

Safety with Firearms

INFORMATION SHEET #8

Following the guidance in this information sheet is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. If you follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with WorkSafeBC regulations.

OVERVIEW

This guide provides 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.

Blanks can kill. Treat all firearms as though they are loaded. Live ammunition is never to be used and not brought into any performance venue.

WHO THIS APPLIES TO

This guideline applies to the property manager, props person, stage manager, actors (using props), prop masters, armourers, etc. acting in the interest of the Production Company for obtaining, maintaining, securing and handling all firearms for the production. They work in conjunction with the company's designated Safety Representative to assure that the following recommendations are adhered to.



SAFETY PRACTICE

Before any use of a firearm in a rehearsal or performance, all persons involved must be thoroughly briefed at an on-site Safety Meeting. This meeting shall include a walk through and/or a dry run with the Property Manager 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 they are trained in safe handling, safe use, the safety lock and proper firing procedures. If there are any questions regarding the competency of the person who uses the firearm, the Property Manager shall determine if additional training is required.

A Safety Meeting for the cast and crew shall be conducted. If there are any questions regarding 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 Information Sheet should be posted in the rehearsal hall and at the performance venue.



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HOW TO SAFELY USE AND HANDLE 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 other safety representative, such as the Stage Manager. Remember, anything you point a firearm at 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. Do not fire towards another person.
- d. Do not engage in horseplay with any firearms or weapons.
- e. Never discharge a firearm when the barrel has become clogged with dirt or foreign material. The Property Manager or Stage Manager should inspect the firearm and barrel before and after every firing sequence.
- f. Utilize all safety devices until the firearm is ready to use.
- 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 coaxed, coerced, or otherwise forced into handling a firearm.
- j. The jamming or malfunction of a firearm must be reported immediately to the Property Manager, Props Person or Stage Manager. Do not attempt to adjust, modify, repair or unjam the firearm. Malfunctioning firearms must 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 licensed person working on firearms.
- l. All personnel should remain a pre-determined, safe distance from the weapon firing area. The distance will be determined by the Property Manager or Props Person in consultation with the Stage Manager to ensure personal safety of all from blank debris and hot ejected casings.
- m. All Provincial and Federal safety regulations are applicable and override this guide.



The Property Manager, Props Person, or Stage Manager is responsible for the following:

- a. Possession, securement, control and distribution of all firearms for the production
- b. All firearms used during the production are given to and in the possession of the Property Manager, Props Person or Stage Manager. Designating individuals under their immediate supervision to assist as necessary.
- c. People who work with firearms are responsible for their own qualifications for work with the type of firearms being used, the knowledge of the safe handling, use and securement, and familiarity with the blank ammunition being used.
- d. Seeking expert advice if not familiar with the firearm, or its blank ammunition used.
- e. Ensuring that current licenses and permits are obtained for the possession and use of production firearms.
- f. The knowledge of the applicable laws governing transportation, storage and use of firearms and be in compliance with those laws. The laws can be found here: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-11.6/>.



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- g. The knowledge of and adherence to all manufacturers' warnings, expiration dates, inspection, storage and handling procedures for blank ammunition and firearms.
- h. Issuing firearms. The Property Manager, Props Person, or Stage Manager will not issue a firearm until they have trained the person who is to use it. The training shall include handling and safe use, including the safety lock, and others in proximity of the action.
- i. Ensuring that sufficient time is allotted for training and rehearsal and that the people using firearms are comfortable with them.
- j. The ability to demonstrate prior knowledge of the safe handling of firearms and blank ammunition.
- k. Requiring that an actor or weapon-handler demonstrate prior knowledge, if any, of the safe handling of a firearm.
- l. The personal loading of firearms with blank ammunition or designating an experienced person working under their immediate supervision to load the firearms. Firearms are to be loaded just before they are to be used in a scene.
- m. Ensuring that any actor who is required to stand near the line of fire be allowed to witness the loading of the firearms.
- n. Using the lightest load of blank ammunition consistent with the needs of the scene and advising the Director and other involved personnel prior to firing.
- o. The notification of all those present prior to firing any blank ammunition.
- p. After firing, the Property Manager, Props Person or Stage Manager unloads the blank ammunition from the firearm and prove it.
- q. Checking each firearm before each use. All firearms must be cleaned, checked and double-checked, and inventoried at the close of the show. All weapons must be accounted for before personnel are allowed to leave. The production company needs to allow time in its schedule for this procedure.
- r. The utilization of replica or rubber prop guns whenever possible.
- s. Ensuring that an inspection is made of the stage and that all casings and unspent blank ammo are picked up and disposed of properly.

RESOURCES AND REGULATIONS

All Provincial and Federal safety regulations are applicable and override this guide.

- Review Canadian Legislation to understand your requirements and obligations. The District Firearms Office's contact number is [1-800-731-4000](tel:1-800-731-4000).
- Canadian Firearms Program (CFP): <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms>
- Canadian Firearms Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/f-11.6/>
- Part III of the Canadian Criminal Code under Firearms and Other Weapons: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/page-13.html#h-117002>

