

Armed policing

This page is from APP, the official source of professional practice for policing.

This module provides:

- guidance on the appropriate issue and use of firearms and related less lethal options within the police service
- a basis for the training of all relevant police staff in matters relating to the operational use of firearms. This includes command issues at strategic, tactical and operational levels
- guidance on command structures, tactical options and operational issues associated with the deployment of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs)

This APP on Armed Policing (AP-APP) module does not seek to be prescriptive in terms of its content, however, where the term 'must' appears, it is to be interpreted as follows:

A police force or an individual officer is under a positive obligation in law, or that given the gravity of the issue, the inclusion of the term 'must' has been approved by NPCC Chief Constables' Council, thereby endorsing the need for this action to be completed.

If a chief officer determines it necessary to issue separate instructions, due to the operational context or legal provisions appertaining in a specific jurisdiction, they should ensure that the evidence base for their decision is provided by their Armed Policing Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment (APSTRA) and that a documented audit trail explaining their rationale for doing so is maintained.

It is recognised that situations involving the deployment of AFOs, by their very nature, often involve a set of circumstances which are constantly evolving. Nothing within AP-APP is intended to restrict police officers from taking innovative action to effectively and lawfully resolve incidents in ways which are not included in this guidance.