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TRAINING DURING COVID-19: VERSION 2 – 21/09/20

1. **Current Situation.** The introduction of COVID-19 guidelines make it impossible to continue to conduct our theatrical firearms training in the same manner that we have been doing previously. In order to continue to train actors with firearms to a very high standard whilst keeping the price affordable to the customer, it is necessary to compromise in some areas. This document sets out the Bare Arms guidelines for how Theatrical Firearms Courses (TFCs) will be run for the foreseeable future in order to minimise the risk of infection, whilst maximising the effectiveness of the training.
2. **Risk Factors.** The following factors add to the risk of training.
 - a. **Numbers of Students and Instructors.** The higher the numbers of people who are meeting from different households, the higher the risk of one of those people having COVID-19 and passing it to the rest of the course. One-on-one training (one student and one instructor) is the least risky form of training, but can be prohibitively expensive for the majority of private students. Our normal course of 8 students and 2 instructors presents a higher risk.
 - b. **Age and Health of Students and Instructors.** Most of our students are in the lowest risk brackets for severe symptoms from a COVID-19 infection, and even if they were infected are likely to have mild symptoms if any. Consideration needs to be taken by those who are in higher risk categories, or will be living with those who are, if training during this current time is worth the risk.
 - c. **Travel.** Travelling to the course location via public transport presents a risk that the student may encounter infection whilst en route. Travel between the accommodation and the ranges is normal via shared transport, which would also present an increased risk of transmission of infection between course members.
 - d. **Proximity/Distancing.** The ranges and classrooms are limited in size which makes it difficult for our normal sized groups to be able to maintain 1m distancing at all times. During practical lessons, it is necessary for the instructors to be hands-on with the students throughout, and on ranges they need to be ready to step in for safety reasons. It is assessed that after 20mins if being within 2m of someone, the risk of infection increases dramatically. Students and instructors would be spending 2.5 days together.
 - e. **Shared Kit and Equipment.** During a normal course, students have to share weapons and equipment. This can be a vector for infection.
 - f. **Accommodation/Feeding.** Normally students are housed in dorm rooms and are in close proximity during meal times.

g. **Communicating With PPE.** Communication between student and instructor on the range is critical for safety. Whilst wearing ear defence and a mouth covering, it is much more difficult to communicate.

3. **Mitigation Factors Already in Place.** The following measures are already being observed.

a. **The Tunnel.**

- (1) Temperature checks are performed on everyone who enters the facilities.
- (2) Only three firers are allowed on the range firing points at one time.
- (3) Masks are worn inside at all times.
- (4) Hand sanitiser is readily available.
- (5) Ranges and facilities are cleaned regularly.

b. **Monkton Wyld (Accommodation).**

- (1) Rooms are single occupancy.
- (2) One group per floor inc. shower and toilet facilities.
- (3) Meals are prepared and left for groups to distribute themselves so that there is no contact between staff and guests.

4. **Residual Risks.** Risk of infection cannot be eliminated completely only reduced. Some risk measures such as masks may increase the risk of a safety incident occurring on the range due to difficulties in communication. The length of time that students and instructors spend together, despite distancing and other measures being in place, is the biggest factor that affects the chances of infection.

5. **Student Attitudes to Training.** Bare Arms conducted a survey of potential students and those that had previously trained with us. Whilst their responses are not scientific and should not be treated as such, they can help shape our approach to training. At the time of writing, 53 responses had been received with the following trends observed.

- a. 51% stated that COVID had not had a lasting change on their behaviour, or had returned to mostly normal in the last few months.
- b. 50% stated that they intended to undertake training with Bare Arms regardless of what measures were in place, with an additional 29% who said they would attend training with basic measures in place.
- c. Most stated that they were comfortable with any size of class, especially if everyone was tested.

- d. The majority were happy not to wear masks if it hindered with training or safety, as long as everyone was tested and monitored.
- e. Almost all respondents were happy being in close proximity to other people as long as testing was in place, or people were wearing masks.
- f. When asked *“If training was conducted free of COVID restrictions (assuming everyone would be tested), would you be happy to sign a waiver agreeing that you are aware of the risks entailed and wanted to train regardless?”* 85% agreed.

