



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE_PAX016

Declared Weapons & Firearms Handling

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PURPOSE

This SOP establishes a standardized process for the handling of declared firearms and ammunition within DHS operations. It ensures compliance with applicable national legislation and internal DHS requirements.

Airport and airline-specific procedures are followed in accordance with their respective LOPs or local instructions.

The SOP defines the DHS responsibilities clearly and ensures that weapons are handled only by legally authorized entities.

OBJECTIVE

- describe the steps required to safely process passengers travelling with declared weapons
- define communication and coordination requirements with airport authorities and police
- ensure DHS staff do not handle, store or transport weapons
- ensure airline responsibilities (e.g. PIC notification) remain with the airline
- protect DHS from taking on any legal responsibility outside its operational scope

APPLICATION

Passenger Services Department:

Customer Service Supervisor, Customer Service Lead Agent

ABBREVIATIONS & DEFINITIONS

Declared Weapon: Firearm or ammunition voluntarily declared by a passenger for legal carriage.

Authorized Entity: Bundespolizei, airport authority or other legally approved handler for firearms.

PIC: Pilot-in-Command.

LOP: Local Operating Procedure (airline- or airport-specific instructions).



PROCEDURE STEPS

A) Departure – Check-in Process

Step	Action
1.	Passenger declares firearm or ammunition during check-in.
2.	Check-in agent verifies whether the weapon is pre-booked / pre-approved according to airline and airport requirements (e.g. SSR, airline remark, or documented authorization). DHS does not request weapon details; DHS verifies only the presence of pre-advice.
3.	If the weapon is not pre-booked or no authorization is visible: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stop the process• inform Supervisor• Supervisor notifies Bundespolizei• DHS does not proceed with check-in until authorities give instructions
4.	If the weapon is pre-advised, the agent informs the Supervisor to initiate the authority handover.
5.	Supervisor contacts Bundespolizei or the responsible airport authority. DHS staff do not inspect, handle or request to see the weapon.
6.	Bundespolizei verifies legality, documentation, permits and ownership.
7.	Passenger completes any required forms issued by authorities or by the airline.
8.	Weapon is handed over directly from passenger to the authorized entity (Bundespolizei / airport security). DHS must not take custody at any point.
9.	Supervisor informs the airline station representative/DHS OPS department in accordance with the local LOP. Airline/DHS OPS is responsible for PIC notification.
10.	If required, DHS enters the airline-approved remark into the DCS (e.g. "Firearm declared – cleared by authorities").

B) Transit Passengers (Transit Handling)

Step	Action
1.	Transit passengers travelling with declared firearms do not receive their weapons during the connection. Firearms remain under the custody of the authorized entity (Bundespolizei or airline-appointed handler) throughout the entire transfer process.
2.	DHS does not receive, hold or transfer weapons during transit at any time.
3.	If the onward airline requires confirmation of the firearm's presence or legal status, the Supervisor coordinates this communication with the authorities. DHS provides no details beyond what authorities release.
4.	If an airline requires an updated notification (e.g. PIC advisory for the connecting flight), DHS informs the airline representative according to the applicable LOP.
5.	If a declared transit weapon is missing from the expected handover chain (rare case), the Supervisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• immediately informs Bundespolizei• informs the concerned airline• logs the event in Safety Culture according to internal procedures DHS performs no search or tracing of the weapon.
6.	If the onward airline refuses carriage because of missing pre-advice, documentation or legal approval, DHS must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• inform the passenger



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• involve Bundespolizei• assist only with airline communication <p>All decisions regarding weapons and legality remain with police and the airline.</p>
7.	If the passenger has a long layover and approaches DHS for information about their firearm, DHS may only provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• procedural information (e.g. "your weapon remains with Bundespolizei")• no storage location• no details• no access
8.	At no point may DHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• touch• store• transport• move• inspect any firearm or ammunition during transit.

