any suspicious behaviour rests with every member of staff, students and visitors and they shall report any suspicions to the Security Service,

## 7 Further Information

**Crown Prosecution Service:** responsible for prosecuting criminal cases.  
Offensive Weapons, Knives, Bladed and Pointed Articles  
Firearms

**BBC:** risk assessment information and guidance on filming. MyRisks

**The British Academy of Dramatic Combat (BADC)**  
Teacher’s Handbook

### Guidance

Health and Safety Executive: Entertainment Information Sheet 20 (Revision 1) *the Management of Firearms and Weapons in Film and TV Productions.*

## Appendix 1 Weapons and Firearms Awareness Procedural Flow Chart



