1. **Accidental weapon discharges have increased at an alarming rate.** These accidental discharges are both preventable and unacceptable. Commanders and leaders will enforce the standards for weapons safety, cleaning procedures, and clearing barrels contained in this memorandum. 

2. The premise that the U.S. Army is basing this standard on holds that there is no difference between unloading and cleaning a weapon. Unloading a weapon is simply the removal of its ammunition, the process of clearing. At no time should a weapon be unloading and not cleaned.

3. A significant number of accidents resulting in injuries and loss of life have been associated with accidental discharges during weapons cleaning or subsequent functional tests of the weapons with ammunition present. Leaders at all levels should not consider these activities low risk when ammunition is present.

4. **Safe practices.**

   - **Safe muzzle orientation** is critical to weapon safety. Soldiers will always keep their weapon pointed in a safe direction. At no time should any part of the human body be in the likely path of a bullet. This requires constant awareness of the muzzle orientation and frequent repositioning and adjusting of the weapon. Muzzle orientation will be enforced at all times, not just when the weapon is considered loaded. It is critical that Soldiers learn muzzle orientation as a life skill that becomes second nature and a personal responsibility.

   - **Weapons** will be kept on safe at all times when not engaging a target or when enemy contact is not imminent. Fingers will be kept off the trigger until firing the weapon is intended. There have been numerous accidental discharges resulting from Soldiers being bumped while the weapon safety selector was placed on FIRE and the finger on the trigger.

   - **Commanders** will ensure that controls are in place to prevent Soldiers from mishandling weapons in living and sleeping areas. Leaders will supervise weapons cleaning at all times whether ammunition is present or not. Leaders will remain involved to ensure ammunition has not inadvertently been left in the weapon or placed in the weapon in a manner that cannot be unloaded or an accidental discharge. Leader enforcement of muzzle orientation is particularly important in these weapons handling activities.

   - When clearing weapons on too ranges, the weapon will be oriented downrange during the clearing process. When a clearing barrel is required by local installation SOPs, use the requirements as outlined in this memorandum. 

   - **Leaders** and Soldiers must ensure all weapons are in a secure location and a personal responsibility.

5. **Weapon issue and turn-in procedures.**

   - **During the issue and turn-in of weapons,** both the armorer and the Soldier will visually verify that the weapon does not contain any ammunition. This will be accomplished in conjunction with a clearing barrel, when appropriate and available. The armorer must provide clearing barrels and install them as required by local SOPs. Further guidance concerning weapon issue and turn-in is found in the following paragraphs.

   - **Weapon issue and turn-in procedures.**

     - **Leader** will ensure the weapon is clean and safe. During the issue and turn-in of weapons, the armorer or other authorized person must verify each individual’s authority to bear arms before issuing any weapons, ammunition, or both.

6. **Ensure that each weapon is cleared and visually inspected prior to issue or turn-in.**

   - **Armorer responsibilities include:**
     - Verifying each individual’s authority to bear arms before issuing any weapons, ammunition, or both.
     - Ensuring that each weapon is cleared and visually inspected prior to issue or turn-in.
     - Issuing all weapons under armory control (but) first, muzzle elevated, slide or bolt locked to the rear, and on SAFE.
     - Allowing only one person at a time to approach the issue and turn-in area.
     - The armorer or other authorized person must visually inspect all weapons, ensuring that all ammunition has been removed prior to storage.

7. **Clearing barrels.** The unloading and clearing of small arms is typically done by the armorer. However, when required by local SOPs further guidance concerning the use of clearing barrels can be found in the above paragraphs.

   - **Clearing barrels will be mounted at a height and angle that allows the user to stand near them.** The clearing barrel will be mounted at a height and angle that allows the user to stand near them. The armorer or other authorized person will place the clearing barrel at a height and angle that allows the user to stand near them.
APPENDIX A - M2 (.50 CAL) MACHINE GUN

Unloading and Clearing Procedures

WARNING: DO NOT INSTALL OR REMOVE A LOADED WEAPON FROM A MOUNTING BRACKET.

