

Police Service of Northern Ireland

For Internal Use Only

HQ Ref OPS 113'2001

General Order No 64'2002

File Box D

Date 18 October 2002

Sub-Head. (a)

Part I

FIREARMS TACTICAL ADVISERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- (1) Within the Service a number of officers are available as Firearms Tactical Advisers (FTA) who are accredited to ACPO standards. A number of FTA's have been assigned to cover North, South and Urban regions on a 24-hour call-out basis.
- (2) Firearms tactical advisers can offer tactical advice on any operation or incident in which an armed police response is required or anticipated, or intelligence indicates firearms may be involved or used, including both planned operations and spontaneous incidents. To meet the Service's obligations regarding human rights legislation, the use of firearms tactical advisers will be crucial in both the planning and implementation stages of any planned operation or prolonged spontaneous incident. This was highlighted within the ruling of *McCann -v- UK 1995*, where the court considered whether the particular operation or incident was "*planned and controlled by the authorities so as to minimise, to the greatest extent possible, recourse to lethal force*".
- (3) This General Order must also be read in conjunction with General Orders:
 - 34/2001, File Box D(a) 'Human Rights and Police Use of Force';
 - 55/2000, File Box D(a) 'Critical Incident Negotiators'
 - 61/2001, File Box D(a) 'Human Rights and Police Use of Firearms'
 - (not yet issued) 'Police Response to Critical Incidents, Command & Control'

2. USE OF FIREARMS TACTICAL ADVISERS

- (1) Firearms tactical advisers must be contacted at the earliest possible opportunity regarding any planned operation or spontaneous incident where an armed response is required, or on the basis of the available evidence and intelligence and it is likely that firearms could be used.
- (2) Firearms tactical advisers may also be contacted when planning an operation and intelligence indicates that their advice might be valuable. Such circumstances are outlined below, but this list is by no means exhaustive:
 - (a) the suspect has a previous history of violence with firearms or offensive weapons;
 - (b) legally held firearms are present on premises to be searched;
 - (c) any other operation or incident where intelligence suggests a possibility that firearms may be present or involved.
- (3) While the need for tactical advice will always exist at the level of silver commander as a priority, gold commanders may wish to seek the advice of a firearms tactical adviser concerning the potential operational effect of setting operational parameters.
- (4) When tasked, the firearms tactical adviser should be briefed on the current situation to date, including all information concerning the operation or incident available at that particular time. The adviser will then assess the situation and complete a 'Tactical Options' proforma (Appendix 'A'). This proforma highlights all the options that are available to the relevant commander in charge, including the preferred option. The tactical options proforma will be signed by the firearms tactical adviser and should be countersigned by the receiving commander in charge of the operation or incident.
- (5) Officers are reminded of the importance of record keeping and any use of firearms tactical advisers

should be fully documented within policy files, journals and official notebooks as applicable.

3. SCOPE OF TACTICAL ADVICE GIVEN

- (1) Any tactical advice and options given or suggested will depend upon the information available at the time, including any relevant threat assessments. Should circumstances or information change during any operation or incident, the adviser may make additional tactical assessments and complete additional tactical options proforma if necessary.
- (2) It should be noted that firearms tactical advisers do not make any decisions or take any independent action. The responsibility for the validity and the reliability of the advice lies with the adviser, but the responsibility for the use of the advice lies with the relevant commander in charge of the operation.
- (3) Police officers should not be expected to endanger their own lives, the lives of other officers or members of the public in unplanned or impulsive attempts at rescue, or to affect an early arrest of an armed suspect. Personnel involved in policing a planned operation or reacting to a spontaneous incident should be properly trained and have been supplied with the necessary equipment for the role. [See General Orders listed at paragraph 1(3)].

4. PROTOCOL FOR DEPLOYMENT

Requests for firearms tactical advisers should be made as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Requesting a Firearms Tactical Adviser by Mobile Phone		
Urban Region North Region South Region	07703 320534 07801 738819 07801 738820	
Requesting a Firearms Tactical Adviser by Pager	Pager Number	
Urban Region North Region South Region	Pager Centre Number: 028 9262 8663	4588 4584 4546
In the Event of any Difficulty in Contacting a Firearms Tactical Adviser by the above Methods, ring:		
Force Information Centre	Extension: 22469	

5. CANCELLATION

General Order Part I No 13/2002, File Box D(a) 'Firearms Tactical Advisers' is hereby cancelled.

Distribution/

**All chief officers, chief superintendents,
superintendents, departments, stations,
offices and the Police Ombudsman for
Northern Ireland**

General Order Part I, No 64/2002, File Box D(a)

Index Entries/

'A' - Adviser - Firearms Tactical

'F' - Firearms Tactical Adviser

'T' - Tactical Adviser - Firearms

TACTICAL OPTIONS

OPERATION: _____

TASKED BY: _____

OPTION:	PREFERRED	YES NO
FOR:	APPROVED	YES NO
AGAINST:	SIGNED:	
OPTION:	PREFERRED	YES NO
FOR:	APPROVED	YES NO
AGAINST:	SIGNED:	
OPTION:	PREFERRED	YES NO
FOR:	APPROVED	YES NO
AGAINST:	SIGNED:	
OPTION:	PREFERRED	YES NO
FOR:	APPROVED	YES NO
AGAINST:	SIGNED:	