

Guidance for Emergency Service Personnel Handling of Police Issue Firearms

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for members of the emergency services (police, fire & rescue and ambulance) on how to safely handle police issue firearms in the event of an authorised firearms officer (AFO) becoming injured and incapacitated.

This may be of particular relevance during the response to a marauding terrorist attack (MTA), therefore this guidance should be read in conjunction with the MTA Joint Operating Principles (JOPs).

It is important to note that **the handling of firearms should not be undertaken by untrained emergency service (ES) responders unless necessary to save life and even then, handling should be kept to the absolute minimum necessary to fulfil those obligations.**

AFOs who become injured and incapacitated should have their firearms recovered by another AFO as a matter of urgency and prior to being transported to hospital.

However there may be rare occasions where it is not possible for another AFO to deal with an injured colleague's weapon(s) and it becomes necessary for another ES responder to handle the weapon(s) in order to render first aid/clinical intervention.

Guidance:

The following guidance is therefore intended to assist relevant ES responders where, in extremis, they are required to handle police issue weapons in order to make lifesaving interventions with an injured AFO. This should only be done where it is assessed to be necessary to provide first aid/clinical intervention, the AFO themselves is incapable of assisting and no other AFO is available.

Key Initial Principles:

- The first option should always be to leave the weapon(s) alone if possible to do so.
- Only police issued weapons should be touched or moved. Any non-police issued weapons should be left in situ and reported to a police officer (armed or unarmed).
- Another AFO should be asked to manage the weapon(s) where available.
- Only where another AFO is unavailable and it is necessary to handle the weapon in order to administer first aid/clinical interventions should ES responders consider handling/moving the weapon(s).
- The ES responder should approach the injured AFO from the safe side of their weapon (i.e. not towards the barrel). They should make themselves known to the injured officer and, where responsive, gain their consent to approach them.
- The ES responder should perform a dynamic risk assessment to determine that it is safe to approach. If the injured AFO is conscious but does not understand or agree to the ES responders intentions, then they should not proceed and seek urgent AFO assistance.
- The ES responder should communicate with the injured AFO explaining the need to move their weapon(s) for their clinical assessment and to render care to them.

Removal of Weapons:

Police AFOs carry at least one firearm, and in most circumstances two, together with a Taser. These are often described as a

- 1) Carbine / long barrelled
- 2) Pistol / handgun / sidearm

1) Carbine / Long barrelled weapons

Fig 1 and 2 below provide examples of carbines carried by AFOs.



Fig 1 – Sig MCX



Fig 2 – H&K G36

- To remove a long barrel weapon, cut the sling securing the firearm to the officer.
- Carefully move the weapon to provide the required clinical interventions, however keep the firearm within sight. When moving the weapon only hold the stock, barrel (caution – the barrel may be hot) or the carry handle (if the weapon has one). (See Fig 3, 4 & 5 below).



Fig 3 – stock carriage

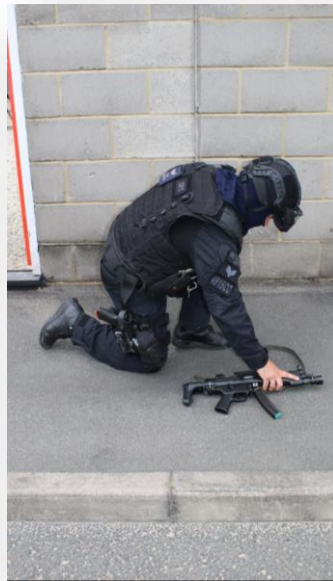


Fig 4 – barrel carriage



Fig 5 – carry handle carriage

- Never handle the weapon by the pistol grip and at all times keep fingers away from the trigger and other switches or levers.
- The weapon should be placed on the ground and the barrel pointed away from responders and in a safe direction (Fig 6).



Fig 6

2) Pistols / Handguns



Fig 7 – Glock 19

- If the pistol is still contained within its holster, it should be left there. Should the pistol need to be removed from the casualty, cut the holster belt only, but do not remove the weapon from the holster.
- If a pistol is found out of its holster it may still be connected to the AFO by a lanyard or other retention strap. Cut the retention strap and move the pistol keeping it within sight.

