

Exercise: Using the ISACS–AT to Support the Destruction of SALW

ISACS Operational Module 05.50: Destruction: Weapons

SCENARIO

You are an independent, external expert for safety and security of weapons and ammunition management and have come to Country X to inspect ongoing destruction activities of small arms and light weapons. The destruction programme started a week ago, and while an initial risk assessment had been undertaken in its planning phase, a destruction staff member got injured in a minor incident in the first week of the programme. This is the reason you have been asked by the National SALW Commission to supervise and oversee its safety procedures and to ensure the safety plan is implemented.

Safety context

You arrived in the early morning at the site and received an introductory briefing from the programme manager and the technical officer in charge of overseeing the destruction activities. The programme manager in charge of overseeing the destruction programme is from a development agency responsible for community safety programming, and is relatively new to weapons issues, having just joined the agency six months ago. The technical officer is former military personnel, who has over 10 years of experience in weapons handling. The technical officer, however, is not a certified Ammunition Technical Officer (ATO). After your introduction, and informing them about your function and tasks, the programme manager and the technical officer provide you with the Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) in place for destruction of small arms and light weapons and share with you the safety and medical evacuation plan, which are annexed to the SOP.

From the medical evacuation plan, you learned that in the case of a serious accident the nearest medical facility is 45 minutes away. The medical evacuation plan also notes that hospital has the capacity to treat trauma patients. You notice, however, that the drive to the destruction site is rather chaotic with limited lanes on the road and a high number of vehicles, which may cause traffic jams from time to time.

The programme manager informs you that a total of 15 first aid kits have been placed and prominently displayed at regular distances from operation areas on the destruction site. In case of an accident, he notes that there is a protocol in place with certain accidents that, in the case they occur, would require him to immediately stop the destruction operations and report to his supervisor to call for an investigation.

The technical officer has provided you with a copy of the safety plan. He explains that all of his staff has received a mandatory initial training when they joined his team on safe weapons handling and operation of destruction equipment, as well as the required personal protective equipment and its use (e.g. helmets, goggles, hearing protection, gloves).

From the documentation and briefing, you get the sense that the authorities consider safety a high priority.

Observations from destruction activity

During the site visit in the afternoon, you make a detailed observation tour of the physical destruction of weapons. The method of destruction being used here is crushing. You take the following notes:

- A number of destruction personnel seem to be not entirely comfortable with the destruction equipment in use. You ask the officers about the equipment and they inform you that while the machines are new and slightly different from the previous model, they know how to operate the machines. You inquire if they had received any advanced or up-to-date training on these machines and they note that they have only received their initial mandatory safety and security training when joining the team.
- The site is extremely warm, as it is summer time. As destruction activities are labour intensive, a lot of the destruction officers are sweating and some of them seem to have abandoned the use of goggles, most likely due to visibility issues.
- You take a look at how the weapons are being handled. You note that the weapons that are piled up to be destroyed are not all pointing to the same direction. You also note that some weapons still have a magazine in them. You cannot verify right away if the magazines are empty. You check with the technical officer right away that the weapons were checked to ensure that there was no ammunition in the weapons and he ensures you that procedures were followed on this.
- You note that a new load of containers with weapons destined for destruction has just arrived at the site. Two out of five containers that you saw arriving at the point of destruction did not have a visible Certificate of Safety.
- You notice fragments of metal several meters outside of the destruction operation area.

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TASK # 1—Risk assessment on safety

Given the information above, conduct a risk assessment on the safety of the destruction operation described above, including issues related to primary hazards. Consider the method of destruction and the practice described above carefully. You may consult Annex A of ISACS 05.50 to complete this task. You may also use the ISACS–AT to obtain data on safety practices to assist you in this process, focusing specifically on Primary Hazards under Risk Management and Occupational Health, Weapons Handling, Actions in the Event of Accidents, and Medical Evacuation under Safety.

Refer to the Help Tip (points 1 and 2) to carry out this task.

TASK # 2—Risk reduction plan

Based on the risk assessment conducted above, determine if the risk is above the tolerable level. If the risk is determined to be above the tolerable risk level, you must develop a risk reduction plan and provide this document to the technical officer at the site. You may consult Annex A, Table A.2, to conduct this task. The results from the ISACS–AT may also be used as a part of the risk reduction plan. You are to present the findings and the risk reduction plan to the technical officer. Please make sure to include the following in your presentation:

- a) Measures implemented well in line with the ISACS;
- b) Measures not in line with the ISACS;
- c) Measure not implemented at all;
- d) What measures should be taken as a matter of priority in order to reduce risk;
- e) Explain why those measures are important.

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HELP TIP

Recall the steps to conducting an assessment:

1. Identify the information needs that need to be measured in the Module:
 - a. Identify specific clauses/subclauses you wish to measure. Check with the facilitator to ensure that you have identified correctly the measures to be assessed;
2. Design a questionnaire to formulate a baseline assessment:
 - a. Use the ISACS–AT to design the questionnaire based on the identified clauses/subclauses;
3. Complete the questionnaire to collect data for assessment; and
4. Analyse the results to inform the findings and report, with particular focus on:
 - a. Priority needs (utilize the priority-setting function, as well as targeted analysis).

KEY NOTE

1. Implemented: Measure that you are certain has been implemented (100%).
2. In Progress: Measures that you observe have been undertaken, but not completely implemented (1%–99%). In Progress may also be used in cases when a certain aspect of the measure (as described by the indicator) is implemented.
3. Not Implemented: Measures that you are certain have not been implemented based on the information provided and/or observed.
4. Not answered: Measures that you are not able to evaluate due to lack of information provided.
5. Not applicable: Measures that are not applicable to the context you are dealing with.

ASSUMPTION

All available information on primary hazards and safety procedures during destruction of small arms and light weapons is presented above. If certain information is missing, consider that the relevant information has not been observed, presented, or made available to you.