

Note: Throughout this document, “Prop Master” may also refer to the Armorer or someone designated by the Prop Master who is experienced, trained and qualified. This is an iterative document subject to change as changes in policy or regulation occur.

Introduction

These guidelines are intended for Production Management / Supervisors related to the safe handling, use, and storage of firearms, ammunition and blanks.

Responsibilities

Production Management (Production Manager, Producer)

The Producer and Production Manager have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring Production Safety Programs are implemented. They must ensure that qualified and experienced individuals are hired in all positions (including the Prop Master), and that those people are following safety protocols within these guidelines, as well as state and federal laws that may apply.

Prop Master

The Prop Master will be the individual acting in the interest of the Producer for obtaining, maintaining and handling all firearms for the production. They will work in conjunction with Production Safety to assure that the following standards are adhered to.

Armorer

The Armorer will be delegated the responsibility by the Prop Master for maintaining and handling all firearms for the production. They will work in conjunction with the production's designated Safety Representative to assure that the following standards are adhered to.

Production Safety

Production Safety is responsible for orienting production on administrative requirements and operational protocol, providing ongoing guidance and consultation, and auditing compliance.

Administrative Procedure

Production Start-Up

Production Manager Orientation

Prior to starting production, the assigned Production Safety Manager will set up a production safety orientation with the Production Manager (and POC and Producer if available) to discuss their responsibility for the implementation of their safety program.

Provision of Program Templates, Forms & Training

The Production Safety Manager, upon receiving production management contact information, will provide access to the [Production Safety Website](#) and the *Production Safety Orientation* (if outside California). Included in the program will be required forms

Prep

Hiring

Productions are responsible for hiring qualified and experienced AD's and Prop Masters. Prop Masters must be trained and experienced in handling the specific type of prop firearms that will be used on set. If they are not, they should seek training or hire an armorer who has appropriate experience and training.

Orientations

AD's and Prop Masters must meet with Production Safety as soon as they are hired, where they will be oriented on production safety programs, safety hotline, requirements for safety meetings, requirements for posting of materials and information on call sheets, required planning forms (e.g. *Production Activity Notification Checklist*, Risk Assessments etc.), and procedures for handling incidents.

Script & Schedule Review

Production Safety must be provided scripts and schedules far enough in advance to better understand any planned firearm use. Production will be responsible for completing the *Production Activity Checklist*.

Prep Meetings

When scenes are planned with firearms, Production Safety must be invited to all prep meetings with the Prop Master/Armorer/Props Department and AD's to ensure all administrative requirements have been completed. The AD is responsible for ensuring that Production Safety is apprised of planned firearm use on production.

Training

Props/Armorerers: All props personnel and armorerers must have completed the SafetyPass “S” course or an equivalent firearms safety course. Props personnel and armorerers must have knowledge and experience in the use of the *specific* firearms used.

Crew: No one shall be issued a firearm until they are trained in safe handling, safe use, the safety device, and proper firing procedures. If anyone’s competency regarding the handling firearms is questionable, then the Prop Master shall determine if additional training is required.

Production Safety Notification

As soon as production is aware that they will be using firearms on set, Production Safety must be notified. The *Production Activity Notification Checklist* must be completed and provided.

The AD Department should ensure the [Firearms Safety Bulletin # 1](#) (or [Bulletin #2](#) as applies) and any other appropriate information is attached to the call sheet.

Firearms Hazard Assessment

A *Firearms Hazard Assessment* is required every time firearms are used (including non-guns). It must be completed by the Prop Master or Armorer. It must be complete and thorough.

It must be reviewed and approved by the Production Manager, 1st AD, and Production Safety far enough in advance of the shooting day to allow for questions and comments.

Location Scouting

Any time firearms are planned, Production Safety should be invited to attend the tech scout, or time should be scheduled with the Locations Department to review the location, and how it may or may not affect firearms and blank gunfire.

Licensing & Permits

The Prop Master must ensure that he and/or the armorer possess all the licensing and permits necessary for the use of firearms and/or blanks. Copies should be archived in the production office and provided to Production Safety for review prior to the day of filming

Filming

Call Sheets

All cast and crew must be issued call sheets with the [Firearms Safety Bulletin # 1](#) attached prior to the day of filming (or [Bulletin #2](#) as applies). The call sheets must:

- notify all cast and crew that firearms will be used on set that day
- include the number for the anonymous Safety Hotline (818) 560-7391
- provide numbers for emergency first responders
- provide the address of the nearest hospital
- include the name and contact information for the Prop Master, Armorer, and Production Safety
- state that the *Firearms Safety Bulletin # 1* is attached (or *Bulletin #2* as applies)
- state name and contact information for on-set medical personnel (when applicable)

Safety Meetings

Before any use of a firearm in a rehearsal, on (or off) camera sequence, all persons involved must be thoroughly briefed on-site where the firearms will be used. This meeting shall include an “on-site walk through” and/or “dry-run” with the Prop Master, Production Safety, 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 must be clear.

