

# Firearms Induction

## *(Part 1 – Theory)*

For Cast and Crew who require to handle and use a firearm  
on a theatrical production



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# Legislation

## Overview

- The use of firearms or prohibited weapons on a theatrical production is strictly regulated in NSW and there are severe punishments for any breach, deliberate or not.
- Every person using firearms or prohibited weapons are subject to maintaining strict compliance to relevant legislation in NSW
- There is zero tolerance for any person found to be using firearms contrary to any legislation or safety instruction
- The Armourer is responsible for ensuring you are aware of your legal obligations, your compliance to those obligations and in the event of a compliance issue is obligated to reporting you to NSW Police.
- An imitation or replica Firearm or Prohibited Weapon is legally defined in the same manner as a real operational Firearm or Prohibited Weapon in NSW

# Legislation

## Relevant Acts and Legislation in NSW

- Firearms Act 1996
  - Firearms Regulation 2017
  - Weapons Prohibition Act 1998
- Weapons Prohibition Regulation 2017
  - Work, Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work, Health and Safety Regulation 2025
  - Crimes Act 1900 (SECT 93G)

# Legislation

## Firearms Act & Regulation Weapons Prohibition Act and Regulation

### KEY POINTS:

- Your ability to handle and use a firearm or prohibited weapon in NSW on a theatrical production is authorised by the armourer who must have the relevant theatrical armourer licenses for firearms and prohibited weapons.
- Under the direct supervision of the licensed armourer you are authorised to handle and use firearms and prohibited weapons for the period only immediately essential to the requirements of the production. This includes static and blank firing the firearm and any prohibited weapon
- The authority extended to firing a firearm is for blank cartridges only
- All firearms and weapons will be signed out, which may include multiple times a day
- Direct supervision means you must be in line of site of the armourer at all times. Simply having a firearm or weapon signed out to you does not mean ongoing possession throughout the day, going to lunch with it or other. You will be issued the firearm or weapon at the time you need it and you will return it when finished with it.
- Before having access to a firearm or weapon it is a legislative requirement that the Armourer satisfies themselves of your demonstrated capacity to safely use a firearm or weapon.
- Safe keeping of firearms or prohibited weapons is the responsibility of the armourer
- It is important to recognise that Police can inspect the use or possession of firearms or prohibited weapons at any time.

# Legislation

## Work, Health and Safety Act and Regulation

- Every person has a responsibility to the safety of themselves and others. This includes identifying and reporting a real or potential risk.
- The use of firearms and prohibited weapons can present significant risk and require stringent safety controls, highly skilled and experienced armourers and cast and crew who have been assessed as competent by the armourer.
- Blank firing of firearms can be and has been lethal in Australia. Other injuries have also occurred. However, all recorded incidents have been a result of inadequate safety controls, inadequate quality assurance procedures, unsuitable armourers or blatant disregard for safety systems
- Your armourer is required to prepare a risk assessment for each production and will be able to share it with you if requested
- The blank firing of firearms requires modification to firearms. This modification must only be undertaken by competent gunsmiths and more widely the firearm should be inspected and tested before each use by the armourer to ensure it is in safe and reliable working order
- The use of firearms and prohibited weapons on a theatrical production must be respected and given adequate time and resources to ensure their use can be done safely.

# Legislation

## Crimes Act 1900

- Discharging a firearm, which includes the use of blank fire firearms, without authority of the location of the production is a significant offence and carries significant jail time.
- Your armourer and the production will ensure before any firearms are introduced to a location or discharged that prior notification and permission has been completed.

# Role of the Armourer

- Working with the production to ensure the proposed use of firearms or prohibited weapons are lawful is the primary responsibility of the armourer
- Directly liaising with the production to ensure the correct firearms and weapons are chosen
- Ensures all firearms and weapons are in a functional and safe working order before being used
- Assesses the risk of each production and working with the Director, Assistant Director, Safety Officer, Cast and other Crew ensures risk mitigation processes are established
- Responsible for determining the competence of Cast and Crew to access and use firearms and prohibited weapons
- Responsible for the direct supervision of cast and crew handling or using firearms or prohibited weapons
- Responsible for providing and overseeing a safety template for the use of all firearms and prohibited weapons
- The safe storage and security of firearms, blank ammunition and prohibited weapons is the responsibility of the armourer

# Armourers

## **Managing Armourer:**

Responsible for the team of armourers, working with the production on and off set, fulfils managerial administrative and armoury duties including leading armourer if required

## **Leading Armourer(s):**

Working with cast and crew (Director, 1<sup>st</sup> AD, Safety Officer) and armourers providing for legal and safe working environments. Overall responsible for ensuring a timely and reliable service onset and advance scene planning ahead of schedule.

