

**CENATNSF ANSWERS CALL TO REDUCE SMALL ARMS EXPLOSIVE MISHAPS**  
**Sidebar Item: CLEARING BARREL TOP EIGHT LESSONS LEARNED**  
**(PresRel#NPDC0426a) – 04 August 2004**  
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# WEAPONS CLEARING STATION

Clearing Barrel Supervisor should first check condition of clearing barrel, know what is behind and adjacent to the clearing barrel and clear all unnecessary personnel away from clearing barrel. The clearing barrel supervisor initiates clearing barrel procedures, will read each command slowly and clearly, while closely monitoring the process. Personnel shall execute each command as directed.

## CLEARING BARREL INSTRUCTIONS

**WARNING** ENSURE THE PISTOL IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M9 SERVICE PISTOL LOAD & MAKE READY CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command LOAD and MAKE READY, personnel will, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the pistol pointed into the clearing barrel, perform the following steps to take the pistol from Condition 4 to Condition 1:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert pistol into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Place the pistol in Condition 4, with the slide locked to the rear. **PROCEED**
3. Visually and physically verify that the pistol is safe and clear. **PROCEED**
4. Rotate the pistol so that the magazine well is inboard. **PROCEED**
5. Insert the magazine into the magazine well and ensure it is seated. **PROCEED**
6. Visually and physically ensure that the pistol is on safe. **PROCEED**
7. With the trigger finger extended straight along the receiver, release the slide and verify the slide is fully forward. **PROCEED**
8. Ensure a round is chambered by physically checking the loaded chamber indicator. **PROCEED**
9. Ensure the safety is on, the hammer is forward and holstered. **PROCEED**

**WARNING** ENSURE THE PISTOL IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M9 SERVICE PISTOL UNLOAD, SHOW CLEAR CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command UNLOAD, personnel, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the pistol pointed into the clearing barrel, will perform the following steps to take the pistol from Condition 1 or 3 to Condition 4:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert pistol into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Visually and physically ensure the pistol is on safe. **PROCEED**
3. Remove the magazine, and hand it to the clearing barrel supervisor. **PROCEED**
4. With the non-firing hand lock the slide to the rear and eject the round into the hand. **PROCEED**
5. Hand the round to the clearing barrel supervisor. **PROCEED**
6. Visually and physically check the pistol to ensure it is safe and clear. **PROCEED**

(Clearing Barrel Supervisor will now perform a secondary inspection to ensure pistol is safe and clear) Tell entry to, "Show Clear"

7. Assume administrative transport position. **PROCEED**

## CLEARING BARREL INSTRUCTIONS

**WARNING** ENSURE THE RIFLE IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M16A3 SERVICE RIFLE LOAD CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command LOAD, personnel will, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the rifle pointed into the clearing barrel, perform the following steps to take the rifle from Condition 4 to Condition 3:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert rifle into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Place the rifle in Condition 4, with the bolt locked to the rear. **PROCEED**
3. Visually and physically verify that the rifle is clear. **PROCEED**
4. Release the bolt and ensure it is fully forward. **PROCEED**
5. Ensure the selector lever is in the safe position. **PROCEED**
6. Withdraw a magazine from the magazine pouch and ensure it is loaded. **PROCEED**
7. Fully insert magazine into the magazine well. **PROCEED**
8. Without releasing the magazine, tug downward to ensure it is seated. **PROCEED**
9. Close the ejection port cover. **PROCEED**

**WARNING** ENSURE THE RIFLE IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M16A3 SERVICE RIFLE UNLOAD, SHOW CLEAR CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command UNLOAD, personnel, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the rifle pointed into the clearing barrel, will perform the following steps to take the rifle from Condition 3 to Condition 4:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert rifle into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Visually and physically ensure the rifle is on safe. **PROCEED**
3. Remove the magazine, and hand it to the clearing barrel supervisor. **PROCEED**
4. Rotate the rifle so that the ejection port is facing the deck and lock the bolt to the rear. **PROCEED**
5. Put the rifle on safe now if it would not go on safe earlier. **PROCEED**
6. Visually and physically check the rifle to ensure it is clear. **PROCEED**

(Clearing Barrel Supervisor will now perform a secondary inspection to ensure rifle clear) Tell entry to, "Show Clear"

## CLEARING BARREL INSTRUCTIONS

**WARNING** ENSURE THE SHOTGUN IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M500 SERVICE SHOTGUN LOAD CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command LOAD, personnel will, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the shotgun pointed into the clearing barrel, perform the following steps to take the shotgun from Condition 4 to Condition 3:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert shotgun into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Place the shotgun in Condition 4, with the action to the rear. **PROCEED**
3. Visually and physically verify that the shotgun is clear. **PROCEED**
4. Lock the fore-end in the forward position, with the action closed. **PROCEED**
5. Ensure safety is in safe position. **PROCEED**
6. Rotate the magazine tube upward. **PROCEED**
7. Load the magazine tube through the loading port. **PROCEED**

**WARNING** ENSURE THE SHOTGUN IS POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION AT ALL TIMES AND THAT THE TRIGGER FINGER REMAINS STRAIGHT AND OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD.

