DAVID GEFFEN SCHOOL OF DRAMA AT YALE AND YALE REPERTORY THEATRE WEAPONS POLICY

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David Geffen School of Drama at Yale and Yale Repertory Theatre Weapons Policy Summary

Firearms including blank firing weapons and edged weapons are potentially hazardous and are capable of inflicting severe and potentially lethal injury.

The key safety issues surrounding 'firearms' covered in this guidance note include:-

- Storage, transportation and handover of firearms
- Use of firearms during rehearsal and performance
- The security of weapons

If you request, handle, store or use a weapon you are responsible for making sure you know exactly what that entails, and for asking for help when you do not know.

Who is covered?

The weapons policy covers all faculty, staff, students, technical interns, visiting artists and anyone who may request the use of a weapon.

Rules

DGSD/YRT weapons will not be used, loaned or rented to any non-DGSD/YRT group or production.

All weapons used in DGSD/YRT programs and productions must be owned by DGSD/YRT, or rented and/or obtained by DGSD/YRT staff; **no personal weapons may be used or brought on-site**.

Any firearm used at DGSD/YRT will be non-firing or blank-firing only. Firearms capable of firing live rounds are not allowed. (NOTE-Shotguns are currently the only exception to this.) Firearms capable of firing a projectile, such as a pellet or dart, shall not be used.

Definitions

Weapons, as used in this policy, encompass the following: Firearms (hand guns and rifles, including blank-firing, non-firing, facsimile, rubber, toy), edged weapons (such as knives, swords, spears, and daggers), bow and arrows, cross bows. Also could include clubs, axes, pitch forks, and other stage props that might be used in stage combat.

Powder, or Gun-powder—Any of the several types of explosive powder used to propel bullets or projectiles from firearms.

Live Shell or Round--Ammunition for use in a firearm that contains powder, a primer and a lead or metal bullet or projectile.

Blank Shell or Round—As above, but where the bullet or projectile has been replaced with paper wadding, or the open end is crimped, to contain the powder.

Primer-only Shell or Round—As above, but where there is neither a bullet or projectile, nor any powder or wadding. The sound and discharge, if any, of such a Shell results from only the activation of the shell's primer.

Spent Shell—Either a live, blank or primer-only shell that has had the primer activated, the powder consumed and/or the bullet or wadding expelled. Usually, the projectile end of a Spent Shell will appear empty, and the primer end will be dimpled, either at the center or on the edge of the rim.

Dummy Shell—Prop or substitute shell that is made to look like a Live Shell with a bullet or projectile. There is no actual primer. In place of the powder, metal shot is often loosely placed in the cartridge causing it to rattle in order to distinguish a Dummy Shell from a Live Shell.

Live-Firing Firearm—A firearm capable of receiving and firing a Live Shell.

Blank-Firing Firearm—A firearm that has been manufactured or altered to only receive and/or fire a Blank or Primer-only Shell.

Stage, Prop, Reproduction or Facsimile Firearm—A non-firing "firearm" that can neither receive nor fire any type of Live Shell or Blank Shell.

Caliber—The diameter of the bore of a firearm, usually in hundredths (100ths) of an inch and expressed in terms of a decimal fraction. For example, .22 caliber or .45 caliber.

Weapons Supervisor—The DGSD/YRT staff person who is responsible for the oversight of the stage weapons in storage, and for their inspection, maintenance and cleaning outside of production use.

Weapons Requestor—The DGSD/YRT person (student, faculty or staff) who initiates the stage weapons request process and fills out and submits the Stage Weapons Request form to the Weapons Supervisor.

Weapons Handler—The DGSD/YRT person (student, faculty or staff) designated to receive the stage weapons and who manages their use, care and maintenance during rehearsals and performances. The weapons handler is also responsible for training, or for arranging training, for the actors who will use or interact with the stage weapons in the production.

Storage

Weapons are normally stored in a secure area at 149 York St.