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (Clearing lane).
2.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE. NOTE: If the bolt is in the forward position, place the weapon on FIRE and pull the cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt to the rear. Place the weapon on safe.
3.) Push in latches to open cover assembly.
4.) Remove ammunition belt.
5.) Check the space between the face of the bolt and the receiver to include the space under the bolt and operating rod assembly.
6.) Close feed tray and feed tray cover.
7.) Place safety on FIRE.
8.) Pull and hold charger cable (or cocking handle assembly) to rear, pull trigger and ease bolt forward to close and lock.

APPENDIX E - M240 MACHINE GUN

Unloading and Clearing Procedures

WARNING: DO NOT INSTALL OR REMOVE A LOADED WEAPON FROM A MOUNTING BRACKET.

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (Clearing lane).
2.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE. NOTE: If the bolt is in the forward position, place the weapon on FIRE and pull the cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt to the rear. Place the weapon on safe.
3.) Push in latches to open cover assembly.
4.) Remove ammunition belt.
5.) Check the space between the face of the bolt and the receiver to include the space under the bolt and operating rod assembly.
6.) Close feed tray and feed tray cover.
7.) Place safety on FIRE.
8.) Pull and hold charger cable (or cocking handle assembly) to rear, pull trigger and ease bolt forward to close and lock.

APPENDIX F - MK19 MACHINE GUN

Unloading and Clearing Procedures

WARNING: DO NOT INSTALL OR REMOVE A LOADED WEAPON FROM A MOUNTING BRACKET.

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (Clearing lane).
2.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE. NOTE: If the bolt is in the forward position, place the weapon on FIRE and pull the cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt to the rear. Place the weapon on safe.
3.) Push in latches to open cover assembly.
4.) Remove ammunition belt.
5.) Check the space between the face of the bolt and the receiver to include the space under the bolt and operating rod assembly.
6.) Close feed tray and feed tray cover.
7.) Place safety on FIRE.
8.) Pull and hold charger cable (or cocking handle assembly) to rear, pull trigger and ease bolt forward to close and lock.

APPENDIX G - M16 RIFLE (.223/5.56MM)

Unloading and Clearing Procedures

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (Clearing lane).
2.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE (M4 must be cleared first). 2.) Push in a SAFE DIRECTION! (Clearing lane)
3.) Push in the release button and pull the barrel forward. 4.) Watch to see if a round extracted.
5.) Place selector lever on SAFE.
6.) Inspect the breech to ensure a round is not present.
7.) The cleaning barrel attendant will visually verify that ammunition is not present.
8.) Pull the barrel to the rear until it clicks.

APPENDIX H - M203 GRENADE LAUNCHER

Unloading and Clearing Procedures

WARNING: DO NOT INSTALL OR REMOVE A LOADED WEAPON FROM A MOUNTING BRACKET.

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (Clearing lane).
2.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE.
3.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE.
4.) Ensure weapon is on SAFE.
5.) Inspect the receiver to ensure no ammunition is present.
6.) With the right hand palm up, pull the cocking handle to the rear, locking the bolt in place.
7.) While holding the cocking handle, move selector lever to the SAFE position by pushing it to the right until the red ring is not visible.
8.) Return and lock the cocking handle to the forward position.
9.) A. Squeeze latches to open cover assembly.
10.) Remove ammunition belt and any loose rounds present on the feed tray.
11.) Conduct a 5-point safety check:

   1.) Check the feeder panel assembly under the cover.
   2.) Check the feed tray assembly.
   3.) Lift the feed tray assembly and inspect chamber.
   4.) Check the space between bolt assembly and chamber.
   5.) Insert two fingers into the magazine well to extract any brass, links, or ammunition.
   6.) Close the feed tray cover.

   8.) With the right hand palm up, pull the cocking handle to the rear. While holding the cocking handle, place the weapon on FIRE. Squeeze the trigger and ride the bolt forward.