



## INTERAGENCY SECURITY COMMITTEE



# Items Prohibited in Federal Facilities

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## An Interagency Security Committee Standard

2022 Edition

U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency  
Interagency Security Committee



## Message from the Interagency Security Committee Chair

The Interagency Security Committee (ISC) vision statement is: *"Federal facilities, the people who work at them, and those who visit them are safe and secure throughout the country."* The ISC achieves its vision by establishing security policies, ensuring compliance, and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of security and protection of federal facilities. The ISC consists of 64 departments and agencies who work collaboratively to achieve its vision. As the Interagency Security Committee (ISC) Chair, I am pleased to introduce *Items Prohibited in Federal Facilities: An Interagency Security Committee Standard*.

This standard updates procedures for establishing control of prohibited items in federal facilities. An established list of prohibited items provides consistency and prevents confusion at screening checkpoints. Consideration should be given to the specific process for granting exemptions or exceptions and should include a statement relating to those items already inside the facility at the time this standard is adopted.

Facility Security Committees or tenant representatives for single tenant facilities are encouraged to document their prohibited and controlled items policies in their facility security plans (FSPs) and include them in briefings to new employees as part of their on-boarding process.

This document represents exemplary collaboration within the ISC Standards Subcommittee and across the entire ISC.

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# 1.0 Introduction

Prohibited items include items that are dangerous, unlawful, or otherwise determined to create vulnerabilities to the occupant agency (or agencies) or visitors. This document establishes a list of prohibited items in federal facilities to protect facility occupants and visitors. Further, it provides procedures to control prohibited items, increasing consistency and preventing confusion at screening checkpoints.

The baseline prohibited items list provided in this standard includes a breakdown of controlled items that may otherwise be prohibited from a federal facility but may have a legitimate, lawful purpose and use in federal facilities. These items may require advance written notification and subsequent approval prior to admittance to a facility.

The items in this standard are prohibited in all federal facilities, whether or not facilities have a screening checkpoint, unless granted an exception or exemption by the Facility Security Committee (FSC), tenant representative for single-tenant facilities, or legal authority (hereafter referred to as "responsible authority"). The Interagency Security Committee (ISC) recognizes that federal departments and agencies will implement this standard in a manner reflecting the unique and varied mission requirements of their respective components, while also abiding by applicable federal, state, local and tribal law.

## 2.0 Background

In October 1995, the President signed Executive Order (EO) 12977 establishing the ISC, which has developed and published over 20 policies, standards, and recommendations to identify, assess, and prioritize risks at federal facilities.

Since March 2003, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been the home of the ISC upon its transfer from the General Services Administration (GSA) in accordance with EO 13286.

The original document, *Items Prohibited from Federal Facilities* published in February 2013, developed a standard to use as a starting point for creating a customized list for each facility. The Standards Subcommittee subsequently reviewed and updated the document for current publication reflecting emerging threats that federal facilities face.

## 3.0 Applicability and Scope

Consistent with EO 12977, *Items Prohibited in Federal Facilities, an Interagency Security Committee Standard*, identifies a baseline list of prohibited items that each responsible authority shall customize to mitigate facility risk. It is applicable to all executive branch buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by federal personnel for non-military activities. These facilities include currently owned, to be purchased, or leased facilities; standalone facilities; federal campuses; and, where appropriate, individual facilities on federal campuses and special-use facilities. Additionally, per DoD Instruction, 2000.12, all DoD leased facility space or space in buildings owned or operated by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) not located on DoD property must comply with this standard.

## 4.0 How to Apply This Standard

The responsible authority for security policies of a federal facility should develop policies and procedures necessary to implement this standard in their facility. The policies and procedures should address employee possession of legal items that are prohibited, specific processes for granting exemptions and exceptions, and a statement relating to those items already in the building at the time this Standard is adopted.

The prohibited items list applies to all facility occupants, contractors, and visitors, and is to be used in conjunction with all other ISC standards and applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.

