

LegCo Gun Handling Police Speaking Notes

Opening Statement

I should like to thank the Chairman (Honourable Mr. James To) and members of the Panel for inviting me to discuss the incident on 9th February where a handgun was dislodged from a holster. As members are aware, this was an isolated incident for which the Force shares members' concerns. The Force takes a very serious view of this incident and I would like to take this opportunity to recap the circumstances and reassure members of the Force's full attention to the safe handling of handguns.

I should also like to take the opportunity to outline the immediate action that was taken after the incident and provide information about the training provided and the overall safety considerations with regard to the handling of handguns.

The Incident

- Around 1100 hrs on 9th February 2007 in Shanghai Street, Yaumatei, a crowd management operation was underway as it had been learned that at least three separate groups of people might stage protests
- This operation was conducted by officers from the local police station and the Police Tactical Unit.
- During the event, some protestors unexpectedly rushed the police line, and some managed to break through the cordon
- A scuffle took place and in the confusion, a police handgun was dislodged from its holster and fell to the ground.

Immediate Action

- The pistol was immediately recovered by police officers at the scene.
- Enquiries were initiated into the incident.
- The pistol and holster concerned were subsequently examined by the Force Armourer. Both were found in good working order.
- All handguns and holsters in the officer's unit were also re-checked immediately and again confirmed to be in good working order.
- All officers in the unit were again reminded of the importance of handgun security.
- Regular checks on all handguns and holsters in the Force have continued to be conducted.

- At this point, I should like to reassure members that at no stage were any members of the public or police officers at the scene at risk. The reason for this is that the only way a bullet can be fired from a Force issue handgun is for the trigger to be drawn to its rear most position. Unless this is done, the handgun cannot fire.
- I would add that there is no recorded incident of an accidental discharge arising from dropping of a handgun

In the aftermath, the incident has refocused our attention on:

- The importance of the police continuing to ensure that manpower is deployed flexibly enough to deal with changing

circumstances.

- The importance of maintaining continuous dialogue with various interested parties to facilitate a public order event and ensure public safety.

Wearing of handguns and holsters

- The wearing of holster by police officers is strictly monitored and Force handguns will only be carried in approved type of holsters, which are purpose designed for this job.

Checking of handguns and accessories

- All Force handguns and accessories are subject to regular checks to ensure their condition and serviceability.
- A designated inspecting officer will check handguns issued to eligible officers on a personal basis to ensure the serviceability and cleanliness of each handgun, its ammunition and accessories, including holster.
- Personal issue handguns and accessories for Junior police officers are subject to weekly check.
- Any faulty handgun or accessories will be promptly replaced.

Drawing/presenting of handguns

- There are also stringent orders governing drawing /presentation of handguns.

- **Unless an officer uses his handgun under the circumstances outlined in the LegCo paper or it is drawn in specified circumstances (e.g. during training, cleaning and maintenance of firearms, reporting on/off duty), a police officer should not draw a handgun from its holster or present it.**
- **A police officer who draws or presents a handgun as a precautionary measure will need to report the fact as soon as practicable.**
- **Senior officers will then look into the case to assess whether such action was justified based on the facts.**

Safety Mechanism of handguns

- **All handguns used in the Force have inherent safety feature to ensure drop safety.**
- **Revolver : Hammer Block and Hammer Seat.**
- **Glock pistol : Trigger Safety, Firing Pin Safety and Drop Safety.**
- **SIG P250 : Firing Pin Safety.**

Safety Features of Force Holsters

- **Secured to Waist Belt**
- **Moulded to Specific Firearms**
- **Built in Retention Device or Safety Strap with Thumb Break**
- **Covering Trigger**

Training and firearms qualification

- **Officers receive in excess of 100 hours training on handguns during their Foundation training.**
- **They are subject to examinations in both the theory and practical aspects of handguns.**
- **To maintain their skill at arms, Officers undergo three range courses a year, one of which is a qualification test. The pass mark is 75%.**
- **Prior to any range course officers are drilled on weapon retention techniques.**