### M500 SERVICE SHOTGUN UNLOAD, SHOW CLEAR CLEARING BARREL PROCEDURES

On the supervisor's command UNLOAD, personnel, with trigger finger straight along the receiver and with the shotgun pointed into the clearing barrel, will perform the following steps to take the shotgun from Condition 3 to Condition 4:

1. With trigger finger extended along receiver, insert shotgun into clearing barrel. **PROCEED**
2. Visually and physically ensure the shotgun is on safe. **PROCEED**
3. Remove rounds from the magazine tube until empty, handing them to the clearing barrel supervisor. **PROCEED**
4. Pull the fore-end to the rear. **PROCEED**
5. Visually and physically check the shotgun to ensure it is clear. **PROCEED**

(Clearing Barrel Supervisor will now perform a secondary inspection to ensure rifle clear) Tell entry to, "Show Clear"

Clearing Barrel Not Used - Instructions mandate that clearing barrels will be used. The Clearing Barrel listed on Ashore and Afloat AEL's is the APC-100. These are GSA approved items and can be wall mounted or pedestal mounted. We should get away from the "locally produced" varieties, as they are not always constructed properly and can be dangerous. The APC-100 models are small, heavy duty and will absorb up to and including a .50 caliber round. For more information on the APC-100 Clearing Barrel visit [www.firearms-safety.com](http://www.firearms-safety.com)

Weapon Safety Not Checked – When approved Clearing Barrel Procedures are properly used, checking the safety to ensure it is engaged is required during a number of steps. For instance, during loading procedures with the M9 Pistol you first check to ensure the pistol is in condition four with the slide locked to the rear, which requires checking the safety, the next step is to visually and physically check to ensure the pistol is safe and clear, prior to releasing the slide you again check to ensure the safety is engaged and prior to holstering you again check to ensure the safety is engaged. Is this overkill? If you read mishap reports you will quickly find that this is not overkill and is totally necessary. Follow mandated procedures, remain focused, do not skip steps, and do not get complacent!

No Clearing Barrel Supervisor – Instructions mandate that Clearing Barrel Supervisors shall be used. This does not mean that the supervisor can be the oncoming watch. Clearing Barrel Supervisors should be senior personnel who are knowledgeable and experienced in these procedures. They should remain alert and focused on the task at hand. They shall read each command from the Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards and then observe the armed sentry performing those individual steps.

No Clearing Barrel Procedure Placards Posted – Instructions mandate that Clearing Barrel Placards will be posted in a position forward of the clearing barrel so that they can be easily read. CENATNSF has developed a standardized placard. To receive an electronic copy of the placard shown below contact the Small Arms POC listed at the end of this article. If you are looking at this article on a website, click on the placard, save to a folder where you can resize and copy the placard for your use.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Not Followed – SOP's are written to be read, understood and followed. In addition, review the NTRP and step-by-step Clearing Barrel Procedures in the Weapons Handling Courseware to ensure your procedures are correct. The procedures in these references shall be followed as described, demonstrated and mandated.

Personnel Weapon Transfer On Post – Procedures should be implemented that allow an oncoming sentry to receive a Condition 4, action opened firearm from the armorer, assume an approved transport position as outlined in NTRP 3-07.2.2, report to the Clearing Barrel, load up as per procedure, report to Guard Mount to receive post and special orders and assume post. For the off going watch they should download at the Clearing Barrel, assume an approved transport and return the weapon to the armorer. At no time should personnel transfer weapons on post.

Squeezing Trigger While At Clearing Barrel – At absolutely no time is it ever necessary to squeeze the trigger into the Clearing Barrel. No part of Clearing Barrel Procedures directs personnel to squeeze the trigger and it should never occur. Many of the Clearing Barrel mishaps occurred when personnel squeezed the trigger during Clearing Barrel Procedures. Armed Sentries shall keep their fingers extended and outside the trigger guard alongside the receiver and Clearing Barrel Supervisors should remain observant and ensure that the Sentries trigger finger never goes inside the trigger guard.

Not Removing Source Of Ammunition Prior To Checking Chamber – In many instances during unloading, personnel armed with an M9 Pistol will first pull the slide to the rear, catch the chambered round, release the slide and then remove the magazine. Let's examine what just occurred. Without first removing the source of ammunition (magazine), the sentry has now chambered another round when releasing the slide. Again if procedures are followed this will not occur. Always remember the following: SAFETY, MAGAZINE, CHAMBER, SAFETY!  
SAFETY – ensure safety is in safe position. MAGAZINE – remove the source of ammunition (magazine). CHAMBER – lock the slide to the rear, catch the round, hand it to the supervisor and look into the chamber to ensure it is clear. SAFETY – again check safety to ensure it is in the safe position. Start with the safety and end with the safety and you cannot go wrong. Follow procedure, think and remain focused on the task at hand! Remember - always remove the source of ammunition from small arms prior to removing the round from the chamber.