

University Policy: Firearms, Weapons and Explosives

Policy Category: Safety and Risk Management

Subject: Managing the possession of firearms, explosives and weapons within the University campus, University controlled buildings, University vehicles and while conducting University business.

Responsible Executive: Chief Financial Officer, Vice President & Treasurer

Office Responsible for Review of the Policy: Campus Life; Finance and Treasurer [Human Resources, Public Safety; Risk Management]; Provost's Office; General Counsel

Related University Policies: Faculty Manual; Staff Personnel Policy Guide; Housing and Residence Life License Agreement; Campus Violence Prevention

Related Laws: Code of the District of Columbia; District of Columbia Municipal Regulations

I. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the American University community, including but not limited to faculty, staff, students, contractors, vendors, alumni, visitors and guests.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment for all members of the American University community. Except as expressly authorized within this policy the use, possession or storage of any firearms, explosives or other weapons, is expressly prohibited on the American University campus, grounds, facilities, University leased or controlled property, at University sponsored events, while conducting University business anywhere, or in any vehicle, owned, leased or controlled by the University. This prohibition exists whether or not a federal or state license to carry or possess the weapon has been issued to the possessor.

III. DEFINITIONS

Firearm- a firearm is defined as any device which is designed to fire a bullet, pellet, shot, flare, spear, or other projectile. This includes, but is not limited to, handguns, rifles, pistols, shotguns,

revolvers, cannons and firearms of any material made with 3D printers and similar reproductive technology, as well as the ammunition for these devices. The definition includes devices which are loaded or unloaded, and powered by any propellant, such as CO2. For example, paint ball weapons.

Weapon – a weapon is any device that is designed to or traditionally used as an instrument to inflict or threaten bodily harm or to damage or destroy University property or the property of others. Weapons include, but are not limited to, knives that are longer than 3 inches, firearms, bows and arrows, any item which could be reasonably construed as a weapon, such as imitations or replicas, or any other object legally controlled as a weapon.

Explosives – any chemical compound or mechanical mixture that contains oxidizing and combustible units, or other ingredients, in such proportion, quantities, or packing that an ignition by fire, friction, concussion, percussion or detonator, or any part of the compound or mixture, may cause a sudden generation of highly heated gases that results in gaseous pressures capable of producing destructive effects on contiguous objects or of destroying life or limb. This definition includes, but is not limited to, fireworks, toy cannons or toy guns in which explosive materials are used or other devices containing any combustible or explosive substance used to propel another object.

IV. POLICY

A. General

American University strives to comply with all relevant and applicable federal, state and local laws and ordinances. In relation to firearms, explosives or other weapons (hereafter referred to collectively as “weapons”) on the University’s campus, within University-controlled property, University facilities, while conducting University business anywhere or using University vehicles, all members of the University community, including faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors and visitors to the University, are strictly prohibited from possessing weapons on the premises of the university without the explicit, prior, written consent of the university.

Any weapon carried onto University property in violation of this policy may be confiscated. To the extent permitted by law and university policies and procedures, the American University Police department (AUPD) may conduct security searches for weapons. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary or other remedial action.

Many common objects and materials may be used or modified for use as a weapon. In deciding whether such an object or material is covered by this policy, the University will use reasoned judgment when considering among other factors, the time, place and circumstances surrounding the use and possession of the common object or tool, including the explanation for its possession or use and whether it has been modified or altered to make it more effective as a weapon.

B. Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy are:

1. Authorized law enforcement officers, military personnel and individuals who are in the business of transporting mail, money, securities or other valuables (such as armed guards), as well as licensed firearms dealers. This authorization is limited to periods when these individuals are acting in performance of their official duties and to the extent that they are legally permitted to possess weapons in the jurisdiction in which the University premises are located.
2. Weapons on display as objects of artistic, decorative, historical, or cultural value, provided that such weapons are secured so as to prevent access to the weapon or removal of the weapon by unauthorized persons, have been rendered inert and inoperable and prior approval for such display is obtained from the Assistant Vice President of University Police Services and Emergency Management.
3. University-recognized groups, activities or events where a weapon is required as part of the curriculum or activity, including dramatic performances, student clubs, and official military ceremonies. The weapons used must be inert replicas, working weapons rendered inert, or military ceremonial swords carried in conformance with applicable branch of service regulations. The weapons must be stored in a secure location, which has been inspected and approved by the AUPD. Prior to any such use in the curriculum or activity, approval by the Assistant Vice President of University Police Services and Emergency Management must be obtained at least one week before the scheduled activity.
4. Easily identifiable toys, such as brightly colored or clear water guns. Toy replicas designed to resemble real weapons are prohibited.

C. Reporting Requirements

Any member of the American University community who observes an unattended weapon or observes an individual in possession of a weapon, which is not connected to that individual's status as someone who is authorized to possess the weapon, should report this sighting to the American University Police Department immediately.

IV. VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY

Any member of the American University community, including but not limited to faculty, staff, students, contractors, vendors, alumni, visitors and guests, who violates the terms of this Policy will be subject to the applicable University disciplinary process for that violation. Consequently, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with relevant disciplinary procedures contained in the relevant handbooks, policies, procedures, practices, or contracts. In addition, because conduct which violates this policy may also be a crime, the University may refer any violation of this policy to law enforcement officials who may arrest and prosecute the violator.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective as of April 3, 2018.