



SENIOR PRESIDING JUDGE  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## **Procedure for Applications for Armed Police Presence in Crown Courts and Magistrates' Court Buildings**

### **Guidance Issued by the Senior Presiding Judge**

#### **Introduction**

1. This guidance sets out the procedure for the making and handling of applications for authorisation for the presence of armed police officers within the precincts of any Crown and Magistrates' Court building at any time.
2. It has been produced in consultation with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service.

#### **Commencement and Amendment**

3. It will take effect from 1 November 2012 and may be amended as required by the Senior Presiding Judge after consultation with ACPO and HMCTS.

#### **Definitions**

4. The guidance applies to an application to authorise the carriage of Firearms or Tasers in court. It does not apply to officers who are carrying CS Spray or PAVA incapacitant spray which is included in the standard equipment issued to officers in some forces and therefore no separate authorisation is required for its carriage in court.

#### **Scope**

5. The guidance applies to all cases in England and Wales<sup>1</sup> in which a police unit intends to request authorisation for the presence of armed police officers in Crown or Magistrates' Court buildings at any time and including during the delivery of prisoners to court.
6. It is intended to provide a consolidated record of the procedure that should be followed in all cases where a request for authorisation is sought by the police. It replaces previous guidance issued by the Senior Presiding Judge.

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt this guidance does not apply to Scotland.



It is intended to be consistent with (and not supersede) Home Office Circular 69/88.

### **Emergency Situations**

7. The guidance does not apply when there is an emergency. In such circumstances the police must be able to respond in a way which in their professional judgement is most appropriate.

### **Designated Court Centres**

8. Applications may only be made for armed police presence in the designated Crown Court and Magistrates' Court centres listed in Annex A. This list may be revised from time to time in consultation with ACPO and HMCTS. It will be reviewed at least every 5 years in consultation with ACPO armed police secretariat and the Presiding Judges.

### **Preparatory work prior to applications in all cases**

9. Prior to the making of any application for armed transport of prisoners or the presence of armed police officers in court buildings, consideration must be given to making use of prison video-link equipment to avoid the necessity of the prisoner's attendance at court for the hearing in respect of which the application is to be made.
10. Notwithstanding their designation, each requesting police officer will attend the relevant court before an application is made to ensure that there have been no changes to the premises and that there are no circumstances that might affect security arrangements.

### **Standard application in the Crown Court**

11. All applications should be directed to the Cluster Manager and should be sent by e-mail if at all possible.
12. The application must be made on the standard form attached at Annex B.
13. The Cluster Manager will notify the Presiding Judge on the Circuit by e-mail providing a copy of the form at Annex B and any supporting evidence. The Presiding Judge may ask to see the senior police officer concerned.
14. The Presiding Judge will consider the application. If it is refused the application fails and the police must be informed.
15. If the Presiding Judge approves the application it should be forwarded to the secretary in the Senior Presiding Judge's office. The Senior Presiding