

INTERNATIONAL AMMUNITION TECHNICAL GUIDELINES

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Bans and constraints

Warning

The International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) are subject to regular review and revision. This document is current with effect from the date shown on the cover page. To verify its status, users should consult www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition

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Foreword

Ageing, unstable and excess conventional ammunition stockpiles pose the dual risks of **accidental explosions at munition sites** and **diversion to illicit markets**.

The humanitarian impact of ammunition-storage-area explosions, particularly in populated areas, has resulted in death, injury, environmental damage, displacement and disruption of livelihoods in over 100 countries. Accidental ammunition warehouse detonations count among the heaviest explosions ever recorded.

Diversion from ammunition stockpiles has fuelled armed conflict, terrorism, organized crime and violence, and contributes to the manufacture of improvised explosive devices. Much of the ammunition circulating among armed non-State actors has been illicitly diverted from government forces.¹ In recognition of these dual threats of explosion and diversion, the General Assembly requested the United Nations to develop **guidelines for adequate ammunition management**.² Finalized in 2011, the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) provide voluntary, practical, modular guidance to support national authorities (and other stakeholders) in safely and securely managing conventional ammunition stockpiles. The UN SaferGuard Programme was simultaneously established as the corresponding knowledge-management platform to oversee and disseminate the IATG.

The IATG also ensure that the United Nations entities consistently deliver high-quality advice and support – from mine action to counter-terrorism, from child protection to disarmament, from crime reduction to development.

The IATG consist of 12 volumes that provide practical guidance for ‘through-life management’ approach to ammunition management. The IATG can be applied at the guidelines’ **basic, intermediate, or advanced levels**, making the IATG relevant for all situations by taking into account the diversity in capacities and resources available. Interested States and other stakeholders can **utilize the IATG for the development of national standards and standing operating procedures**.

The IATG are reviewed and updated at a minimum every five years, to reflect evolving ammunition stockpile-management norms and practices, and to incorporate changes due to changing international regulations and requirements. The review is undertaken by the UN SaferGuard Technical Review Board composed of national technical experts with the support of a corresponding Strategic Coordination Group comprised of expert organizations applying the IATG in practice.

The latest version of each IATG module can be found at www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition.

¹ S/2008/258.

² See also the urgent need to address poorly-maintained stockpiles as formulated by the United Nations Secretary-General in his Agenda for Disarmament, *Securing Our Common Future* (2018).

Introduction

Bans and constraints on the use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal of conventional ammunition are a fundamental component of a safe, effective and efficient ammunition management system. They are primarily issued by the conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation to control the issue and use of explosives and ammunition to make sure that the users receive ammunition that is: 1) safe to use; and 2) will perform within the agreed ballistic and performance envelopes. Constraints on the use of ammunition may also be used to protect ammunition stock levels during shortages of certain types of ammunition.

It is essential for the safety and morale of users that they receive ammunition that they have confidence in; a system of ammunition bans and constraints, instigated by the conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation, ensures this.

Bans and constraints

1 Scope

This IATG module introduces and explains the concept and use of bans and constraints on the use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal of ammunition as part of a safe, effective and efficient conventional ammunition management system.

2 Normative references

A list of normative references is given in Annex A. These documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

A further list of informative references is given in Annex B in the form of a bibliography, which lists documents that contain additional information related to the contents of this IATG module.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this module the following terms and definitions, as well as the more comprehensive list given in IATG 01.40 *Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations*, shall apply.

The term 'ban' refers to *a moratorium placed on the issue and use of ammunition, usually pending technical investigation.*

The term 'constraint' refers to *the imposition of a limitation or restriction in the use, transportation, carriage, issue, storage or inspection of a munition.*

In all modules of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, the words 'shall', 'should', 'may' and 'can' are used to express provisions in accordance with their usage in ISO standards.

- a) **'shall' indicates a requirement:** It is used to indicate requirements strictly to be followed in order to conform to the document and from which no deviation is permitted.
- b) **'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.
- c) **'may' indicates permission:** It is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document.
- d) **'can' indicates possibility and capability:** It is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical or casual.

4 Aim of a bans and constraints system

The aim of a formal system of bans and constraints, instigated by a conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation, should be to ensure:

- a) the safety of personnel during the use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal of conventional ammunition;
- b) the optimum use of the conventional ammunition stockpile, which is an expensive national asset; and

- c) the controlled issue and use of specific or generic conventional ammunition during times of shortages.

