

# Oxted & Limpsfield Barn Theatre Company Co. Ltd

## Firearms and Weapons in Productions

### Guidance

Refer to Health & Safety Executive Fact Sheet ETIS20 and Equity Safety Tip



HSE Firearms &  
Weapons.pdf



Equity Firearms  
Safety Tips.pdf

It is now illegal to have in your possession 'in a public place' any gun or something having the external appearance of a gun, or any sword, knife, etc. Any item having the 'external appearance' of a gun is now considered to be a 'realistic imitation firearm'. It does not matter whether it is plastic, alloy, a cap gun, a deactivated gun, an imitation gun, a prop gun, a dummy gun, a water pistol, a gun made by the properties team, whether blank firing or otherwise, in fact anything having the 'external appearance' of a gun.

If it is good enough to give the appearance of a gun to an audience, then in the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 it is a 'Realistic Firearm' (this is a single piece of legislation covering firearms and weapons). The act also covers edged weapons, swords, daggers, knives, spears, pikes, halberds, in fact anything that could be said to have "an edge or a point".

The Act provides a legal defence in law if you can prove that a weapon is 'required and necessary' for a specific theatre production. (Section 37 Par 238). Proof must set down in writing for the need for a firearm, and to have this available on request i.e. refer to the actual pages in the script.

### Requirements

Responsibility rests with the Producer of the production i.e. the hirer of the Barn Theatre for the duration of the hire period.

- All firearms must be hired from reputable bona fide organisations who can demonstrate they are fully insured to supply (see Appendix A). The only exception to this will firearms currently owned by a Hirer who can prove the firearm complies with the requirements set out in this document. Such firearms will require the approval of Phil Littleford or John Kempton
- No firearm capable of firing projectiles can be used i.e. only theatrical, blank firing, props guns or replicas can be used
- The Hirer must identify a "nominated person" who will be responsible for the transport, storage, maintenance and use of all weapons
- If a large number of firearms/weapons are required then there must be an additional "nominated/responsible person" who assists, say in the event that they have to operate in each wing
- No one is to be appointed or accredited as an "Armourer"
- The nominated person must be familiar with the use of the weapons and ensure that all the users have been trained in their use. They need to know about loading, safety catches, what to do in case of a misfire etc.
- A completed Registration Form (see Appendix B) must be sent to Phil Littleford *before the first rehearsal* in which a firearm is to be used. Phil Littleford will then provide the gun safe key to the nominated person who must retain possession at all times
- Phil Littleford will register the use of firearms with Surrey Police Firearms Unit
- Firearms/weapons must be transported in a suitable bag/case and kept secure including the transport to and from the theatre at the beginning and end of a hire period
- Firearms/weapons must never be openly carried in public and must be accounted for at all times
- The nominated person must be able to observe the use of the firearm/weapon and monitor the action to make sure their instructions are being followed. The firearm/weapon must be removed from the locked gun safe prior to being needed, handed to the actor on the side of the stage, received back from the actor at the side of the stage and placed back in the gun safe
- If the firearms are used multiple times over a short period of time, they may be locked in the case provided in the stage wings

- Firearms must be locked in the gun safe when not being used
- Only the required number of blanks should be loaded, allowing for a misfire
- A second person must check that the required number of blanks and that they are blanks, not live rounds, are loaded
- Firearms and weapons must not be fired/used in the auditorium area and can only be used for rehearsals or performances of stage combat, they must not be sparred with or played with in any way
- Firearms must never be pointed at anyone and when in use the full line of sight both *on stage and off* must be clear
- The nominated person must check that that risk control measures are in place and there has been adequate rehearsal
- All performance sequences involving a weapon must be choreographed/rehearsed by a competent person (in most cases this will be the Director or Choreographer, or someone nominated by them as competent)

*If the above is not complied with the use of firearms or weapons is strictly forbidden*

### **Appendix A - Suggested Organisations for the Hire of Firearms and Weapons**

This list will be developed as other relevant organisations are identified by the Barn Theatre and our Hirers. The credibility of a hiring organisation can be established by reviewing their website.

Cutting Edge - <http://www.cuttingedgecombat.co.uk>

Ariel Productions - <http://www.arielproductions.co.uk/muse/index.html>

## Appendix B – Registration Form

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Society name   |  |
| Production name  |  |
| Name of Nominated Person   |  |
| Phone number and email address of Nominated Person   |  |
| Name & contact details of organisations firearms and weapons are being hired from  |  |
| Date of first rehearsal with firearm   |  |
| Date of last performance with firearm  |  |
| List firearms/ammunition and weapons being used  |  |
| Confirm the need for a firearm/weapons and list page numbers in the script   |  |
| Confirm that no firearms capable of firing projectiles are being used  |  |
| Confirm that all requirements will be complied with  |  |
| Statement to include how risks are being managed and how the firearms/weapons will be accounted for at all times (including collection from place of hire and transportation to the theatre) |  |

*This information must be emailed to Phil Littleford – [pjlittleford@btinternet.com](mailto:pjlittleford@btinternet.com)  
Keys for the gun safe will not be released to Hirer until this information is provided.*