C) Arrival Handling

Step	Action
1.	Upon arrival, any firearms or ammunition carried in the hold are collected directly at the aircraft by the airline's authorized representative (Bundespolizei or the designated airport authority handler). DHS does not approach or receive the item.
2.	DHS staff must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• accept the weapon• take temporary custody• transport to L&F• escort it These actions are performed solely by authorized entities.
3.	If the passenger approaches DHS in the arrivals hall regarding their weapon, DHS provides only procedural information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Your firearm will be processed by Bundespolizei / the authorized handler." No details about storage location or process steps are shared.
4.	The authorized entity (police or appointed handler) is responsible for verifying the passenger's identity, documents and legal eligibility before releasing the weapon. DHS has no role in this verification.
5.	DHS may assist in communication between the airline and authorities if requested, but does not take part in the physical handover or custody at any stage.
6.	If the authorized handler cannot locate the weapon or there is a delay, DHS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• informs the Supervisor• informs the airline representative• refers the passenger to Bundespolizei DHS does not investigate or trace the weapon.
7.	If a passenger claims that baggage containing a weapon is missing or mishandled: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DHS creates or updates AHL/OHD files,• but clearly indicates that weapon handling lies with authorities,• and escalates immediately to Bundespolizei DHS does not search for or retrieve weapons.



8.	If the authorized entity refuses release due to missing documents, DHS may support the airline with communication, but all decisions rest exclusively with authorities and the airline.
9.	Under no circumstances may DHS store firearms temporarily at counters, back offices, lost & found, or any DHS-controlled area.

D) Irregularities

Step	Action
1.	If any firearm, ammunition or item suspected to be a weapon is discovered unexpectedly (e.g. in baggage, at check-in, at boarding, or found unattended), the agent must: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stop the process immediately• avoid touching or moving the item• inform the Supervisor at once
2.	Supervisor immediately notifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bundespolizei• Airport Security (if locally required)• Airline station representative DHS does not attempt to verify whether the item is real, unloaded, legal, or safe.
3.	DHS staff must not open the passenger's baggage to inspect or confirm the presence of a weapon. Any inspection is carried out exclusively by authorized authorities.
4.	If a passenger claims they "forgot to declare" a weapon: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• stop process• involve Supervisor• Supervisor calls Bundespolizei• no check-in continues until authorities give instructions
5.	If a weapon is declared but not pre-advised in the DCS/SSR: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DHS does not reject the passenger independently• Supervisor escalates to Bundespolizei and the airline• DHS follows the instruction given by police and airline• check-in remains paused until cleared
6.	If Bundespolizei refuses clearance (e.g. incorrect documents, illegal weapon, missing permits): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DHS informs the passenger of the refusal• no alternative handling offered• airline is notified• DHS provides no advice on legal matters
7.	If a weapon or ammunition is missing from the expected custody chain on arrival (e.g., aircraft arrived but weapon not delivered): Supervisor must immediately: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• escalate to Bundespolizei• inform the airline• inform Airport Security (if applicable)• log the event internally DHS must not search for the weapon.
8.	If an item appears to be a weapon but is a replica, toy, or model: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• treat it as a weapon until Bundespolizei arrives• DHS does not classify or determine its legal status• authorities decide classification and handling



9.	If a passenger becomes aggressive, uncooperative, or agitated during weapon-related processing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DHS follows the Unruly/Disruptive Passenger SOP• inform Bundespolizei immediately• DHS does not attempt de-escalation beyond safe communication
10.	All instructions given by Bundespolizei, Airport Security, or the airline must be followed immediately and without modification. DHS has no discretionary authority in matters involving weapons.

SAFETY NOTES

- DHS staff must not handle, touch, store or transport firearms or ammunition at any time.
- Verification and custody of weapons are performed solely by Bundespolizei or other legally authorized entities.
- Any undeclared or suspicious weapon must be escalated immediately to the Supervisor and Bundespolizei.
- All instructions from authorities must be followed without delay.

REFERENCE

DHS ASM, Chapter 12 – Handling of Weapons and Prohibited Items

DHS GOM, 1.1.6.13 – Carriage of Firearms

Applicable national legislation (e.g. Luftsicherheitsgesetz, Waffengesetz)