

SECRETARIAT

REVIEW OF AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES DEPLOYMENT POLICY FOR SHORT SHELF- LIFE ITEM

Secretariat Issue Paper # 26 – Mandated Study

1. ISSUE PAPER THEME: Other / Cross-cutting

2. SUMMARY / BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS HISTORY

During the 2023 COE Working Group (WG) session, the WG requested the Secretariat to revise the policy of deploying ammunition and explosives with 50 per cent shelf life, for ammunition and explosives having shelf life of five years or less, during the next revision of United Nations Manual on Ammunition Management (UNMAM).

The current policy stipulated in 2020 UNMAM (Chapter 3, para 3.5.2), states that, “*no ammunition will be accepted for deployment which has crossed half of its original shelf-life as stated by the manufacturer*”. This rule is further reiterated in the 2023 COE Manual (Chapter 3, Annex A, para 26c) which states that, “*Troop/Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) are responsible for deploying ammunition and explosives with a minimum of 50 per cent of their shelf-life remaining and for storing them properly*”.

Managing the shelf-life of ammunition is a critical aspect for ensuring the safety and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. The UNMAM sets guidelines for shelf-life or service life, defining it as the period during which an explosive or device can be stored or maintained under specific conditions before use or disposal without becoming unsafe or failing to meet specified performance criteria. Extension of the shelf-life is possible under certain and strict circumstances, requiring a well-established in-service proof and surveillance process established by the T/PCC providing the ammunition. As this has been rarely proven to be in place, the minimum shelf-life at the time of deployment is essential for the provision of operational, cost-efficient and safe ammunition and explosives.

The Secretariat is conducting the review of 2020 UNMAM which is expected to be completed in 2026 after the ongoing revision of International Technical Ammunition Guidelines (IATG) is completed. The UNMAM review would include revision of the current policy of 50 per cent shelf-life for ammunition with five years or less shelf-life at the time of deployment, as recommended by the 2023 COE WG. In the meanwhile, in the absence of an approved policy, the deployment of all types of ammunition, including with short shelf-life, is governed by the minimum 50 per cent rule.

Expired ammunition poses two-fold challenges for United Nations missions – one to dispose it and second to financially or logistically support its replenishment. It also requires the troop/police contributors to procure this ammunition for replenishment.

3. DETAILED PROPOSAL

Based on the recommendation of the 2023 COE WG and with the aim of minimizing the challenge of disposal and replenishment of expired ammunition, and the associated financial costs, it is proposed that the shelf-life requirement at the time of deployment (including replenishment) specifically for ammunition with a short shelf-life of five years or less, as given by the manufacturer, is revised to a minimum 80 per cent. This would mean

ammunition like for example tear gas, which normally has five years shelf-life, would at the time of deployment, require a minimum of four years of balance of original shelf-life as stated by the manufacturer. Similarly, ammunition with a shelf-life of four years would require a minimum of 3.2 years (three years and two months) and ammunition with a shelf-life of 3 years would require a minimum of 2.4 years (two years and five months) at the time of deployment.

If approved by the 2026 COE WG, this proposed revision in the minimum shelf-life requirement for ammunition with original shelf-life of five years or less, shall be captured in the COE Manual for immediate implementation. The Secretariat will also replicate this requirement when finalizing the ongoing review of the UNMAM.

This modification seeks to improve the efficiency of ammunition inventory management, reduce instances of ammunition expiring early in the mission area, and improve deployment and replenishment processes.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Ammunition with short shelf-life requires regular disposal and replenishment. This proposal is expected to reduce the financial costs and logistical challenges associated with disposal and replenishment of expired ammunition with a shelf-life of five years or less.

5. PROPOSED 2026 COE MANUAL TEXT

Revise para 26 (c) in Chapter 3 Annex A, p. 36, struck out text to be deleted and bold text to be added:

(c) Ammunition and explosives that ~~become~~ **expired** in the mission area, **subject to the ammunition with five years or less original shelf-life had a minimum of 80 per cent of remaining shelf-life upon deployment, other ammunition and explosives with over five years original shelf-life had a minimum of 50 per cent of remaining shelf-life upon deployment, and the ammunition was stored properly in the mission; Troop/police contributors are responsible, however, for deploying ammunition and explosives with a minimum of 50 per cent of their shelf life remaining and for storing them properly;**

Revise para 27, first bullet point, in Chapter 3, Annex A, p. 36, bold text to be added:

- Ammunition that has exceeded half of its shelf life, **or 20 per cent of its shelf life for ammunition with an original shelf life of five years or less**, as stated by the manufacturer shall not be accepted for deployment. An exemption/waiver can be given based upon an ammunition management policy statement (see International Ammunition Technical Guideline 03.10) or an equivalent statement by a national safety authority proving that the ammunition is supported by a technical surveillance and in-service proof programme (see International Ammunition Technical Guideline 07.20). Ammunition that has exceeded half of its shelf life, **or 20 per cent of its shelf life for ammunition with an original shelf life of five years or less**, when deployed and is lacking an ammunition management policy statement or equivalent statement, regardless of the reason of deployment needs, will not be reimbursed. Troop/police contributors are responsible for providing a manufacturer's certificate stating the production year and the estimated shelf life of the ammunition being deployed in the mission area. Troop/police contributors are further responsible for certifying that all ammunition deployed in support of national contingents is safe to deploy.