Weapons used in rehearsal will be stored in their transport case or other appropriate case, which will be secured in a locked cabinet and/or in a locked room when not in use.

Secure spaces for our various rehearsal rooms or buildings are:

305 Crown—Closets in the rear hallway on the 1st floor; and/or room 011 in the basement

149 York—rehearsal storage cabinets in rooms 107, 109 and 221

217 Park—in either secure gun cabinet assigned to the Studio or to the Cabaret

1156 Chapel—to be determined when used for rehearsal: typically in the venue's gun cabinet

Weapons used in technical rehearsals and performances will be stored in their transport cases, and in a secure properties lock-up or a gun cabinet. Gun cabinets are located in the Rep, UT, Iseman, Cabaret and Studio theaters. Keys to these gun cabinets will be signed out along with the weapons and their transport cases for productions to be performed in these venues.

Requests

Use of a weapon during a rehearsal or performance must be approved in advance. A Weapons Use Request Form for the use of weapons in any YSD/YRT production or project must be submitted to the following people as noted below for their review, approval and signature.

Rep Productions--James Mountcastle

DGSD's, FP, SRP's, SP's, NPL's, SPR, and 3rd Year Acting Projects—Narda E. Alcorn

Drama 50's (non-firing only)--C. Nikki Mills

Yale Cabaret and Yale Summer Cabaret Productions (non-firing only)—James Mountcastle

Class Use (non-firing)—Anna Glover

What do I need to do to request a weapon?

The DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor will be DGSD Prop Supervisor, Jen McClure, who will oversee the maintenance, care, cleaning and repair of all DGSD/YRT weapons outside of production use. (Weapons in production use that need repair beyond routine maintenance should be brought to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor for such repair.) The Weapons Requester will schedule appointments to sign-out weapons. Jen McClure will coordinate this process, provide final approval for sign-out, and review the DGSD/YRT use, care, maintenance and documentation procedures with the person who is signing for the weapon.

Procedure

The selection, approval and sign-out process for weapons should proceed as follows:

- The director, designer and stage manager meet to discuss the production's requirements for stage weapons, and to develop a preliminary list of weapons and their anticipated use. The DGSD/YRT fight directors, Mike Rossmy and Kelsey Rainwater, are consulted as needed for advice and guidance on the selection and use of weapons in the production.

- The director, designer and stage manager review the DGSD/YRT Weapons Inventory that is on-line on the G-Drive at: YSDPub/Productions/Departments/Props/Weapons Inventory
- From the Weapons Inventory, a preliminary list of weapons is developed. This list is sent to Jen McClure via an email for review.
- A meeting is scheduled with the designer, the stage manager and Jen McClure to review the proposed weapons, their anticipated use in the production and the schedule for their use.
- Once the list of available and appropriate weapons is defined for the production, the Weapons Use Request Form is filled out, and sent for approval signature as noted above. A copy of the signed approval form is to be left with the authorized approver.
- The Weapons Requestor then meets with Jen McClure to sign-out and obtain the weapons, their transport cases and to receive appropriate training. The approved Weapons Request form is left with the Weapons Supervisor.
- A new Weapons Request Form must be submitted and approved if changes to the types or number of weapons is required once the weapons are issued.

The Weapons Requester is expected to follow all weapons procedures included in this policy. The Weapons Requester is responsible for returning the weapons to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor as soon as possible after the strike of the production. The Weapons Supervisor must be contacted if a delay in returning the weapons is anticipated.

The Weapons Handler is responsible for the use, care and maintenance of weapon(s) once the weapons' responsibility is transferred from the Weapons Requester. For productions that have a Fight Director or a Fight Captain assigned, that person will advise the Weapons Handler on the use, care and maintenance of the weapon(s).

