

- *must authorise the deployment of AFOs, or ratify or rescind the deployment where it has already been approved by the tactical firearms commander*
- *should ensure that all decisions are recorded, where practicable, in order to provide a clear audit trail*
- *must ensure that the firearms strategy complies with the wider strategic aims of the overall operation*
- *should test the tactical plan against the established strategy, where practicable and/or time allows*
- *is responsible for overall resourcing in respect of the deployment of AFOs*
- *where appropriate, will chair meetings of the strategic coordinating group (SCG) when they are held during a multi-agency or multi-discipline response*
- *should set command protocols where appropriate*
- *should consider consulting partners, stakeholders and interest groups involved (if any) when determining strategy (see also development of strategy (gold))*
- *should consider the need for a community impact assessments*
- *should consider declaring and managing the event as a critical incident*
- *should maintain a strategic overview*
- *must be able to be contacted by the tactical firearms commander*
- *is responsible for reviewing and ensuring the resilience and effectiveness of the command structure and the effectiveness of the tactical firearms commander*
- *should consider the appointment of more than one tactical firearms commander where there are clear demarcations geographically (ie, police boundaries), or in respect of roles, or where the management of AFOs is only one part of the operational police response.*

[COP0000024. APP Command content as of 11 December 2015. pdf pages 4-5. \(2.1. Strategic firearms commander\).](#)

5.2.1. The SFC responsibilities did not change between December 2015 and the most recent revision published in March 2021. The changes made in March 2021 better articulated the SFC role in respect of the working strategy for armed deployment, and the measures taken to ensure that the working strategy was appropriately tested in response to changes in the threat and risk assessment and tactical plan. The changes also better align to operational practice, recognising that the initial working strategy is usually developed by the TFC, following consideration of the available information and intelligence and the identification of relevant threat and risk, prior to being considered and ratified or amended by the SFC.

- *must constantly monitor the need for the continued deployment of AFOs.*
- *must review and update the tactical plan and ensure that any changes are communicated to the operational firearms commanders and, where appropriate, the strategic firearms commander*
- *should consider and, where appropriate, conduct a community impact assessments*
- *should consider declaring and managing the event as a critical incident*
- *should consider the number, role and function of the operational firearms commanders*
- *should consider the wider community, public safety and evidential implications of the use of specialist munitions, pyrotechnic devices or incapacitants*
- *should ensure that after all deployed staff are appropriately debriefed, operational and organisational learning takes place.*

[COP000024. APP Command content as of 11 December 2015. pdf pages 5-6. \(2.2. Tactical firearms commander\).](#)

5.3.1. In March 2021 a number of amendments were made to the TFC responsibilities in the APP-AP. The specific TFC responsibilities that were amended or added in March 2021 are:

- *must assess and develop the available information and intelligence, and develop an appropriate threat assessment and working strategy for ratification by the SFC where practicable*
- *must consult a tactical advisor as soon as practicable*
- *should ensure that an operational risk assessment is undertaken prior to deployment*

[COP000025. APP Command content as of 12 May 2021. pdf pages 5-6. \(2.2. Tactical firearms commander\).](#)

5.3.1.1. The first bullet point reinforced the amendments, previously explained, regarding the initial responsibility for developing the threat assessment and working strategy for ratification by the SFC. The second bullet point changes the requirement to consult a tactical advisor from 'should' to 'must'. This is to strengthen the requirement and the term 'must' is explained in the December 2015 APP-AP, and is materially unchanged (other than amendment to the ACPO terminology) in 2021 as;

*A police force or an individual officer is under a positive obligation in law, or that given the gravity of the issue, the inclusion of the term 'must' has been approved by ACPO Chief Constables' Council, thereby endorsing the need for this action to be completed. If a chief officer determines it necessary to issue separate instructions, due to the operational context*