## **Armourer(s):**

Working at the direction of the leading armour(s) to ensure cast and crew are accessing the correct firearms or weapons, helping to ensure safe operation and chain of custody requirements are maintained. Assists the team maintaining firearms and weapons in working order

## **Assistant Armourer(s):**

Provides general assistance to the leading armourer and armourers with tasks like weapons servicing, loading magazines, signing in/out weapons, transport and other supporting roles

# Firearm Groups

- There are a range of different firearm types you may be required to use on a production.
- Your armourer will provide you with more specific details on the firearm you will use, however in general the types of firearms you may use can include:
  - a) Air powered firearm
  - b) Break action firearm
  - c) Loading gate firearms
  - d) Bolt action firearm
  - e) Lever action firearm
  - f) Straight pull firearm
  - g) Lever or button release firearm
  - h) Revolving cylinder firearms
  - i) Pump action firearm
  - j) Semi automatic firearm
  - k) Automatic firearm
  - l) Muzzle loading firearm (percussion or flintlock)
  - m) Replica or imitation firearm

# Imitation and soft firearms or weapons

- Treated the same as the real item, including the way they are handled and administered
- Often used for stunt activities or background/extras
- Commonly made of different grade foams and rubbers or mix of both

# How to Clear a Firearm and Make Safe

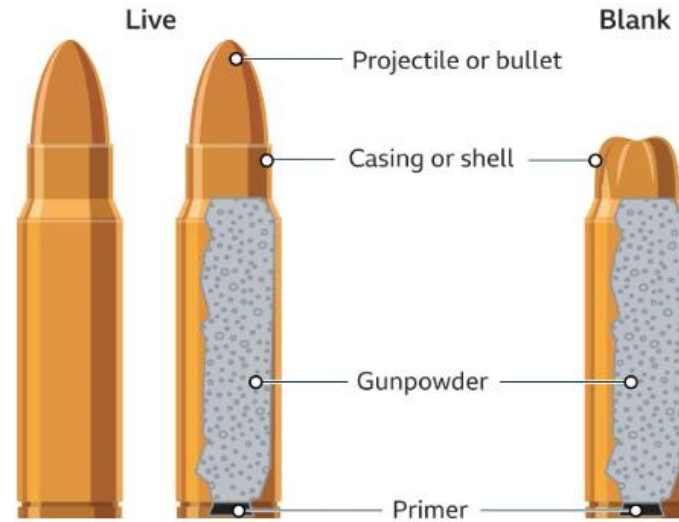
- Your armourer will provide you and any other person with demonstrated instructions for how to clear a firearm.
- Generally speaking, with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction you will need to identify:
  - a) The action is open
  - b) The magazine is removed (if possible)
  - c) The chamber is clear (e.g. there is no ammunition in the chamber)
  - d) Any magazine or feed system is empty
- After confirming the firearm is clear your armourer will announce “Gun is clear”

# Identifying the difference between blank, imitation (dummy) and live ammunition

## What is a blank round?

### What is a blank cartridge?

A blank cartridge is the same as a live round, except it does not have a projectile or bullet at its tip