Duties of the Weapons Requester and the Weapons Handler are noted below for various types of YSD/YRT productions:

A. Rep Productions--The Stage Manager (Weapons Requester) obtains the weapon, and receives the appropriate training on its use, care and maintenance prior to its initial use. Once the production moves into the performance space, the Stage Manager will relinquish this responsibility to the Props Runner (Billy Ordynowicz), who then is fully responsible as the Weapons Handler for the use, care and maintenance of the

weapon, and who will return the weapon to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor after the run of the show.

B. DGSD Series Productions: (DGSD1,2,3, DGSD4(R, B, &G)) --- The Stage Manager (Weapons Requester) obtains the weapon, and receives the appropriate training on its use, care and maintenance prior to its initial use. Once the production moves into the performance space, the Stage Manager will transfer this responsibility to the show's Assistant Stage Manager (Weapons Handler), who then is fully responsible for the use, care and maintenance of the weapon. The Assistant Stage Manager will return the weapon to the Stage Manager at strike, who will return the weapon to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor.

C. FP, SRP's, SP's, NPL's, SPR1, and 3rd Year Acting Projects— The Stage Manager (Weapons Requester) obtains the weapon, and receives the appropriate training on its use, care and maintenance prior to its initial use. Once the production moves into the performance space, the Stage Manager will designate and transfer this responsibility to a backstage crew person (Weapons Handler) The Weapons Handler is then responsible for the use, care and maintenance of the weapon, and for returning the weapon to the Stage Manager, who will return the weapons to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor.

D. Drama 50's-- The Weapons Requester and the Weapons Handler is typically the same person, who will be determined by the Associate Head of Production. This person is responsible for obtaining the weapon, and for its use, care and maintenance, and for returning the weapon to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor.

E. Cabaret and Summer Cabaret--The Cabaret or Summer Cabaret Production Manager designates a Weapons Requester or a Weapons Handler who obtains the weapon and receives the appropriate training in its use, care and maintenance prior to its initial use. Weapons will be issued for Cabaret or Summer Cabaret productions no earlier than 3-day before the 1st performance. [NOTE-This procedure needs to be confirmed by the Cabaret staff.]

F. Class Use—The Weapons Requester and the Weapons Handler will be determined by the Director of Theater Safety. This person is responsible for obtaining the weapon, and for its use, care and maintenance, and for returning the weapon to the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor. Weapons for class use will be issued and returned on the day of the class use.

Transportation

External: Building-to-Building

Yale Police can provide a secure escort for building-to-building transport of stage weapons. Call Gregory Catania, Yale Police Department Communications Coordinator, at 203-432-4427 (203-915-3558 cell), at least 24 hours in advance to schedule this escort. Weapons must be transported in a locked or secure case, and secured at each DGSD/YRT location as noted above.

Internal: Within a DGSD/YRT Building

Unless on-stage, or obviously part of the performance, all stage weapons must be kept out of the view of audience, or other non-production staff, cast or crew. To achieve this, weapons that are to be transported within a building must be moved or carried in a case, or other container specifically designed and designated for the purpose of such transport. The plan for internal transport if expected must be included in the transport notification noted below.

Notification of transportation and Firing of Weapons

At least 24-hours in advance of each weapons transport, the Weapons Requester, as noted above, will notify via email Gregory Catania, Yale Police Department Communications Coordinator (gregory.catania@yale.edu), Anna Glover (anna.glover@yale.edu), Narda E. Alcorn (narda.alcon@yale.edu), James Mountcastle (james.mountcastle@yale.edu), and Jon Reed (jonathan.reed@yale.edu), with information about the planned weapons transportation, including who will be doing the transport, how, from where and to where, and the date and approximate time of the transport.

Yale Police and others must be notified of all intended firing of weapons. At least 24-hours in advance of each weapons firing, the Weapons Requester as noted above will notify via email Gregory Catania, Yale Place Department Communications Coordinator

(gregory.catania@yale.edu), Anna Glover (anna.glover@yale.edu), Narda E. Alcorn (narda.alcon@yale.edu) , James Mountcastle (james.mountcastle@yale.edu), and Jon Reed (jonathan.reed@yale.edu). The following information must be included in this notification: times and dates of use, types of weapons to be used, names of Stage Manager and others who will be responsible for the use, care and maintenance of the weapons.

