

Actsafes Safety Bulletin #2

SPECIAL USE OF LIVE AMMUNITION



These guidelines are intended to give recommendations, special guidelines, and conditions for the safe handling, use and storage of firearms utilizing live ammunition.

1. LIVE AMMUNITION:

Live ammunition is not to be used on a set.

Exception: On special effects second units there may be rare occasions when live ammunition must be used to obtain an effect.


Live ammunition may be used **only** if the following criteria and special conditions have been met:

The Property Master or Licensed Armourer (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 producer for obtaining, maintaining and handling all firearms for the production. He/she will work in conjunction with the production's designated Safety Representative to assure that the following standards are adhered to.

- a. The Director, the Line Producer (if present), the Director of Photography, the Property Master, Licensed Armourer, and the Licensed Special Effects Technician shall jointly determine whether a situation exists in which there is no practical alternative to the use of live ammunition to achieve an effect.
- b. Live ammunition shall not be used under circumstances where a desired special effect can be achieved by using conventional special effects techniques by a qualified and licensed Special Effects Technician and/or by computer generated means (computer generated images "CGI").
- c. This special use of live ammunition shall only be performed at a site that is suitable for the use of live ammunition (i.e. a military, police, or private gun range, the deck of a vessel, or in an area deemed safe for this procedure).
- d. Additionally, the permission and/or permit shall be obtained from the authority having jurisdiction (police, city, township, military base, or agency having authority to issue this type of permit).
- e. The insurance company providing insurance for the production should be notified of the intention to use live ammunition and the circumstances surrounding the special use and conditions. Approval must be obtained for the use of live ammunition.
- f. The Studio Safety Department and/or Safety Representative shall be notified prior to the use of any live ammunition.
- g. Notification will be made on the Call Sheet, or by other advance notice if there is no Call Sheet, before the date live ammunition is to be used.
- h. Before any use of firearm and the loading of live ammunition in a rehearsal and/or for an on-camera sequence, all persons involved shall be thoroughly briefed at an on-site SAFETY MEETING where the firearms will be used.

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- i. The SAFETY MEETING shall include an “on-site walk through” and/or “dry-run” with the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production), Range Master (if applicable), designated production representative, and anyone that will be using and/or handling the firearms. An understanding of the intended action, possible deviations, plans to abort, emergency procedures, and chain of command should be made clear.
 - j. Cast and crew members shall be limited to those members absolutely required to film the effect. No minor may be present in any scene or in the vicinity when live ammunition is being fired.
 - k. The Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) with those licenses required by the Authority Having Jurisdiction will procure and maintain the proper firearm to achieve the special effect and determine that the firearm is in good, safe working condition. The firearm will be kept in the control only of the Special Effects Technician. It will not be used as a prop.
 - l. In the event that the firearm to be used to fire live ammunition is to be provided by or matched by the Property Master or Licensed Armourer, the Property Master or Licensed Armourer shall be notified before the day the firearm is to be used. Where a weapon to be used to fire live ammunition is to be matched by a similar weapon for photographic purposes (i.e. a non-firing replica), the Special Effects Technician shall identify the live ammunition weapon by color or some other easily recognizable means of identification. These types of firearms shall never be kept together and/or stored together.
 - m. All live ammunition will be kept in the control of the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) and shall be stored in a manner to keep it safe and secure and in compliance with all applicable local, provincial and federal regulations related to the storage and use of live ammunition.
 - n. Live ammunition will not be kept on the set for any longer than is necessary to complete the scene in which it is being used. Live ammunition shall be secured in a locked box and clearly marked in a manner to differentiate it from blank ammunition.
 - o. Live ammunition will be transported in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations to and from the set on the day of its use.
 - p. While on a gun range and/or military base, the Range Master shall have overall control and final authority of the range and every person present, including the production cast and crew and the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production).
 - q. All safety procedures and requirements shall be strictly followed. There shall be no deviation of the intended sequence without the permission of the Range Master or Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) depending on who is in charge of the specific location to be utilized.