5 Content of a ban or constraint

Any ban or constraint on the use of specific or generic type of ammunition should contain the following information, which shall be disseminated to users as soon as possible:

- a) the type and calibre of ammunition;
- b) the specific lot, batch and/or serial number of the ammunition to which the ban or constraint applies; and
- c) full details of the ban or constraint, which may require:
 - i) a total cessation of use;
 - ii) a limitation which is necessary during use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal; or
 - iii) a limitation in use during training.

6 Bans (LEVEL 2)

6.1 Rationale for bans

A ban on the use of specific type of conventional ammunition (which may be at generic type, lot, batch and/or serial number level) should be imposed to prevent the issue or use of conventional ammunition under the following circumstances:

- a) when it is suspected of being the cause of an ammunition accident, irrespective of whether death or injury has been caused;
- b) when there have been excessive performance failures;
- c) when a defect, which could compromise safety, has been discovered; or
- d) when the ammunition is to be withdrawn at the end of its serviceable life.

6.2 Dissemination of bans

The organisation responsible for the overall conventional ammunition management system should ensure that an appropriate system is in place that can rapidly alert users to the imposition of an ammunition ban.

6.3 Action on notification of a ban

Users should take the following action when they receive notice of an ammunition ban from the conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation:

- a) mark the ammunition packaging or container with the following information:
 - i) 'NOT FOR ISSUE OR USE';
 - ii) the ban serial number; and
 - iii) any special instructions received with the ban.

- b) enter the details of the ban in the user's ammunition account; and
- c) if instructed to do so, arrange for the ammunition to be transported to the designated ammunition demilitarisation or destruction organisation.³

7 Constraints (LEVEL 2)

7.1 Rationale for constraints

Constraints (which may be at generic type, lot, batch and/or serial number level) are the imposition of a limitation or restriction in the use, transportation, carriage, issue, storage or inspection of munitions. Constraints should be used as a tool for the ammunition management system. They normally remain in force for the life of ammunition, while a ban can be a short-term measure.

Details of the constraints shall be printed on the ammunition issue vouchers, and a note shall be made on the ammunition account sheet of any constraints.

Constraints on the use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal of ammunition may include:

- a) storage temperatures to be adhered to;
- b) special handling requirements;
- c) a decision that ammunition is for training use only; and
- d) a change of shelf life parameters.

7.2 Dissemination of constraints

The organisation responsible for the overall conventional ammunition management system should ensure that an appropriate system is in place that can rapidly alert users to the imposition of an ammunition constraint.

7.3 Action on notification of a constraint

Users should take the following action when they receive notice of a constraint on ammunition use, storage, handling, transportation or disposal from the conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation:

- a) mark the ammunition packaging or container with the following information:
 - i) the constraint serial number; and
 - ii) details of the constraint.
- b) enter the details of the constraint in the user's ammunition account.

³ This responsibility may lie with the conventional ammunition stockpile management organisation.

Annex A

(normative)

References

The following normative documents contain provisions, which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of the guideline. For dated references, subsequent amendments to, or revisions of, any of these publications do not apply. However, parties to agreements based on this part of the guideline are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the normative documents indicated below. For undated references, the latest edition of the normative document referred to applies. Members of ISO maintain registers of currently valid ISO or EN:

- a) IATG 01.40 *Glossary of terms, definitions and abbreviations* . UNODA. 2020.

The latest version/edition of these references should be used. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) holds copies of all references⁴ used in this guideline and these can be found at: www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/references/. A register of the latest version/edition of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines is maintained by UNODA, and can be read on the IATG website: www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition. National authorities, employers and other interested bodies and organisations should obtain copies before commencing conventional ammunition stockpile management programmes.

⁴ Where copyright permits.

Annex B **(informative)** **References**

The following informative documents contain provisions, which should also be consulted to provide further background information to the contents of this guideline:

- b) DSA03.OME part 2 provides for the safe storage and processing of Ordnance, Munitions and Explosives (OME). UK MOD. November 2020.

The latest version/edition of these references should be used. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) holds copies of all references⁵ used in this guideline and these can be found at: www.un.org/disarmament/un-safeguard/references/. A register of the latest version/edition of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines is maintained by UNODA, and can be read on the IATG website: www.un.org/disarmament/ammunition . National authorities, employers and other interested bodies and organisations should obtain copies before commencing conventional ammunition stockpile management programmes.

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