

Performing Arts Safety Bulletin #8

SAFETY WITH FIREARMS

BLANKS CAN KILL. TREAT ALL FIREARMS AS THOUGH THEY ARE LOADED. LIVE AMMUNITION IS NEVER TO BE USED NOR BROUGHT INTO ANY PERFORMANCE VENUE.

These guidelines are intended to give recommendations on the safe handling, use and storage of firearms. Firearms include prop guns, rubber guns, plastic guns, non-guns, flintlock guns, pistols, machine guns, rifles and shotguns that shoot blank ammunition.

The Property Manager (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) will be the individual acting in the interest of the Production Company for obtaining, maintaining and handling all firearms for the production. He/she will work in conjunction with the company's designated Safety Representative to assure that the following standards are adhered to.

Before any use of a firearm in a rehearsal or performance, all persons involved must be thoroughly briefed at an on-site Safety Meeting where the firearms will be used. This meeting shall include an on-site walk through and/or a dry-run with the Property Manager (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production), designated production safety representative, and anyone that will be using and/or handling a firearm. An understanding of the intended action, possible deviations, plans to abort, emergency procedures and chain of command should be made clear.

No one shall be issued a firearm until he/she is trained in safe handling, safe use, the safety lock and proper firing procedures. If there are any questions as to the competency of the person who will use the firearm, the Property Manager (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) shall determine if additional training is required.

A Safety Meeting for the cast and crew shall be conducted. If there are any questions as to the safety of firearms being used in the sequence or if any changes are made from the original sequence, another Safety Meeting shall be held.


Additionally, this Bulletin should be posted in the rehearsal hall and at the performance venue.

1. GENERAL SAFE USE AND HANDLING OF FIREARMS:

- a. NEVER POINT a firearm at anyone, including yourself. If it is absolutely necessary to do so as part of the action, consult the Property Manager (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) or other safety representative, such as the Stage Manager. Remember that any object at which you point a firearm could be destroyed.
- b. Never place your finger on the trigger until you're ready to shoot. Keep your finger outside the trigger guard and off the trigger.
- c. Know where and what your intended target is. If you or another person involved are moving, do not fire towards the other person.
- d. Do not engage in horseplay with any firearms or weapons.

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- e. Never discharge a firearm when the barrel has become clogged with dirt or foreign material. The Property Manager (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) should inspect the firearm and barrel before and after every firing sequence.
 - f. Utilize all safety devices until the firearm is ready to be used.
 - g. Never lay down a firearm or leave it unattended. Unless actively performing or rehearsing, all firearms should be secured.
 - h. Only a person qualified (either licensed or experienced) shall perform the loading of blank cartridges. Check with Canadian regulations to see if a license is required (District Firearms Office 1-800-731-4000). In Canada, any custom loading of blank cartridges must be performed by a licensed special effects pyrotechnic operator. Never use or bring live ammunition onto any stage or location.
 - i. No person is to be coaxed, coerced or otherwise forced into handling a firearm.
 - j. The jamming or malfunction of a firearm must be reported immediately to the Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production). Do not attempt to adjust, modify, repair or try to un-jam the firearm. Malfunctioning firearms should be taken out of service until properly repaired by a person qualified to work on firearms.
 - k. Hand loading or altering factory loaded blank ammunition shall be done only by a person qualified (licensed) to work on firearms
 - l. All personnel should remain a predetermined, safe distance from the weapon firing area to be determined by the Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production), to ensure personal safety from blank debris and hot ejected casings.
 - m. All Provincial and Federal safety regulations are applicable and override these guidelines if they are more stringent. Further information can be found at the following web site: http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/bulletins/entertainment/Default_e.asp
2. The Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) is responsible for the following:
- a. Possession, control and distribution of all firearms on the set.
 - b. All firearms to be used on the production, whether company owned or rented, or privately owned, are to be given to and are in the possession of the Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production).

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- c. Designating individuals under his/her immediate supervision to assist as necessary.
- d. Their own qualifications for work with the type of firearms being used, the knowledge of their safe handling, use, and safe keeping, and familiarity with the blank ammunition being utilized.
- e. Seeking expert advice if he or she is not familiar with the firearm to be used.
- f. Ensuring that current licenses and permits have been obtained for the possession and use of production firearms.
- g. The knowledge of the applicable laws governing transportation, storage and use of firearms and be in compliance with those laws.
- h. The knowledge of and adherence to all manufacturers' warnings, expiration dates, storage and handling procedures for blank ammunition and firearms.
- i. Issuing firearms. The Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) will not issue a firearm until he or she has trained the person who is to use it. The training shall include handling and safe use, including the safety lock.
- j. Ensuring that a sufficient amount of time has been allotted for training and rehearsal.
- k. The ability to demonstrate prior knowledge of the safe handling of firearms and blank ammunition.
- l. Requiring that an actor or weapon-handler demonstrate prior knowledge, if any, of the safe handling of a firearm.
- m. The personal loading of firearms with blank ammunition or the personal designation of an experienced person working under his or her immediate supervision to load the firearms. Firearms are to be loaded just before they are to be used in a scene.
- n. Ensuring that any actor who is required to stand near the line of fire be allowed to witness the loading of the firearms.
- o. Using the lightest load of blank ammunition consistent with the needs of the scene and advising the Director and other involved personnel.
- p. The notification of all those present, prior to firing any blank ammunition.
- q. After firing, the Props Person (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) will unload the blank ammunition from the firearm.

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- r. Checking each firearm before each use. All firearms must be cleaned, checked and double-checked, and inventoried at the close of each day's shooting. All weapons must be accounted for before personnel are allowed to leave the area. The production company needs to allow time in its schedule for this procedure.
- s. The utilization of replica or rubber prop guns whenever possible.
- t. Ensuring that an inspection is made of the set and all spent brass casings and unspent blank ammo have been picked up and disposed of properly.

For further information about the Canadian Firearms Act and how it applies to the Entertainment Industry, refer to the Canada Firearms Centre Bulletins at http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/bulletins/default_e.asp.