The ISC defines a facility as space built or established to serve a particular purpose. The facility is inclusive of a building or suite, the associated support infrastructure, (e.g., parking or utilities), and land. This standard provides a baseline list of prohibited items intended for use at the entry points of federal facilities. The responsible authority shall not allow the removal of an item from the baseline or customized prohibited items list if the item is prohibited by federal, state, or tribal law.<sup>1</sup> Exemptions, such as lawful performance of official duties by an officer, can be found in the footnotes below.

Supplementary measures may be taken at vehicular, service, and loading dock entrances. These measures may be more restrictive based on local or agency rules or regulations. Further, it must be noted that the baseline list prescribed in this document is not intended to be all-inclusive and does not cover every item that may be prohibited or controlled in every portion of each facility. For example, this document does not cover mail handling and screening. Refer to Title 41, CFR 102-74 Subpart C for additional information on items such as narcotics.

The responsible authority may prohibit items that might otherwise be permitted into the facility from being allowed in certain portions of a facility or by certain individuals or groups. For example, a court may restrict the public from possessing a cell phone in a courtroom but permit such a device to be carried by a court employee or attorney.

The final, approved, facility-specific prohibited items list and policy must be documented (recommend inclusion in the facility security plan) and reviewed in conjunction with the annual facility security plan review. Additionally, to ensure facility occupants are aware of the policy, organizations should incorporate a

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<sup>1</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 930 and Title 41, CFR Part 102-74 Subpart C.

18 U.S.C. § 930: US Code - Section 930: Possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities:

(d) Subsection (a) shall not apply to -

(1) the lawful performance of official duties by an officer, agent, or employee of the United States, a state, or a political subdivision thereof, who is authorized by law to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of law;

(2) the possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon by a Federal official or a member of the Armed Forces if such possession is authorized by law; or

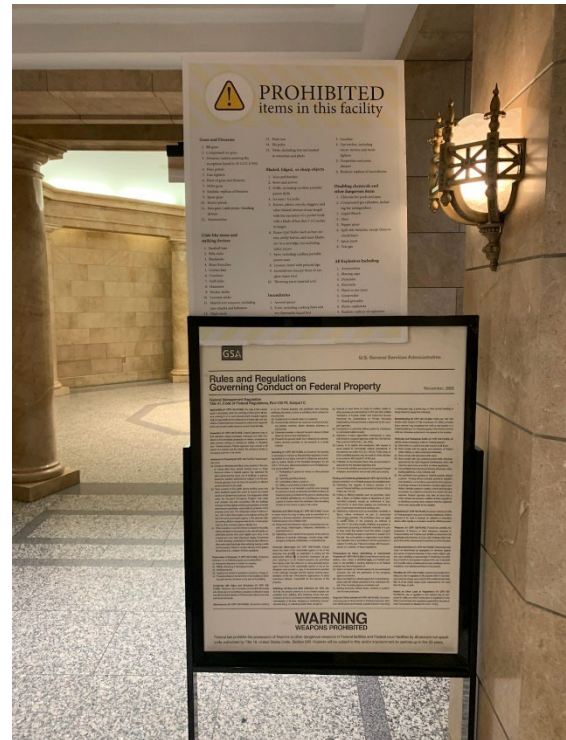
(3) the lawful carrying of firearms or other dangerous weapons in a Federal facility incident to hunting or other lawful purposes.

(f) Nothing in this section limits the power of a court of the United States to punish for contempt or to promulgate rules or orders regulating, restricting, or prohibiting the possession of weapons within any building housing such court or any of its proceedings, or upon any grounds appurtenant to such building.

prohibited and controlled item briefing as part of the on-boarding process for new employees. A notice of prohibited items should be posted at each public entrance to the facility to include citing applicable enforceable codes. Title 41, CFR Subpart C, Section 102-74.385 notes "Persons in and on property must at all times comply with official signs of a prohibitory, regulatory or directory nature and with the lawful direction of Federal police officers and other authorized individuals".

## 5.0 Lists of Prohibited Items

The items that are prohibited in federal facilities include any item prohibited by any applicable federal, state, local, or tribal law and/or ordinance, as well as firearms, dangerous weapons, explosives, or other destructive devices, including their individual parts or components, that are designed, redesigned, used, intended for use, or readily converted to cause injury, death, or property damage. This list applies to all facility occupants, contractors, and visitors.