Depending on the location of their intended use, other building occupants must be notified of the planned use and firing of weapons. For instance, for weapons use in the Iseman Theater, the notification emails above will be forwarded to the staff of the School of Art by Anna Glover.

Training

TD&P and Stage Management students will receive weapons' training that includes a review of DGSD/YRT weapons policies, the use, care and maintenance of weapons, and the firing of weapons in a controlled setting. The Rep Stage Carpenter and the Rep Props Runner should also receive this training. The Props Supervisor and the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor should receive this training, and more extensive training in the inspection and repair of weapons. The Props Supervisor and the Weapons Supervisor will review policies and procedures with the Weapons Requester when weapons are signed out.

The Weapons Requester who is signing out the firearm will be trained by the Props Supervisor or the DGSD/YRT Weapons Supervisor in the weapon's safe use, loading, firing, cleaning and care. (The firearm will be test fired as part of this training, so notification described above is required.) A cleaning kit and a locked storage/transport case will be issued in addition to the weapon(s). Any additional security procedures will be discussed.

The training will also include a discussion of sound levels related to firearm types and load sizes so that appropriate firearms and blank loads are issued. Eye and hearing protection should be used during any test firing. (Eye and ear protection equipment is available for purchase from the DGSD/YRT Inventory as necessary.)

Edged Stage Weapons and Piercing Props

Definitions

Edged Weapons and Piercing Props, include, but are not limited to the following: Knives, swords, rapiers, razors, darts, bows and arrows, axes, hatchets, saws, spears, crossbows and throwing stars.

Rules and Guidelines

In addition to the Rules and Procedures noted above for all stage weapons, the following apply to the use of edged weapons and piercing props used in DGSD/YRT classes, rehearsals and productions.

1. Weapons shall be strong enough and so constructed that they will not accidently break into dangerous pieces when used for their intended purpose.
2. Edged weapons designed and constructed as a facsimile decoration, reproduction, or costume prop, (i.e. not specifically designed and constructed for stage combat), shall not be used for stage combat.
3. Weapons used to strike other weapons, or other hard surfaces shall be of steel or high tensile aluminum.
4. Spring-tensioned knives or daggers, where the blade retracts into the handle, are prohibited.
5. Edges of weapons shall be dulled, and their points blunted.
6. Sharpened weapons may only be used when the appearance of cutting cannot otherwise be simulated.
7. Maintain all safety devices and guards, such as sheaths, until the weapon is about to be used.

Use and Care of Edged Weapons

The Weapons Handler is responsible for the care and maintenance of edged weapons and piercing props. This includes at least the following before and after each use:

1. Inspect the edges, points and handles of the weapons,
2. Check that dulled edges are being maintained, and that burrs and gouges have not been created by use and contact,

3. Inspect connections and fastenings; make sure that they are secure and have not been damaged from use. For swords, rapiers and the like, check the pommel and tang.

4. Take out of service any weapons found to be deficient, damaged or otherwise dangerous until repairs can be completed by a competent person.

Disposal of Stage Weapons

The inventory of YSD/YRT stage weapons will be inspected periodically and the condition of each stage weapon will be assessed. Any stage weapon determined to be valuable for use in production but in need of repair will be brought to a licensed gunsmith (for stage guns) or to a competent armorer (for edged weapons) for further assessment and repair if warranted. Any stage weapon determined to be un-necessary for use in production or is not repairable will be brought to the Yale Police Department for proper disposal. Contact Gregory Catania, Yale Police Department Communications Coordinator, at 203-432-4427 (203-915-3558 cell) to make arrangements.

