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Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)  
Department of Peace Operations (DPO)  
Department of Operational Support (DOS)  
Department of Safety and Security (DSS)  
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## Standard Operating Procedures

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## Loss of Weapons and Ammunition in Peace Operations

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**DPPA/DPO/DOS/DSS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES ON  
LOSS OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION  
IN PEACE OPERATIONS**

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**A. PURPOSE**

1. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) set out measures for preventing and addressing the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition in United Nations (UN) peace operations and special political missions (SPMs) in the field.
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**B. SCOPE**

2. The provisions of Weapons and Ammunition Management (WAM) Policy (2019) apply (Refer to G. References 1).
3. In accordance with the WAM Policy, this SOP shall apply to all UN civilian and uniformed personnel serving in UN peace operations, both in UN Headquarters (UNHQ) and in field operations, and to Troop and Police Contributing Countries. (T/PCCs). The SOP deals with:
  - a) Weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition owned by T/PCCs, i.e., Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE);
  - b) Weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition owned by the UN (UNOE); and
  - c) Weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition that have been seized/recovered and or captured by the force or other mission entity.
4. 'Loss' is defined as the unauthorized change in possession - either physical, administrative or otherwise - of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition from the legal custody of an entity. In peace operations' context this means the unauthorized movement from a T/PCC and UN field inventory. Examples of loss, but not limited to, are: theft, seizure following ambushes and attacks, disappearance during accidents, in waters, negligence and unauthorized sales.

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5. This SOP deals with the prevention of loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition and addresses loss, including the recovery, reporting and lessons learned during the period as defined in the WAM Policy.

#### **C. RATIONALE**

6. Any loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition may result in severe operational, safety, security, financial and reputational consequences for the UN, regional, international organizations, the local population, while long term consequences can be materialized in neighboring countries as well. In this light it is vital that clear, unambiguous and rigorous procedures are available to prevent and, if required, address the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition.

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#### **D. PROCEDURES**

7. Every effort shall be made to avoid the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition both from camps/bases, and during operations outside these facilities. To that end, in accordance with WAM Policy, missions with weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition shall develop specific, tailored SOPs on the prevention and loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, based on the standards as described in the WAM Policy, which is based on the Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC) and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG), amongst other standards.
8. The following procedures detail the actions to be taken by responsible units in the field and at UNHQ to prevent and address a possible loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition.

##### **D.1 Prevention**

###### **Operations outside camps/bases.**

9. To prevent loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition during operations, UN and T/PCC national policies that meet or exceed UN standards on safety, security and force protection, shall be implemented. Countering threats, such as ambushes and attacks, to protect life and equipment, including weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, shall be integrated in pre-deployment training according to the United Nations Military Manual (Refer to G. References, 12) and the Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping for police contingents.
10. Military and police contingents shall ensure that the relevant data on weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition (refer to para 13) are available at the various unit headquarters and in the unit that is conducting operations outside bases/camps.
11. Operations may include overnight stay outside established camps/bases. Based on risk assessments, commanders shall take the most suitable measures to prevent loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition.

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### Stockpile Management

12. Effective weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition stockpile management and loss detection are vital. Missions, including their components, shall comply with the weapons standards laid down in MOSAIC, 05.20. An inspection on the number of the weapons shall be carried out on arrival and T/PCC shall provide a certificate of inspection. For ammunition, the Manual on Ammunition Management, applies.
13. Military and police contingents shall be responsible for maintaining records of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition and at any given time shall have the information available about the physical location of each weapon, weapons-related equipment and ammunition. While national templates may be used, the UN weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition registry will contain, at the minimum, the following data:

#### Weapons;

- Type: Pistol, rifle, shotgun, Heavy Machine Gun etc.
- Make: Glock, AK-47 etc;
- Caliber: 5.62, 9mm etc;
- Serial number;
- Number of each type;
- Location;
- Name of the user;
- Purpose of Issuing Weapon;
- Date and time of issue.

#### Ammunition:

- Associated Ammunition Category;
- Type;
- Calibre;
- LOT and batch number;
- Number of each type;
- Location;
- Purpose of Issuing Ammunition;
- Date and time of issue.

14. The weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition registry can be in the national language and copies in the mission language shall be available.
15. Before handing over, according to mission mandates and plans, seized weapons and ammunition (for instance from armed groups or because of an arms embargo) are often temporarily stored under the mission's responsibility. For this lethal material the stockpile management, as described in the WAM Policy, and this SOP shall be applicable.
16. Management of weapons and ammunition seized/recovered and or captured by the force or other mission entity shall be carried out in accordance with the WAM Policy. The mission shall be responsible for the temporary storage and shall develop a well-managed system to prevent theft/loss of such weapons and ammunition. Mission-specific SOPs shall provide the

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procedures on handing over seized/recovered weapons and ammunition to the host government depending on the mission scenario.