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- r. Immediately prior to the firearm discharge, a rehearsal shall be held to ensure that all who will be present know their assigned location, the safe zones that have been identified, and to ensure that no one is down in the range area. Upon completion of the rehearsal, a formal announcement shall be made to all those present that live ammunition will be fired.
- s. Particular attention shall be paid to the line of fire. Ensure the area is clear of all personnel and be aware of any possible ricochet hazard and/or spent bullet trajectory hazard.
- t. The Property Master or Licensed Armourer (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 compliance with all local, provincial, and federal regulations related to the storage and use of live ammunition.

GENERAL SAFE USE AND HANDLING OF FIREARMS

- a. Never point a firearm at anyone, including yourself.
- b. Never place your finger on the trigger until you are ready to shoot. Keep your finger alongside the firearm and off the trigger.
- c. Know where and what your intended target is.
- d. Do not engage in horseplay with any firearms.
- e. Never discharge a firearm when the barrel has become clogged. The Property Master or Licensed Armourer (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(s) is ready to be used.
- g. Never lay down a firearm or leave it unattended.
- h. Only a person qualified (either licensed or experienced) shall perform the loading of live ammunition. 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. Do not use or bring live ammunition onto any studio lot, stage or location.
- i. Once the firearm has been loaded with the live ammunition, the firearm is considered "hot".
- j. No person is to be coaxed, coerced or otherwise forced into handling a firearm.
- k. The jamming or malfunctions of the firearms must be reported immediately to the attention of the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (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.

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Property Master or Licensed Armourer (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. Ensuring the control of and distribution of all firearms on set.
- b. Ensuring that all firearms which will be used on the production (whether company owned, rented, or privately owned) are given to and in the possession of the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production).
- c. The designation of experienced persons working under his/her immediate supervision to assist as necessary.
- d. Their own qualifications for working with the type of firearm being used, the knowledge of their safe handling, use, and safekeeping, and familiarity with the live ammunition to be utilized.
- e. Seeking expert advice if he/she is not familiar with the firearm being 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 live ammunition and firearms.
- i. Ensuring that a sufficient amount of time has been allotted for training and rehearsal.
- j. The ability to demonstrate prior knowledge of the safe handling of firearms and live ammunition.
- k. The personal loading of firearms or the personal designation of an experienced person working under his/her immediate supervision to load the firearms. Firearms are to be loaded just before they are used in a scene.
- l. Ensuring that any actor who is required to stand near the line of fire be allowed to witness the loading of the firearms.
- m. The possession of all firearms, except during actual filming or rehearsal. Afterward, the Property Master or Licensed Armourer (or, in his/her absence, the weapons handler and/or other appropriate personnel determined by the locality or the needs of the production) will immediately unload the live ammunition from the firearm.
- n. Ensuring that all firearms are cleaned and checked at the close of each day's shooting.
- o. Ensuring that all firearms and live ammunition are accounted for before any personnel is allowed to leave the area.**
- p. Ensuring that an inspection is made of the set (location) and all spent brass casings and unspent live ammunition have been picked up and disposed of properly.**

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NOTE: The Term "Live Ammunition", as used herein, does **not** include those projectiles (regardless of the material or manufacture), which are intended solely for the purpose of creating bullet hit type special effects; such as projectiles fired from Air Rifles, Air Pistols, Air-operated Capsule Guns, Paintball Guns, Blow Guns, Squib-fired Trunion Guns, Crossbows or Crossbow type devices, Slingshots or any other type of special effects device designed to propel any projectile intended to create a bullet hit or recoil type special effect. Additionally any propelled projectile, required to be photographed in flight, shall likewise not be considered "live ammunition." All such projectiles described are to be supervised and operated under the direction of the licensed Special Effects Technician in charge.