Procedures and Best Practices for the Handling of Stage Weapons

Safe Storage

All weapons are to be locked up when not in use for supervised rehearsals, fight calls, and performances. This includes but is not limited to guns (including blank-firing, non-firing, rubber and toy), edged weapons, knives, swords, daggers, bow and arrows, cross bows, etc. Only the Props Runner (Weapons Handler) has access to these weapons while in safe storage.

Firearms

Blank Firing Weapons-Firearms

Blank Rounds or Shells are stored in a separate container from the firearms(s). A firearm is stored in a case which is then locked in a gun cabinet backstage.

Only the Props Runner and the actor who fires the firearm may handle it while in Production. The actor may only handle the weapon during supervised rehearsals, fight call, and performances.

Only the Props Runner may load a blank firing weapon while in Production. Only the necessary blanks to be used up during a supervised rehearsal fight call, and/or performance will be loaded into the weapon.

A blank firing weapon is only loaded prior to use. Once the weapon is loaded, it should remain with and on the Props Runner until it is handed off to the actor who fires it. The Props Runner will wear a holster or other appropriate device for this purpose as practicable. A loaded blank firing weapon should never be locked up.

The actor will hand-off the stage weapon directly to the Props Runner as soon as the actor leaves the performance area. When such a hand-off from or to the Props Runner is not feasible, an alternate crew person may be designated to hand off or receive the weapon from the actor and then transfer the weapon to the Props Runner.

When handing an unloaded firearm to an actor, the Props Runner will do the following procedure. First, make eye contact with the actor, say that the "weapon is unloaded", and hand the firearm grip first with the muzzle pointing down to the actor. Once the actor responds with a "Thank you", release the firearm, and have the actor check that the weapon is indeed unloaded.

When handing off a loaded firearm to an actor, first make eye contact, say that the "weapon is loaded". Hand the weapon grip first with the muzzle pointing down to the actor. Once the actor responds with a "Thank you", release the weapon.

Check the weapon before every fight call and after every fight call. After every performance check and clean the weapon.

Keep a Gun Log for blank firing weapons noting when the gun was loaded, how many rounds were loaded, how many rounds were fired, when the gun was cleaned, and when it is checked in. Also notate on the gun log if there were any problems or special situations with the gun that performance, i.e. a misfire. This helps the Props Department track the performance and maintenance of a weapon.

Soak spent shells in water for 24 hours and then keep the spent shells in separate envelopes or zip-top baggies marked with the date in case a problem should arise and we need to check the ammo. Once the show closes the ammo is disposed of, or recycled.

When A Weapon is Preset On-stage

Examples include a gun was on a flown piece of scenery that no one could access without flying it in like in *Owners*, 2013.

Questions for the production team: How is it going to be preset on the stage? Is there a time to do a switch of the gun for a loaded one?

If the gun is not able to be swapped out, do a check in with the actor right before the house is opened, set the gun on the set, and then open house. Everyone in the production (House Manager, crew, and acting company) needs to be aware that there is a loaded gun onstage during the half hour and the show. Ideally, once the house is open a crew member should be assigned to keep the weapon in their line of sight until the show begins. During the tech process, whoever is in charge of the care of the gun will have to be vigilant about retrieving it during breaks and either locking it up UNLOADED or wearing it. Everyone needs to be made aware that it is not a toy and that the only two people allowed to touch it are the handler and the actor.

Back-up Plan

The production team should develop and document a back-up plan in case a problem should arise with a weapon, whether it be a sword breaking or a firing weapon having a mechanical failure. The backup plan is usually coordinated among the Fight Choreographer, Stage Management, and the Props Department. In the case of blank firing firearms, the back-up plan should include consideration for a sound cue.

Understudy Rehearsals

The Props Runner will acquire a rubber or resin gun for use for understudy rehearsal. The stand-in gun will be locked in a case and the case will then either be locked in James Mountcastle's office at the Rep or Jen McClure's office at the UT for use during understudy rehearsals. Arrangements can be made on a per show basis to fit the needs of the production and rehearsal.