- To do this hold the pistol grip with thumb and fingers both sides and always pointing in a safe direction. **Do not point the firearm at anyone.** (Fig 8)

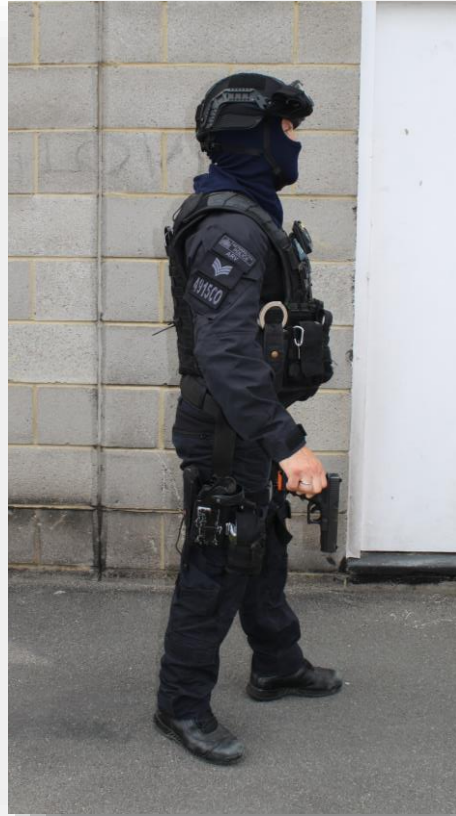


Fig 8

3) Taser

AFOs may also be in possession of a Taser (Fig 9) which is a type of conducted energy device (CED). A CED is a less lethal weapon system designed to temporarily incapacitate a subject through use of an electrical current which interferes with the body's neuromuscular system and produces a sensation of intense pain. This effect may be administered directly from muzzle of the CED or from barbed probes that are propelled from a cartridge.

- If an AFO is in possession of a Taser then leave it in the holster and remove the holster if necessary.
- If un-holstered and required to be removed follow the same principles as for pistols (above).



Fig 9

NB while this figure shows a yellow Taser they may also be black in colour.

4) Pyrotechnics

AFOs may be carrying pyrotechnic devices (percussion or 'stun' grenades Fig 10). When deployed they generate a loud bang, intense white light and an over pressure blast wave intended to stun and disorientate anyone in close proximity. It may create a risk of fire, blast and fragmentation of small loose material, such as gravel, if deployed. The noise created by these devices is in excess of the safe level under health and safety legislation.

Percussion grenades can include the following characteristics and associated risks:

- blast
 - fragmentation, including secondary fragmentation
 - fire/burns
 - noise
 - flash
 - smoke
- AFOs may be carrying pyrotechnic devices in small pouches attached to their body armour or clothing. These should be left in the pouch and removed from the officer where possible.



Fig 10

Any AFOs weapons that have been removed may need to be carried. This can be achieved by holding the weapon by the safe methods described above and with the barrel facing the floor. (See fig 11, 12 and 13)

Always attempt to inform commanders and/or other ES responders that you will be carrying an injured AFOs firearm.

Never hold a weapon in a manner that may be deemed as a hostile threat by other AFOs and handle the weapon(s) for the minimum amount of time as possible.



Fig 11 – stock carriage



Fig 12 – barrel carriage

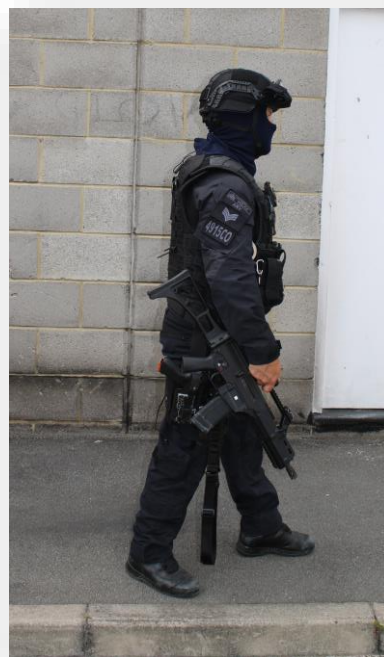


Fig 13 – carry handle carriage