



U. S. Department of Homeland Security

*Office for Domestic Preparedness*

Washington, D.C. 20531

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MEMORANDUM TO: EXERCISE PLANNERS / CONTROLLERS / PARTICIPANTS

DATE: SEPTEMBER 10, 2003

SUBJECT: WEAPONS POLICY FOR HOST JURISDICTIONS IN ODP-  
SPONSORED EXERCISES

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) to ensure that every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment at all ODP-sponsored exercises for its participants, observers/VIPs, control/evaluation staff, volunteers, and the general public.

Federal and contractor exercise planners and controllers shall plan for and promulgate control measures with regard to weapons, whether introduced as a simulated device during exercise play or utilized by law enforcement officers in their normal scope of duties. For the purpose of this policy, a weapon shall include all firearms, knives, explosive devices, less than lethal weapons/tools/devices, and any other object capable of causing bodily harm.

Qualified personnel (law enforcement, security, military, etc.) with legal authority to carry weapons who have an assigned exercise role (responder, tactical team, etc.) and have the potential for interaction with other exercise participants shall **NOT** carry a loaded weapon within the confines of the exercise play area. They may continue to carry their weapon only after it has been properly cleared and rendered safe (i.e., no ammunition in chamber, cylinder, breach, or magazines) and only after being marked or identified in a conspicuous manner (i.e., bright visible tape around the visible stock or holster). The use of an area clearly marked as “off limits,” and with assigned armed personnel to secure weapons in a container, vehicle, or other security area is acceptable, and should be consistent with host jurisdiction weapons security policies.

Qualified personnel (law enforcement, security, military, etc.) with legal authority to carry weapons who are utilized to provide “real world” perimeter security for the exercise and have no assigned or direct interaction with exercise participants may continue to carry loaded weapons as part of their normal scope of duty.

All other personnel with no legal authority to carry weapons shall not bring, introduce, or have in their possession any weapon of any type in any area associated with the exercise. Safety briefings will be provided to all exercise participants specifying provisions and policies regarding weapons prior to the start of the exercise.

Simulated explosive devices, such as ‘flash bangs’, pyrotechnics, flares, smoke grenades, etc. will be handled and/or detonated only by qualified exercise staff or bomb technicians.

Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated during exercise conduct, except in matters of self-defense. Examples of aggressive behavior may include but are not limited to: excessive speeding; uncontrolled animals (i.e., K-9s, horses, etc.); employment of defense products (i.e.,

mace, pepper spray, stun guns, tasers, batons, etc.); and forceful use of operational response equipment or tools (i.e., pike poles, hose lines used at full stream on victims, etc.).

Exceptions to this policy specifying special mitigating circumstances shall be directed, in writing, to ODP through the Vermont Homeland Security Unit 60 days prior to the exercise.