**Prohibited Items Sign at Headquarters, Federal Protective Service (FPS)**

## 5.1 Firearms and Projectile Weapons

The list of prohibited firearms and projectile weapons includes, but is not limited to:

- Firearms or similar devices (i.e., 3D or Ghost Guns, etc.) that expels a projectile through the action of an explosive, unless meeting the exemptions listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d);
- BB or pellet guns;
- Compressed air guns;
- Flare guns;
- Realistic replica or toy firearms, unless meeting the exemptions listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d);
- Spear guns;
- Starter pistols;
- Stun guns, cattle prods, dart-firing stun guns, and other electric weapons;
- Ammunition, shotgun shells, firearm cartridges, black powder, smokeless propellant powder, unless meeting the exemptions listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d); and
- Slingshots.

## 5.2 Bladed, Edged, or Sharp Tools or Implements

The list of prohibited bladed, edged, or sharp tools or implements includes, but is not limited to:

- Axes and hatchets;
- Bows and arrows;
- Ice axes/ice picks;
- Throwing stars (martial arts);

- Knives, sabers, swords, daggers, and other bladed devices with a blade of more than 2 ½ inches, unless meeting the exemptions listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d); and
- Razor-type blades such as box cutters, utility knives, and razor blades not in a cartridge, unless meeting the exemption listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d)(3).

### **5.3 Club-like Items and Striking Devices**

The list of club-like items and striking devices includes, but is not limited to:

- Billy clubs;
- Blackjacks;
- Brass knuckles;
- Chains exceeding 12 inches; jewelry exceptions can be made;
- Night sticks, unless meeting the exemptions listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d); and
- Martial arts weapons, including nunchucks and kubatons.

### **5.4 Destructive Devices, Explosives, or Combustible Chemical Compounds and Mixtures**

The list of destructive devices, explosives, or any chemical compound or mixture that can combust or oxidize upon the application of heat, flame, or shock includes, but is not limited to:

- Blasting caps or detonators;
- Dynamite, nitroglycerin, trinitrotoluene, and others;
- Fireworks;
- Gunpowder;
- Hand grenades, mines, bombs, rockets, missiles, pipe bombs, plastic explosives;
- Realistic replicas of explosives or similar devices;
- Explosive or expanding gases;
- Gas torches; and
- Flammable liquids, such as gasoline, turpentine, and paint thinner, unless meeting the exemption listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d)(3).

### **5.5 Disabling Chemicals and Other Dangerous Items**

The list of disabling chemicals and other dangerous items includes, but is not limited to:

- Mace, pepper spray, tear gas, or other chemical sprays designed for self- defense, unless meeting the exemption listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d);
- Spillable batteries, except those in wheelchairs or similar devices used by a mobility impaired individual;
- Spray paint, unless meeting the exemption listed in 18 U.S.C. § 930(d)(3); and
- Poisonous gases.



## 6.0 Procedures for Exceptions and Exemptions to Prohibited Items

### 6.1 General

As general guidance, some items that are otherwise prohibited from a federal facility may have some legitimate and lawful purpose or use in a federal facility. These legitimate purposes may include accommodations for compliance with specific civil rights and civil liberties under federal laws including, but not limited to, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. An example is the Kirpan, which is a single-edged sword or knife carried by Sikhs as part of a religious commandment.

The responsible authority shall evaluate and determine whether to approve exceptions or exemptions, thereby accepting the risk. Exceptions are temporary in nature and granted for specific occurrences or a defined period. Exemptions are permanent in nature until rescinded.

Agencies can reserve the right to grant access through a screening checkpoint of an otherwise prohibited item described in Section 4.0 that an individual has a legitimate and lawful right to possess in a federal facility.

Recommended factors to consider when determining and approving exceptions and exemptions include:

- Facility Security Level
- Mission of the tenants
- Status of requestor
- Location of the facility
- Heightened security conditions
- Emerging risk scenarios
- Purpose for exception/exemption, (mission needs, morale, etc.)

