



Weapons and Prop Weapons Policy

1. Statement of Policy and Commitment to Safety

Olathe Civic Theatre Association (OCTA) is committed to maintaining a safe working environment consistent with nationally recognized theatrical safety standards, including guidance from the United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) and Actors' Equity Association (AEA).

The presence of weapons or weapon-like props introduces inherent risk. OCTA requires that all productions prioritize the health and safety of artists, technicians, volunteers, and audiences above all artistic considerations.

No theatrical effect justifies unsafe practices.

2. Definitions

2.1 Real Weapons

Real weapons are devices manufactured to cause physical harm. These include, but are not limited to:

- Firearms of any type (pistols, rifles, shotguns, antique or modern)
- Knives, daggers, swords, martial arts weapons, and bladed implements
- Bows, arrows, crossbows, and projectile-launching devices

2.2 Disabled or Deactivated Weapons

Disabled or deactivated weapons are devices originally manufactured to fire a projectile that have been modified to be inoperable.

2.3 Prop Weapons

Prop weapons are objects manufactured or adapted to simulate weapons for theatrical purposes without the intended capacity to cause harm. These include rubber, plastic, foam, or otherwise stage-safe replicas, as well as ordinary objects used in staged violence (e.g., pencils, lamps, rolling pins).

3. Prohibited Items

The following items are **strictly prohibited** at all OCTA facilities, rehearsals, performances, and related activities:

- Real weapons of any kind

- Disabled or deactivated firearms
- Live ammunition, blanks, or any firing mechanism
- Airsoft, paintball, BB devices, or projectiles
- Cap guns, flash devices, or pyrotechnic weapons

No exceptions will be granted.

4. Approved Use of Prop Weapons

4.1 General Principle

All prop weapons shall be treated with the same respect and discipline as real weapons. All participants must assume prop weapons are capable of causing injury.

4.2 Designated Responsible Person

Each production using prop weapons must designate a **Prop Weapon Supervisor** (typically the Stage Manager or Props Master). Responsibilities include:

- Control, distribution, and collection of prop weapons
 - Secure storage and transport
 - Inspection and maintenance
 - Ensuring compliance with this policy
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5. Storage, Transport, and Security

- Prop weapons must be stored in a locked container or secure cabinet when not in use.
 - Prop weapons must never be left unattended backstage, on prop tables, or in public areas.
 - During transport, prop weapons must be concealed in a locked container within a bag or case.
 - Only authorized personnel may access stored prop weapons.
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6. Inspection and Maintenance

- Prop weapons must be inspected before and after every rehearsal and performance.
 - Damaged or malfunctioning props must be immediately removed from service.
 - Maintenance shall follow manufacturer or supplier recommendations.
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7. Rehearsal and Performance Protocols

7.1 Safety Briefings

A safety orientation must be conducted prior to any rehearsal or performance involving prop weapons. All cast and crew must be informed of:

- The presence and nature of prop weapons
- Who will handle them
- How they will be used in staging

7.2 Fight Direction and Choreography

- All staged violence involving prop weapons must be choreographed.
- OCTA strongly recommends the use of a qualified fight director or individual trained in stage combat techniques.
- A **fight call** must be conducted before each performance involving staged combat.

7.3 Chain of Custody

- Prop weapons may only be issued to performers by the Prop Weapon Supervisor.
 - Performers must immediately return prop weapons after use.
 - Prop weapons must not be preset or left unsecured between scenes.
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8. Staging and Use Guidelines

Consistent with AEA and USITT safety practices:

- Never point a prop weapon directly at any person or at the audience.
 - Always aim “off-line” (upstage or downstage of the target).
 - Never aim at the face, head, or torso of a performer.
 - Avoid repetitive dropping, throwing, or striking with prop weapons.
 - Disarmed weapons must not create trip hazards or move toward the audience.
 - Horseplay or unauthorized handling is strictly prohibited.
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9. Participant Responsibilities

All participants must:

- Remain alert, rested, and prepared for rehearsals and performances
- Report unsafe conditions or behaviors immediately
- Follow all directions from the Stage Manager, Director, and Prop Weapon Supervisor

- Exercise professional judgment and stop any action that feels unsafe

Safety concerns shall not result in retaliation.

10. Enforcement and Disciplinary Action

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Immediate removal of the prop weapon
 - Removal from the production
 - Disciplinary action as determined by OCTA leadership
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11. Hierarchy of Authority

To ensure clear decision-making and consistent safety enforcement, OCTA recognizes the following hierarchy of authority regarding prop weapons and staged violence:

1. Board of Directors
2. Production Manager
3. Stage Manager
4. Director
5. Prop Weapon Supervisor / Props Master
6. Fight Director / Choreographer (if engaged)
7. Cast and Crew Members

All participants must follow instructions issued by the Stage Manager or designated safety authority. If conflicting instructions arise, the Hierarchy of Authority prevails.

12. Stop-Work (Hold) Authority

Any participant who observes an unsafe condition or practice has the authority and responsibility to call **“Hold”** or otherwise stop the action immediately.

- No participant will be penalized, disciplined, or retaliated against for raising a safety concern.
- All safety concerns must be addressed before rehearsal or performance resumes.

Safety takes precedence over schedule, artistic intent, and production pressure.

13. Incident Reporting Procedure

All injuries, near misses, or unsafe incidents involving prop weapons must be reported to the Stage Manager and OCTA leadership as soon as possible.

Reports should include:

- Date, time, and location of the incident
 - Individuals involved
 - Description of the event and any injuries or hazards
 - Corrective actions taken
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14. Review and Compliance

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated to reflect evolving industry standards and best practices in theatrical safety.