### **Reporting**

17. Missions shall verify and report on weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition according to the Contingent Owned Equipment (COE) Manual. In addition, at a minimum, military and police components shall count weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition at least weekly.
18. Every month military and police contingents shall report to the Head of the Military Component (HOMC) and Head of the Police Component (HOPC) respectively the status of their weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition. The report should read: 'in mm/yy (month/year):
  - no weapons and ammunition were lost; or
  - the following weapons and ammunition were lost, as reported on dd/mm/yy (date/month/year)' in Code Cable number XX and, if available, Board of Inquiry Report number XX, dated dd/mm/yy;
  - no weapons and ammunition were retrieved; or
  - the following lost weapons and ammunition were retrieved.
19. HOMC/HOPCs shall include the consolidated weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition status of the military and police components in their quarterly report to the Military Adviser for Peace Operations and the Police Adviser and Director of the Police Division, as appropriate, at United Nations Headquarters.

### **D.2. Loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition**

#### **Field Missions**

20. In case of loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, missions shall immediately investigate the incident according to the SOP on Boards of Inquiry (Refer to G. References, 15). The investigation report shall include, at a minimum, the data listed in para 13 above. When possible, misconduct is identified in connection with the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, including gross negligence in the handling of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, the matter shall also be referred for assessment and possible investigation in accordance with procedures for handling allegations of misconduct for the particular category of UN personnel involved.
21. After detection of the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, missions shall, without delay, commence the action to retrieve the lost weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition. All viable options, within the mandate and considering

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the Rules of Engagement, should be considered including the use of force. Host nation authorities shall be informed and consulted.

22. Missions shall report a loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, as defined in para 4, to the mission's Joint Operations Centre (JOC) or equivalent integrating entity with mission-wide reporting and alerting responsibilities. If circumstances require, the JOC will also inform the United Nations Headquarters' Operations and Crisis Center (UNOCC) in accordance with the DPO-DOS Standard Operating Procedures on Integrated Reporting from DPO-led Field Missions to UNHQ (Refer to G. Reference 11). In case the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition is part of a larger incident with casualties and/or fatalities, the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition report shall be provided to the mission JOC as a priority, to be communicated either via a Flash Report or for inclusion in daily integrated reporting, as prepared and provided by the mission JOC. The loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition report shall include all details listed in para 13.
23. In circumstances where the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, whether in circumstances with or without casualties and/or fatalities, results in a noteworthy change in the operational situation, or has immediate or potential impact on the mission's operations, the mission JOC shall be informed immediately, with a view to issuing a Flash Report to the UNOCC containing the following information:
  - Date and time of incident;
  - Incident location;
  - Type of incident;
  - Circumstances;
  - Description of incident; and
  - Actions taken to retrieve weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition.
24. As soon as more detailed information on the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition is available, the data shall be uploaded in the online registration tool: [http://bit.ly/LWA\\_Survey](http://bit.ly/LWA_Survey).
25. The data regarding the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, including retrieval, shall be approved by the Mission Chief of Staff or an equivalent senior official. Missions shall appoint a staff member in the mission headquarters to upload and submit the data to UNHQ.
26. After successful retrieval of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition, Missions should consider outreaching to the local population and media.
27. Each loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition incident shall be evaluated according to the Policy on Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Learning (Refer to G. Reference 14).
28. Failing to report or underreport a loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition may amount to misconduct, which would be dealt with in accordance with applicable procedure and may result in repatriation on disciplinary grounds of commander(s)

and other responsible uniformed personnel, or other appropriate measures in the case of civilian staff.

### UNHQ

29. The Office of Military Affairs and the Police Division will inform the Permanent Missions to the United Nations as soon as possible by code cable about the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition in military and police contingents respectively.
30. In October of each year, the Office of Military Affairs shall draft a report on the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition during the previous year, which will be submitted through the chain of command to the Secretary-General.

### **E. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### UN-wide system

31. All personnel involved in weapons and ammunition-related activities at UNHQ and in DPPA/DPO/DOS-supported missions are individually responsible for adhering to the roles and responsibilities established in this SOP.

#### T/PCCs

32. T/PCCs are responsible for following their national weapons and ammunition policies and implementing this SOP considering these shall meet or exceed the requirements included in this SOP.

#### Mission-level

33. **The Head of Mission** shall be accountable to the Under-Secretary-General (USG) DPO or USG DOS and to USG DPPA and to USG DSS, and shall be responsible for the implementation of this SOP.
34. **The Force Commander (Head of Mission Military Component)** shall execute oversight regarding the implementation of this SOP in military contingents and shall report on a quarterly basis the status of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition according to para 18 of this SOP.
35. **The Police Commissioner (Head of Police Component)** shall execute oversight regarding the implementation of this SOP in police contingents and shall report on a quarterly basis the status of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition according to para 18 of this SOP.
36. **Director/Chief of Mission Support** shall be responsible and accountable to the Head of Mission for ensuring that the implementation of this SOP is facilitated, duly supported logistically and as otherwise required.

37. **Principal/Chief Security Adviser** shall execute oversight regarding the implementation of this SOP regarding DSS security officers.
38. **Weapons and Ammunition Advisory Board (WAAB)** shall be responsible for providing advice on all aspects related to the implementation of this SOP, including drafting and distributing of Lessons Learned after incidents regarding the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition. Details of the roles and responsibilities of the WAAB are in the Manual on Ammunition Management (G. Reference 9).