### 6.2 Procedures

The responsible authority is required to establish, maintain, review, and update procedures necessary for granting exemptions and exceptions, to include the development of any local forms as appropriate.<sup>2</sup> Procedures should include:

- Documenting internal controls and procedures for prohibited item exceptions and exemptions, including the steps to be followed when such exemptions or exceptions have been denied.
- Providing a copy of all approved exceptions and exemptions to each screening checkpoint and to the facility security organization.
- Retaining records in accordance with NARA General Records Schedule.<sup>3</sup>

If a facility occupant wishes to obtain authorization to enter with or possess a prohibited or controlled item, they must do so in accordance with the policies established for the specific facility. A sample [Prohibited Item Exception/Exemption form](#) is available for use on the website. The responsible authority should seek legal counsel when necessary or appropriate about whether to grant or deny an exception or exemption to an individual for an item that is otherwise prohibited from a particular

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<sup>2</sup> The Risk Management Process for Federal Facilities: An ISC Standard, Appendix D, How to Conduct a Facility Security Committee.

<sup>3</sup> See NARA guidance on [General Records Security](#).

federal facility but may have a legitimate and lawful use.

## 7.0 Controlled Items

Controlled items are items considered potentially dangerous devices or items that are not prohibited in federal facilities but that may still require advance notification for entry by federal and contract employees only. While not prohibited for use by federal employees and contractors, controlled items do represent a legitimate risk as they could be used as weapons. Controlled items that require advance notification for entry include tools of the trade and sporting equipment. The responsible authority should establish a policy and procedure for the introduction and possession of such devices.



Visitors are prohibited from bringing controlled items into federal facilities.

### 7.1 Tools of the Trade

Tools of the trade are any items required for a person to do his or her job, such as hand tools for maintenance and construction or a chef's knife for catering.

#### 7.1.1 Bladed, Edged, or Sharp Items

The list of prohibited bladed, edged, or sharp items includes, but is not limited to:

- Saws, including cordless portable power saws;
- Scissors, metal with pointed tips;
- Screw drivers (except those in eyeglass repair kits);
- Drills, including portable power drills; and
- Tools including, but not limited to, wrenches, pliers, and folding, multi-purpose utility tools, etc.

#### 7.1.2 Club-like Items and Striking Devices

The list of club-like items and striking devices includes, but is not limited to:

- Hammers; and
- Crowbars.

#### 7.1.3 Destructive Devices, Explosives, or Combustible Chemical Compounds and Mixtures

The list of destructive devices, explosives, or any chemical compound or mixture that may combust or oxidize upon the application of heat, flame, or shock includes, but is not limited to:

- Flares;
- Gasoline;
- Ammonium nitrate, and
- Aerosol sprays.

#### 7.1.4 Disabling Chemicals and Other Dangerous Items

The list of disabling chemicals and other dangerous items includes, but is not limited to:

- Chlorine and bleach;
- Compressed gas cylinders, including fire extinguishers; and
- Toxic industrial chemicals and/or materials.

## 7.2 Training Aids

Inert training aids may include but are not limited to realistic replicas of explosives or other dangerous weapons used in the training of security personnel, (e.g., vehicle searches, facility searches, and general improvised explosive device recognition). These items require an approved exception as outlined in section 6.0.

## 7.3 Sporting Equipment

Sporting equipment consists of items used in the practice of, or participation in, certain physical activities, games, or sports, many of which may be used as club-like items or striking devices. The list includes but is not limited to:

- Baseball bats;
- Golf clubs;
- Hockey sticks;
- Lacrosse sticks
- Pool cues; and
- Ski poles.

## 8.0 Glossary

**Building:** An enclosed structure, above or below grade.

**Building Entry:** An access point into, or exit from, the building.

**Controlled Item:** Potentially dangerous devices or items that are not prohibited in federal facilities but may require advance notification for entry for federal and contract employees only. Visitors cannot bring controlled items into a federal facility.

**Exception:** Temporary in nature and granted for specific occurrences or a defined period.

**Exemption:** Permanent in nature until rescinded.

**Dangerous Weapons:** An animate or inanimate weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, excluding a pocketknife with a blade of less than 2.5 inches in length.

**Destructive Weapons:** Any device which is either designed or redesigned for use as a dangerous weapon.

**Facility:** Space built or established to serve a particular purpose. The facility is inclusive of a building or suite and associated support infrastructure, (e.g., parking or utilities), and land.