ANALYSIS

6. The current measures in place at The Tunnel and Monkton Wyld mean that infection between groups is minimised, and within groups is reduced. Strict social distancing and mask wearing throughout would probably reduce the effectiveness of some aspects of the training, and possibly have a negative impact of range safety. Even with standard measures in place throughout, the length of the course and the time spent in the classroom/on the range together means that the risk of infection between TFC students/instructors is much higher than any normal day-to-day activity. Adherence to various measures will drop off as students relax, resulting in an increase in the risk of infection.

PROPOSAL

7. Given that level of infection within the general population is currently low and usually isolated to particular areas (but rising) and the measures are unlikely to massively reduce the risk of infection between students within a TFC, it is imperative to minimise the potential for infection to be brought onto the course. There are certain times when range safety must override COVID safety. Other additional measures could be brought in such as;

- a. **Pre-course testing.** Students and instructors could take a test on arrival. This is being explored through a private company. NHS testing is currently overwhelmed and results are not timely.
- b. **Numbers.** Student numbers on courses will be reduced to 4. This allows for more effective distancing when in the classroom and on the range, including allowing everyone to have their own equipment and weapons. It also reduces the risk of an infection being brought onto the course. It makes it easier to accommodate everyone in their own rooms and for everyone to eat spaced out.
- c. **Isolation.** Students and instructors should limit their contact with other people as much as possible immediately before and after attending a course.
- d. **Vulnerable People.** If a student is in a vulnerable category, or lives with someone who is, then they should not attend the course.
- e. **Cancellation.** If someone has any symptoms or doubts about their health, then they should be free to cancel their place without penalty. Each course will have 1-2 reserves who are prepared to attend the course at short notice in case of drop out.
- f. **Hand Washing.** Prior to entering any room/range/starting any lesson, hands will be washed to minimise any infection.

- g. **Wiping Down of Equipment.** If any equipment (firearms) have to be shared, then they will be wiped down before being handed over to the next person.
- h. **Masks.** All personnel will wear masks when moving through public areas. When sat down in the classroom and firing on the range, masks can be removed as long as distancing is observed. If at any point distancing is impossible, masks are to be worn.
- i. **Use of Outside Areas.** Where possible and dependant on weather, lessons will be conducted outside to reduce the risk of infection.
- j. **Frequency.** Courses will no longer be run back to back, to ensure that the instructors can be retested and the equipment and classrooms can be deep cleaned.
- k. **Course Days.** In a change to previous courses, courses will now run Saturday to Monday. The Tunnel is closed to the public on Sunday and Monday (Day 2 and 3 of the TFC where the majority of shooting takes place) and so this minimises the amount of contact that the course will have with members of the public.
- l. **Transport.** Students are strongly encouraged to use private transport to attend the course where possible. On the short drive between the accommodation and the ranges, if students are sharing lifts, then they are to wear masks.
- m. **Accommodation/Food.** Students will all have separate rooms on the same floor, with shared washing facilities. Meals will be eaten outside where possible, and spread out in the dining room when not. Lunch will be taken as a packed lunch to the ranges, to minimise movement to and from the accommodation.
- n. **Track and Trace.** If any student becomes symptomatic or tests positive after a course, then everyone on the course will be informed and will be encouraged to isolate and get tested as per the current government guidance. If a student becomes symptomatic whilst on the course, then the course will be stopped and everyone will be sent home to isolate.

SUMMARY

It is impossible to remove all the risks associated with conducting training during the COVID-19 pandemic. As numbers in the UK are currently low, and the student body is in a low risk category, it is possible to restart training with some minor alterations as described above. The biggest risk to life still remains using firearms on the range, and where mitigation measures adversely affect this, priority should be given to range safety. Whilst it is not critical that training goes ahead, the student body has indicated that they understand the risks and wish to restart training. Mental health is as important as physical health and most of the student body have felt under-utilised for the last 6 months. As the film industry begins to find ways to restart, a return to training can be a valuable part of regaining a feeling of normality and the benefits should not be underestimated. If the situation changes with regards to the rate or risk of infections, then all measures will be revisited to understand if the assumptions made are still valid.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BWR Simmons', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BWR Simmons
Managing Director
Bare Arms Ltd.