



Guidance on the Carrying of Weapons

Following the events of December 1995 with the tragic stabbing of the Headmaster outside his school, it seemed appropriate to the Executive to issue the following guidance to members of BAB regarding the carrying of weapons that are used in training. This advice does not cover the use of weapons within the training session. Whilst the advice is applicable to all weapons it particularly aimed at “live” blades.

The advice given is as follows :

- Weapons should only be carried when it is known that they are required at a particular training session. Instructors should therefore inform their students as to when weapons are actually required.
- Weapons should only be carried directly to and from a practice. Weapons therefore should not be left in the car boot all week.
- Aikidoists should carry their Association’s Membership book.
- The Aikidoists should ensure that their weapons are carried within a secure bag at all times and hence not directly visible and should ensure that the bag is not left unattended at any time.
- Travelling on public transport should be avoided if possible.
- If an Aikidoist who is carrying weapons is stopped by the Police, every possible assistance should be given to the officer(s) including an explanation given of why such weapons are being carried. No attempt to conceal the fact that weapons are being carried should be made.

The law regarding the carrying of weapons in a public place is contained in Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 & Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Offensive Weapon in Public Place

Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 states :

Any person who without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, the proof whereof shall lie on him, has with him in any public place any offensive weapon shall be guilty of an offence.

Offensive weapon in this case means any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person, or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him or by some other person.



Article with blade or point in Public Place

Section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 states:-

Any person who has an article to which this section applies with him in a public place shall be guilty of an offence. It shall be a defence for a person charged with an offence under this section to prove that he had good reason or lawful authority for having the article with him in a public place. Additionally it shall be a defence for a person charged under this section to prove that he had the article with him a) use at work; b) for religious reasons or; c) as part of any national costume.

The above extracts are not word for word, and case law expands the provisions with very precise meanings.

The words “reasonable excuse” and “good reason” in each of the Sections provides a defence for Aikidoists. However, in carrying such weapons, the Aikidoist demeanour is the most important factor. If the Aikidoist complies with the above advice and offers a complete explanation to the Police, if requested, there should be no problems.

Insurance

Attention is drawn to Information Paper 13 regarding the practise with live blades - for the avoidance of doubt you should be aware the Board’s insurance covers does not extend for the practise involving such blades. Associations will need to seek their own cover from Insurers as it is not covered by the Board’s existing policies.