



BAB Weapons Protocol

With effect from October 2023, and until further notice, the use of live blades is no longer covered under the BAB insurances.

We are hopeful that that this issue (which is not exclusive to BAB associations, clubs and members) can be resolved. In the meantime, if you should practise with live blades then this is done entirely at your own risk.

If you have any queries or comments about this issue, then please contact insuranceofficer@bab.org.uk

Purpose of this document

This document has been approved to provide guidance to Instructors and Students on the correct use, transportation and storage of weapons and should be read in conjunction with the Insurance Guidelines, and the BAB Coaching Handbook which can be downloaded at: www.bab.org.uk

Types of Weapons Used in Aikido Training

- **Wooden weapons, including bokken, tanto and jo**
In the case of the bokken and tanto these either have a blunt end of a rounded point and the use of either is covered by the BAB Insurance policy(s).
- **Live blades**
These could include weapons such as original and replica “samurai swords” (i.e. curved blades of 50cm or over in length from handle to tip) and tanto and, under the 2008 Amendment to the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons), could include weapons made from wood, alloy, carbon fibre or even plastic.

The use of such weapons is **NOT** covered by the BAB Insurance policy, subject to strict adherence to this Weapons Protocol.

Basic Protocols

The follow basic protocols and risk assessment requirements should be applied to the use of **ALL** types of weapons:

Transportation and Storage

- Police guidance on the possession and carrying of offensive weapons can be downloaded from the BAB website (www.bab.org.uk) and forms an integral part of this Protocol.
- The law regarding the carrying of weapons in a public place is contained in SECTION 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and SECTION 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.
- Aikidoka carrying weapons who are stopped by the Police, should give every assistance to the officer(s) including an explanation of why such weapons are being carried. No attempt to conceal the fact that weapons are being carried should be made.
- Aikidoka should carry current up-to-date proof of their Association/BAB membership to show they are participating in an approved martial art.
- Weapons should only be carried when it is known that they are required at a particular training session. Instructors/Associations etc. should, therefore, inform students as to when weapons are required.
- Weapons should only be carried directly to and from a practise.
- Weapons should not be left in a vehicle on a permanent basis.
- Aikidoka should ensure that their weapons are always carried within a secure bag and hence not directly visible and should ensure that the bag is never left unattended.
- Travelling on public transport with weapons should be avoided if possible.
- Whilst the words “reasonable excuse” and “good reason” in each of the relevant Acts may provide a defence for the student, in relation to the carrying of such weapons, it will be for the individual, not the police, to prove that they had a reasonable excuse or good reason for possessing the item. The student’s demeanour is a most important factor in dealing with a police enquiry.

Risk Assessment

Before starting a training session, the instructor should carry out a risk assessment including considering the following factors:

- The Dojo floor should be clean and present no tripping hazards (check for holes, gaps etc. and potential slippage from sweat).
- The height of the ceiling should be sufficient to avoid contact with weapons.
- Avoid dangerous obstructions, pillars, heaters etc.
- The Dojo should be large enough for the number of students and the activity. This may be obvious in respect of the area in front of the students but can be overlooked in the area behind them.
- The minimum recommended space for pairs training with weapons is 5 square metres per practitioner.
- Ensure students know how to check their own equipment and its safe use.
- Weapons and any related equipment should be checked, by the user, prior to the classes for any defects.
- The student's dogi and hakama should be worn correctly to avoid the risk of tripping over or weapons becoming entangled in clothing.
- Special consideration should be given to other "users" sharing an area, particularly in large sports halls, where access routes are shared with other activities.