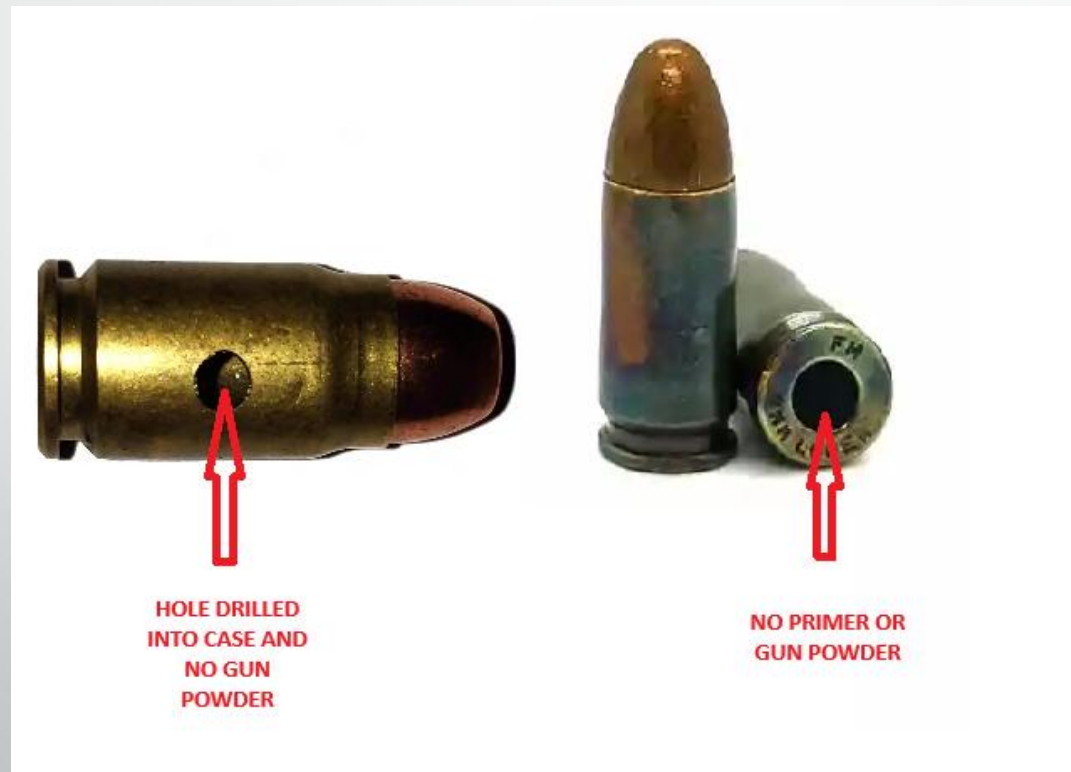


When a gun trigger is pulled, the primer ignites the gunpowder and fires the bullet

With a blank, no bullet is fired

# Identifying the difference between blank, imitation (dummy) and live ammunition

## What is a dummy or imitation round?



# Expectations of Cast and Crew

- Follow all instructions of the armourer
- If you have questions, ASK!
- If you need further support, ASK FOR IT
- Remain in line of site of the armourer at all times
- Unless specifically instructed a firearm should never be pointed at or in the direction of any person
- When a firearm has been cleared and handed to you DO NOT TOUCH OR OPERATE THE ACTION OR ANY OTHER MOVING PART

# Chain of Custody

ARMOURER → CAST OR CREW → ARMOURER

**BEFORE TAKING A FIREARM OR WEAPON, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE WITH CLEARING THE FIREARM, SIGNING FOR IT'S POSSESSION AND WHEN RETURNING IT YOU WILL PARTICIAPTE WITH CLEARING THE FIREARM AGAIN AND SIGNING IT BACK TO OUR CUSTODY**

**A FIREARM/WEAPON NOT RETURNED MAY FIND YOU BEING REPORTED TO POLICE.  
NEVER SHARE A FIREARM OR WEAPON WITH ANY OTHER PERSON.**

# Using blank firing firearms on a production

The creative context of how firearms are used on productions are always different, however there are some common safety and operational things to remember

- a) We never point or discharge a firearm at a person. Each scene will be carefully assessed and planned by your armourer, the safety officer and the 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director to ensure the use of the firearm is safe. There are minimum safe distances and offsets required to operate within proximity to a firearm being discharged.
- b) Unless you are about to fire your finger is never on the trigger
- c) Blank firing firearms is very loud and can cause instant hearing loss. You should always use the hearing protection which will be provided to you. Hearing protection should only be removed once all firearms have been cleared
- d) There are sharp edges on firearms and in some platforms, there is the risk of debris coming back towards your face. Your armourer will discuss this with you and work with you to mitigate any risk
- e) On some firearms spent cases being ejected can be very hot. Touching or being in the pathway of these ejecting cases must be avoided

## Safe Distances and offsets

- Using blank fire firearms can be lethal and very dangerous if not managed correctly.
- When a blank is fired there is a highly pressurised and contained directional gas that rapidly expands from the muzzle.
- These expanding gases vary between each firearm and type of blank but each require a minimum safe operating distance from other people, camera and other property
- In addition, we must consider noise, hot ejecting cases and in some platforms blow back from the action as the weapon cycles

# Using firearms on a production

## Common terms used (*an example of those commonly used*):

- a) **"Load Firearms"**: This or similar is called by the first Assistant Director. At this time the armourer, working with you will load the firearms in preparation for a take
- b) **"Firearms/guns are HOT/LOADED"**: This is announced by the armourer to the First Assistant Director and others. The First Assistant Director will announce this to all crew
- c) **"Guns are Clear"**: This is called by the armourer after inspecting the firearm with key cast and crew. It is further announced to all cast and crew by the First Assistant Director or Safety Officer
- d) **"blank ammunition has been confirmed"**: This is often announced by the safety officer after inspecting all ammunition to be used.
- e) **"Dummy rounds are loaded"**: this means the firearm has been confirmed by the cast, safety officer, first AD and armourer as being loaded with inert dummy rounds and that the firearm is safe for use.

# Assessment (Theory) – part 1

## (10 question assessment)

- Please complete the part 1 assessment available at:  
[Theatrical Armoury Services - Shawmac Industries Australia Pty Ltd](#)
- If you have further questions, send them to us at:
  - [Armoury-induction@shawmacindustries.com.au](mailto:Armoury-induction@shawmacindustries.com.au)

## What to expect in part 2 (practical)

- Identifying blank ammunition
- Common commands and what they mean
- Safe distances
- Weapon familiarisation (*key operational components*)
- General handling skills (*holding, pointing, moving with the weapon and more*)
- Managing malfunctions
- Firing blanks (stationary)
- Firing blanks (*in mock context of the production, e.g. moving individually or with others, laying down, etc*)