



It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Preparedness Directorate to ensure that every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment during National Preparedness Directorate-sponsored exercises for its participants, observers/VIPs, control and evaluation staff members, volunteers, and the general public.

### **Weapons**

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Federal and contractor exercise planners and controllers plan for and promulgate control measures with regard to weapons, whether introduced as a simulated device during exercise play or used by law enforcement officers in their normal scope of duties. For the purpose of this policy, a weapon includes all firearms; knives; less-than-lethal weapons, tools, and devices; and any other object capable of causing bodily harm.

Qualified personnel who have legal authority to carry weapons (e.g., law enforcement, security, military) and who have an assigned exercise role (e.g., responder, tactical team) with the potential for interaction with other exercise participants (e.g., actor victims) will NOT carry a loaded weapon within the confines of the exercise play area. They may continue to carry their weapon only after it has been properly cleared and rendered safe (i.e., no ammunition in chamber, cylinder, breach, or magazines) and only after being marked or identified in a conspicuous manner (e.g., bright tape visible around the stock or holster). The use of an area clearly marked as “off limits” and with assigned armed personnel to secure weapons in a container, vehicle, or other security area is acceptable and should be consistent with host jurisdiction weapons security policies.

Qualified personnel who have legal authority to carry weapons (e.g., law enforcement, security, military) who are used to provide real-world perimeter security for the exercise and have no assigned or direct interaction with exercise participants may continue to carry loaded weapons as part of their normal scope of duty.

All other personnel with no legal authority to carry weapons will not bring, introduce, or have in their possession any weapon of any type in any area associated with the exercise. All exercise participants will be provided with a safety briefing that specifies provisions and policies regarding weapons before the exercise starts.

### **Explosives and Pyrotechnics**

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Simulated explosive devices, such as “flash bangs,” pyrotechnics, flares, smoke grenades, and so forth, will be handled and/or detonated only by qualified exercise staff members or bomb technicians. Eye and ear protection should be worn by any persons in the area of explosive devices.

### **Aggressive Behavior**

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Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated during exercise conduct, except in matters of self-defense. Examples of aggressive behavior may include excessive speeding; uncontrolled animals (e.g., K-9s, horses); use of defense products (e.g., mace, pepper spray, stun guns, tasers, batons);



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and forceful use of operational response equipment or tools (e.g., pike poles, hose lines used at full stream on victims).

### **Exercise Notification**

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The DHS/FEMA National Preparedness Directorate supports exercise play that simulates real-life incidents; however, funds are not to be used for exercises that include or impact the general public without prior notification. Public notification includes, but is not limited to, message signs, press releases, postcards, radio/press advertisements, and community hearings. Exceptions to this policy specifying special mitigating circumstances must be directed, in writing, to the Exercise Manager or [hseep@dhs.gov](mailto:hseep@dhs.gov) thirty (30) days before the exercise.