

Bellingham Symphony Orchestra

BSO Violence Prevention, Weapons, & Armaments Policy

A. Purpose and Commitment

The Bellingham Symphony Orchestra (BSO) is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all individuals engaged in its mission, including musicians, staff, guest artists, board members, volunteers, youth participants, and audiences. In light of updated screening protocols at the Mount Baker Theatre (MBT) and the increasing need to address security risks, BSO is implementing this Violence Prevention, Weapons, and Armaments Policy.

The goals of this policy are to:

- Ensure safety and comfort for all participants in BSO activities, whether on stage, backstage, in public venues, or in outreach programs.
- Support effective identification and response to threats or concerning behaviors.
- Comply with all applicable laws and venue regulations.
- Minimize legal and reputational risks while upholding ethical and professional standards.

B. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All BSO musicians, guest artists, conductors, coaches, staff, volunteers, board members, committee members, youth program participants, and their families.
- All locations where BSO activities occur, including the Mount Baker Theatre (MBT), rehearsal venues, offices, schools, churches, community spaces, and digital platforms.

This policy will be reflected in updates to:

- BSO Player and Coach Codes of Conduct
- Youth Program Guidelines
- Staff and Volunteer Expectations

C. Relationship to MBT and Venue Policies

BSO affirms its commitment to complying with the security and weapons policies of MBT and any other performance venue it uses. This policy shall meet or exceed the minimum safety requirements of those venues. Where venue policies are ambiguous, BSO will define and enforce its own internal standards to ensure safety for all participants, especially backstage and in musician-only areas.

D. Weapons-Free Policy

BSO prohibits all weapons in all BSO-controlled spaces, with limited exceptions as described below.

1) Prohibited Weapons

The following items are prohibited at all times:

- Firearms of any kind, whether concealed or openly carried, regardless of permit status. *Exception:* On-duty or off-duty law enforcement officers.
- Armaments: Explosives, stun guns, brass knuckles, numchucks, or any object used with intent to harm others.
- Blades, tools, or implements not explicitly allowed under Section 4.2.

2) Permitted Tools for Artistic Purposes

The following tools may be brought by musicians for professional purposes:

- **Reed players:** Up to [3] reed knives with blades under [6] inches. Plus 5 razor blades or knives.
- **Other musicians:** One folding knife or multi-tool with a blade under [4] inches (e.g., pocket knife for string maintenance).
- **Cellists and bassists:** Endpins as required for performance.
- **Theatrical:** Performance props, etc. need to be approved in writing.

Misuse of any allowed item may result in disciplinary action.

E. Violence Prevention Standards

BSO prohibits any act or threat of violence in any BSO activity or space. This includes but is not limited to:

- Assault or intimidation.
- Threats (verbal, written, or symbolic).
- Harassment or stalking.
- Brandishing weapons or objects as weapons.
- Repeated patterns of behavior with intent to intimidate.

All individuals are expected to maintain awareness of potentially concerning behaviors. While direct intervention is not expected, individuals should promptly report any concern. Intervention is only encouraged in extremely limited circumstances involving imminent personal harm.

This policy is designed to complement the BSO Misconduct Prevention Policy and relevant Codes of Conduct.

F. Reporting Concerns

Concerns about violence, weapons, or threatening behavior should be reported promptly to one of the following, in order of availability:

1. Law enforcement or appropriate first responder if appropriate
2. BSO Executive Director
3. Lead staff member on site
4. Conductor
5. Board President or any Executive Committee member
6. Players Committee Chair, Vice Chair, Orchestra Representative, or Chorus Representative

All reports will be handled as confidentially as possible. Information will be shared only with those who need to know in order to respond appropriately and legally. Anonymous reporting mechanisms will be provided through the BSO Players Page.

G. Response and Enforcement

Violations of this policy will be addressed using BSO's standard disciplinary sequence (see Policies and Procedures for details):

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Probation and hearing.
- Suspension or termination from participation.

However, **any individual exhibiting confirmed violent or threatening behavior may be removed immediately** from the premises or activity. Such incidents must be followed up within two working days by the Executive Director, Board President, and Executive Committee.

H. Protection from Retaliation

This protection extends to all musicians, volunteers, staff, board members, youth participants, and their families. Good faith reports of suspected policy violations, including concerns about management or peers, shall not result in any adverse action. Whistleblowers are protected regardless of whether the concern is substantiated, provided it was made in good faith. See BSO Whistleblower Policy (Section 16. Whistleblower Protection).

I. Review and Updates

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee and updated as needed to reflect changes in:

- Venue security practices
- Legal or insurance requirements
- BSO operations and risk management goals

Appendix

Legal Framework and Compliance

The Bellingham Symphony Orchestra's Violence Prevention, Weapons, and Armaments Policy is developed in alignment with applicable Washington State laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

- RCW 9.41.300 and RCW 9.41.280 (Weapons in certain restricted locations)
- RCW 49.17.060 and WAC 296-800-110 (Workplace safety and health standards)
- RCW 49.60.210 (Anti-retaliation protections)
- RCW 26.44.030 (Mandated reporting for youth safety)

The BSO reserves the right to enact stricter standards in accordance with its duty of care to its members and the public.

Definition of “Violence”

For the purposes of this policy, “violence” includes physical aggression, threatening language, stalking, bullying, intimidation, sexual violence, or any behavior that creates a hostile or unsafe environment.

Definition of “Weapon”

For the purposes of this policy, “weapon” includes any firearm (loaded or unloaded), explosive device, knife (except as outlined below), or any object that could reasonably be perceived as a weapon, whether or not it is used to cause harm. Toy or replica weapons are also prohibited unless explicitly approved in writing for theatrical performance use.

Definition of “Armament”

For the purposes of this policy, armament refers to any military-style weaponry, combat-grade devices, or equipment designed or primarily intended for use in warfare or personal combat. This

includes but is not limited to: explosives, stun guns, brass knuckles, batons, tactical blades, numchucks, and similar objects not reasonably required for musical or operational purposes.