#### At UN Headquarters

39. **USG DPO, USG DOS (for DPO/DOS Missions) and USG DPPA (for political missions)** shall exercise overall oversight regarding the implementation of this SOP, with exception of DSS security officers.
40. **USG DSS** shall exercise overall oversight regarding the implementation of this SOP regarding Integrated Security Workforce (ISW).
41. **The Military Adviser for Peace Operations (Office of Military Affairs)** shall be responsible for keeping this SOP updated, managing the online reporting tool, and draft an annual report on the loss of weapons, weapons-related equipment and ammunition in close coordination with UNPOL.

#### F. Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this SOP, the following terms and definitions shall apply:

42. **United Nations personnel:** This includes UN civilian staff in both headquarters and the field and persons engaged or deployed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as members of the military and police components of a United Nations peace operation. This also includes officials and experts on mission present in an official capacity in a field operation and persons made available by participating states to serve in a field operation but does not include contractors who are persons engaged by the UN, including juridical as well as natural persons and their employees and subcontractors, to perform services and/or supply equipment, provisions, supplies, materials and other goods in support of the field operation.
43. **Personal weapons:** Are part of the personal equipment according to the COE Manual (G. Reference 16), Annex A. Weapons include, but are not limited to: handguns, (revolvers, pistols, etc.) and long barrel weapons whether automatic, semi-automatic or single shot (rifles, shotguns, etc.).
44. **Heavy weapons:** Weapons as included in the COE Manual under Major Equipment.
45. **Small arms** (according to MOSAIC): Any single-man-portable lethal weapon designed for individual use that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive. Includes, inter alia, revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, submachine

guns, assault rifles and light machine guns, as well as their parts, components and ammunition.

46. **Light weapons** (according to MOSAIC): Any man-portable lethal weapon designed for use by two or three persons serving as a crew (although some may be carried and used by a single person) that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive. Includes, inter alia, heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of a caliber of less than 100 mm, as well as their parts, components and ammunition.
47. **Weapons-related equipment:** specific weapon-system-related equipment and/or parts which are directly related to a [the] weapon system and may not necessarily have a lethal capacity as a stand-alone item however does still constitute a critical or vital part of a weapon system (including but not limited to: magazines; ammunition belts; optics; aiming devices; guidance system components; platforms; mounts; pods; spare parts; electrical and/or mechanical devices or parts).
48. **Ammunition** (according to IATG): a complete device, (e.g. missile, shell, mine, demolition store etc.) charged with explosives, propellants, pyrotechnics, initiating composition or nuclear, biological or chemical material for use in connection with offence, or defense, or training, or non-operational purposes, including those parts of weapons systems containing explosives. The complete round or its components, including cartridge cases, primers, propellant powder, bullets or projectiles, that are used in small arms or light weapons.  
**Includes:**
- cartridges (rounds) for personal and heavy weapons;
  - explosive shells, grenades and missiles for heavy weapons; and
  - mobile containers with missiles or shells for anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems.
49. **Shall:** indicates a requirement. It is used to indicate requirements strictly to be followed.
50. **Should:** indicates a recommendation. It is used to indicate that, among several possibilities, one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required, or that (in the negative form, "should not") a certain possibility or course of action is deprecated but not prohibited.
51. **May:** indicates permission. It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
52. **Can:** indicates possibility and capability. It is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or causal.

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**G. REFERENCES****Normative or superior references**

- 1) DPPA/DPO/DOS/DSS Weapon and Ammunition Management Policy (2019);
- 2) International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG. 2015);
- 3) Modular Small-arms-control Implementation Compendium (MOSAIC);
- 4) SOFAs/SOMAs;
- 5) ROEs;
- 6) Directives on Use of Force;
- 7) Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping

**Related procedures or guidelines**

- 8) UNDSS Manual of Instruction on Use of Force Equipment Including Firearms Security Policy Manual (DSS, 15 February 2018);
- 9) Manual on Ammunition Management (under development);
- 10) Manual on Policies and Procedures concerning the Reimbursement and Control of Contingent-Owned Equipment of Troop/Police Contributors Participating in Peacekeeping Missions (2017);
- 11) DPO/DOS SOP on Integrated Reporting from DPO-Led Field Missions to UNHQ (Ref. 2012.01);
- 12) United Nations Military Manual (under development);
- 13) Effective Weapons and Ammunition Management in a Changing Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Context (2018);
- 14) Policy on Knowledge Sharing and Organizational Learning (2015);
- 15) DPO/DOS SOP on Board of Inquiry (2016.12).
- 16) COE Manual (2011).

**H. Monitoring and Compliance**

53. On behalf of USG DPPA, USG DPO, USG DOS, USG DSS, the Office of Peacekeeping Strategic Partnership will monitor compliance with this SOP.
54. The Office of Military Affairs, in close cooperation with the Police Division, and the other relevant entities in DOS, DPPA, DPO and DSS will monitor the implementation of this SOP and will propose amendments if and when required.

**I. Contact**

55. DPO/Office of Military Affairs/Policy and Doctrine Team.

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**J. HISTORY**

56. This the first version of the SOP on Loss of Weapons and Ammunition.

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