

The Edge

Use of Replica Weaponry in Performances

If you are using replica weaponry in a performance, workshop or rehearsal taking place in The Edge, you must adhere to the following policy. Failure to do so will result in the use of weaponry in your show being forbidden and may under extreme circumstances lead to the cancellation of your event.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Edge at cw887@bath.ac.uk or ca603@bath.ac.uk

This policy is based on HSE guidance which can be found [here](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/etis20.pdf).

# What is defined as a replica weapon?

* **Firearm** includes live weapons, air weapons, blank firing weapons, imitation, replica and deactivated firearms.
	+ **At no time will permission be given for the use of actual firearms, regardless of the circumstances (this includes deactivated firearms and blank firing weapons)**
	+ Imitation weapons (props designed to look like guns, but with no capacity to be activated or fire any projectiles) are permissible but should be treated with utmost caution due to the risk of audience panic should this be mistaken for a real gun.
	+ Plastic and toy guns clearly meant not to look realistic (eg brightly coloured, water pistols) can be used without applying this policy.
* **Weapon** includes any object which is designed for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm such as crossbows, catapults, any sharp-edged instruments used in a fight sequence (swords and knives) or martial arts weapons (such as rice flails) and batons, swords, spears and longbows. This guidance also covers articles such as replica weapons and props which are not designed specifically for the purpose of inflicting bodily harm but which may pose such a risk when used as a weapon
	+ This applies to most props which are designed to look like bladed weapons (knives and swords) which are either bladed, weighted for purposes of stage combat or designed in such a way that they could be mistaken for a real weapon. In this case, you should consider both the possibility of audience panic and of bodily harm

# Planning the use of replica weapons

The use of replica weaponry and firearms MUST be notified to the Edge and approved ahead of time.

You will need to include a risk assessment on the use of prop weapons in you general performance risk assessment which must assess the risks to all involved or others who may be affected by your activities (See RA guidance document).

Your risk assessment will not be approved until you ensure you have planned for and carried out the following:

* Ensure you assess how passers-by may view your activity
* Ensure there is clear signage in place
* Assess the risk of sequences in the performance involving weaponry and direct these safely, especially when fight choreography is required
* Exchange information with others, including the person in control of the weapon/firearm, other performers, crew, Edge and SU staff
* Ensure all involved in the production have received adequate briefing about the use of and risks from firearms and weapons
* Restrict the number of people with access to stage weapons, including limiting those designated to handle these and keeping them excluded from audience and public areas at all times
* Provide adequate time and resources for rehearsals, safety briefings and reappraisal of controls – this is especially important if the people handling weapons are inexperienced
* Provide secure storage arrangements for firearms, and weapons during transit and when not in use

# Notify the Police

If a replica firearm is to be used, heard or seen in or from a public place or where the public have right of passage, you must make sure that the police have been fully informed and that a point of contact for them is nominated. Keeping the police informed will prevent possible misunderstandings involving police armed response units and reduce the likelihood of public distress and possible breaches of the peace.

This is not necessary in the case of replica weapons, however you should consider following the above procedure for particularly realistic weapons (eg blunted steel blades).

# During the performance

During the performance, you should always be able to keep track of the location of all prop weapons at all times. A nominated armourer should be responsible for all of these and will need to ensure the replica weapons or firearms are either onstage as planned or in the correct storage location when not in use.

The weapons should always be kept to the wings or other backstage areas inaccessible to the public. All persons with access to these areas should have been briefed on the presence of and procedures for the use of these items. If replica firearms or particularly realistic replica weapons are utilised, these should be kept in a locked box at all times when not onstage.

**Under no circumstances should replica weaponry of any kind be present in the auditorium during a show.** Signage should be in place for all shows to warn audiences of the presence of replica weaponry and prevent the possibility of audience panic.

**When weaponry is used onstage, scenes should be choreographed to ensure no direct contact is made at any point in order to prevent injury to performers.**

# Storage and transport

All prop weaponry and firearms should be kept in a secure location when not being used for shows. All persons with ability to access these should be aware of their presence and all relevant procedures. These should only be removed from their secure storage when they are needed for use following the process detailed above.

Transport for replica weaponry between permanent storage locations and the performance location should be planned so as to minimise any risk of either injury or panic being caused while in transit. This includes transport over short distances (eg through the Edge foyer). If going through public areas, these should not be visible to members of the public. For longer travel distances or where theft is a potential concern, lockboxes should be used.