**Facility Security Committee (FSC):** A committee responsible for addressing facility-specific security issues and approving the implementation of security measures and practices in multi-tenant facilities. The FSC consists of representatives of all federal tenants in the facility, the security organization, and the owning or leasing department or agency. In the case of new construction or pending lease actions, the FSC will also include the project team and the planned tenant(s). The FSC was formerly known as the Building Security Committee (BSC).

**Federal Contractor:** According to 11 C.F.R. § 115.1 "a person, as defined by 11 C.F.R. § 100.10, who enters into a contract with the United States or any department or agency thereof for the rendition of personal services; or furnishing any material, supplies, or equipment; or selling any land or buildings; if the payment for the performance of the contract or payment for the material, supplies, equipment, land or building is to be made in whole or part from funds appropriated by Congress."

**Federal Departments and Agencies:** Those executive departments enumerated in 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 101, independent establishments as defined by 5 U.S.C. § 104(1), Government corporations as defined by 5 U.S.C. § 103(1), and the U.S. Postal Service.

**Federal Employee:** An individual employed by the U.S. federal government.

**Federal Facilities:** Government-leased-and-owned facilities in the United States (inclusive of its territories) occupied by federal employees for nonmilitary activities.

**Federal Tenant:** A federal department or agency that occupies space and pays rent on this space in a federal facility.

**Government-Owned:** A facility owned by the United States and under the custody and control of a federal department or agency.

**Law Enforcement Officer:** Any officer, agent, or employee of the United States, a state, or political subdivision thereof, that in the lawful performance of official duties is authorized to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of law.

**Legal Authority:** Individuals granted authority under code or regulation with the authority to control the admittance of items in certain buildings or parts of a building. Examples include the control of

personal electronic devices in areas where secure compartmental information may be stored, the prohibition for cameras in certain areas, or a judge prohibiting electronic devices in a courtroom or in an area where witnesses or jurors may be present.

**Non-Federal Tenant:** For the purposes of entry control, employees of non-federal tenants who occupy other space in a mixed multi-tenant facility. The FSC and lease agreement would establish entry control requirements applicable to non-federal tenants passing through a federal entry control point in accordance with established policies.

**Occupant:** Any person who is regularly assigned to federally occupied space who has been issued and presents the required identification badge or pass for access. In multi-tenant facilities, the FSC establishes the thresholds for determining who qualifies for "occupant" status. Based on varying mission assignments, departments and agencies have the flexibility to determine what constitutes a "regularly assigned" person.

**Prohibited Item:** An item, legal or illegal in nature, where possession is restricted from entry into a facility by federal, state, or local law, regulation, court-order, rule, or FSC policy.

**Responsible Authority:** Entities engaged in making security related decisions such as Facility Security Committees and/or tenant representative for single-tenant facilities, or legal authority.

**Security Organization:** The government agency or an internal agency component responsible for physical security for the specific facility.

**Sporting Equipment:** Any object used for sport or exercise.

**Tools of the Trade:** Items required for a person to do his or her job, such as hand tools for maintenance and construction or a chef's knife for catering.

**Tenant Representative for Single-Tenants Facilities:** Representative of the tenant in a single-tenant facility authorized to make or relay security-related decisions such as funding recommended countermeasures or accepting risk, reviewing, and approving facility security plans, mail security plans, active shooter preparedness plans, etc.

**Visitor:** Any person entering the government facility that does not possess a required identification badge or pass for access or who otherwise does not qualify as an "occupant".

**Weapon:** An object, such as a club, knife, or gun, used to injure, defeat, or destroy.

## 9.0 References

- E.O. 12977, "Interagency Security Committee," October 19, 1995.
- 41 C.F.R. §§ 102-71.20; 102-74 Subpart C.
- 18 U.S.C. § 930: "Possession of firearms and dangerous weapons in Federal facilities," (2011).  
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- September 2011/1st Edition - Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office /Technical Support Working Group/ISC - Best Practices for Mail Screening and Handling (For Official Use Only)
- [The Risk Management Process: An Interagency Security Committee Standard](#)

# Acknowledgments

The ISC would like to thank the participants of the *Items Prohibited in Federal Facilities: An Interagency Security Committee Standard*.

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