Operational Procedure

Distribution

The Prop Master or Armorer will have absolute control over the distribution of all firearms. No other personnel will be allowed to handle or distribute firearms unless they are qualified and trained and have been expressly instructed to do so by (and under the supervision of) the Prop Master or Armorer.

Control

All firearms which will be used must be obtained and continuously under the control of the Prop Master and/or Armorer. All firearms must have a total chain of custody at all times. At no time shall any other department (other than Props) have control of a firearm, unless talent is in possession of the firearm and using it in a scene. Exceptions can be made for a technical advisor or stunt coordinator if for demonstration purposes.

Only experienced and trained personnel in the Props Department, working under the immediate supervision of the Prop Master or Armorer may assist with the handling of firearms.

Transportation, Storage & Handling of Ammunition, Blanks, and Firearms

The Prop Master or Armorer is responsible for:

- following all applicable laws governing transportation and storage.
- knowing and adhering to all manufacturers' warnings, expiration dates, storage, and handling procedures for "blank ammunition" and firearms.

Dry Runs & Rehearsals

The Prop Master and 1st AD are responsible for ensuring that sufficient time is allotted for training and rehearsal. All personnel involved in the shot must be present and involved in the dry run/rehearsal.

Firearms must be "cold" (fully unloaded) if used in rehearsal. Firearms must be verified as "cold" by the Prop Master, and if requested, must demonstrate to the cast member that the firearm is "cold" before taking it into their possession. An exception may be made when a full dress rehearsal using ammunition is necessary.

Loading & Use of Blank Ammunition

The Prop Master and/or Armorer is responsible for the loading of firearms.

Firearms must be cold/unloaded until immediately before filming.

The Prop Master and/or Armorer must ensure that any cast member who is required to use a firearm, or cast/crew standing near the line of fire, is allowed to witness the loading of the firearms.

The Prop Master and/or Armorer is responsible for using the lightest load of blank ammunition consistent with the needs of the scene and advising the Director, DP, 1st AD and other involved personnel.

After the scene is complete, the Prop Master and/or Armorer will immediately take possession of all firearms, clear and make "cold" the firearms and secure the firearms without delay.

Communication

The 1st AD is responsible for making notification to law enforcement, notifying anyone close by, and must make a verbal notification to all those present on set just prior to any firing of blank ammunition. In many cases, it is necessary to alert law enforcement 20 minutes before any firing.

Inspection & Inventory

The Prop Master and/or Armorer is responsible for checking all firearms before and after each use. All firearms must be cleaned, checked, and inventoried at the close of each day. All ammunition blanks, and dummy cartridges must be secured at the end of each day.

The Prop Master and/or Armorer must continually ensure all firearms, ammunition, blanks, and dummy cartridges have been accounted for before personnel are allowed to leave the area. Production needs to allow time in its schedule for this procedure.

The Prop Master and/or Armorer must ensure that an inspection is made of the set (location). Immediately after completion of the scene's filming, all spent brass casings and unspent blank ammunition must be picked up and properly disposed.

General

Replica or rubber prop firearms should be considered during the planning and risk assessment process, and used whenever possible.

Incidents

Immediate Action

When an incident occurs, such as a misfire/jamming of a firearm, the 1st AD must stop filming immediately, remove any personnel from any immediate hazards, and have the Prop Master take control of the firearm. The Prop Master must take the firearm out of service until it is thoroughly inspected.

If an injury due to a firearm occurs, the 1st AD must stop filming immediately, call for appropriate medical assistance, and remove all non-injured personnel from the set.

If an injury due to a firearm results in hospitalization, the set must be shut down immediately and secured (cordoned off if possible). Firearm(s) used during the scene must be kept on-set in the possession of the Prop Master. Production Safety must be notified immediately.

Witnesses should not leave the location where the incident occurred, except those receiving medical treatment. The area where the injury occurred must remain secured until Production Safety is satisfied that a thorough investigation has been conducted.

Reporting

Production Management, the Production Executive and Production Safety must be immediately notified of any firearm-related injuries.

If the incident becomes an OSHA-reportable event (admitted to hospital for treatment), Production Safety will assist production with the reporting process.