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STATSREVISORERNE  
RIGSREVISIONEN



Extract from Rigsrevisionen's report on

# the Danish police's management of weapons and ammunition

submitted to the Public Accounts Committee



1849  
147.281  
237  
1976  
114.6  
22.480  
908

April 2017

# 1. Introduction and conclusion

## 1.1. PURPOSE AND CONCLUSION

1. This report addresses how the Danish police force manage their weapons and ammunition.

The starting point of the study is twofold: 1. the police are required to ensure secure management and storing of weapons and ammunition, and 2. police operations may be affected if records of weapons and ammunition are not fully updated.

2. For several years now, the Danish Security and Intelligence Service has assessed the terror threat against Denmark as serious. As a consequence hereof, the Danish National Police has called on the police districts to maintain an elevated level of alertness, as an attack may take place without any pre-incident intelligence. The police must be able to respond quickly and effectively to changes in the threat picture, and it is of particular importance that the police is capable of assembling the necessary personnel and equipment very quickly.

In connection with the terrorist incidents on 14 and 15 February 2015 in Copenhagen at Krudttønden (café) and in Krystalgade (location of the main synagogue of the Danish Jewish community), the Danish National Police encountered a number of logistic challenges concerning re-location of personnel and equipment, which turned out to be a resource-intensive and complicated exercise.

The subsequent evaluation of the terrorist incidents made it clear that the Danish National Police needed to support more effectively its overview of available personnel, equipment and materiel.

3. The purpose of this study is to determine if the Danish National Police has ensured that weapons and ammunition are managed securely in the police districts.

4. In December 2015, Rigsrevisionen submitted a report to the Public Accounts Committee that showed that loss and recovery of weapons were not adequately handled by the Danish Defence. The outcome of this report – although it had another angle on the issue – also formed part of the background to Rigsrevisionen's decision to initiate the present study in September 2016.

### **AMMUNITION**

In this report, ammunition refers to cartridges for firearms, pepper spray and gas.

### **POLICE OPERATIONS**

Tasks that involve the use of personnel and equipment.

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## CONCLUSION

It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the Danish National Police has not ensured adequate management of weapons and ammunition. The Danish National Police is responsible for establishing the framework and rules for the safekeeping of weapons and ammunition in the police districts. The police districts are responsible for ensuring full overview of the location of all weapons, at any time. It is Rigsrevisionen's overall assessment that neither the Danish National Police nor the police districts have lived up to their responsibilities in this respect.

Rigsrevisionen finds it positive that the Danish National Police, based on experience gained in connection with the terrorist incidents in Copenhagen in February 2015, has implemented a new IT system (*VåbenOverblik*) that is intended to provide a clear overview of all weapons held by the police, including their physical location. However, the study shows that the Danish National Police did not assure the quality of the weapons data in the old IT system before they were transferred to the new system. Moreover, at the time of the examination, Rigsrevisionen's stocktaking of weapons in 11 of Denmark's 12 police districts showed that the Danish National Police did not have an updated overview of the location of the individual weapons in the police districts: none of the records in the new IT system corresponded with the number and types of weapons registered by Rigsrevisionen in the armouries at the central police stations. This is considered very unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen.

Nor did Rigsrevisionen's stocktaking of pepper spray, ammunition and gas in the eleven police districts correspond with the records held by the districts. To this should be added that several districts had expired gas in stock ready for use in police operations. This is considered very unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen.

### LIVE WEAPONS

Live weapons can be loaded and fire lethal projectiles.

### BLANK WEAPONS

These are weapons for training use that have been adapted and only produce a noise when fired.

### WEAPONS INSPECTION

Every two years, the Danish National Police is required to conduct a weapons inspection and ensure that all weapons are in the custody of the police and in a serviceable condition.

The study shows that the Danish National Police lacks overview of the number of lost live and blank weapons. In the course of the study, the Danish National Police has adjusted the information provided to Rigsrevisionen concerning the number of lost weapons. According to the latest information received from the Danish National Police, 64 weapons were lost in the period 2010 to 2016. However, the police has since recovered some of these weapons, which brought the total number of lost weapons down to 44, of which eight are live weapons. The study also shows that the information provided to the Legal Affairs Committee under the Danish parliament, in 2014, concerning the number of lost weapons was incorrect, since the actual number of lost weapons was higher than indicated by the minister of justice.

The Danish National Police lived up to its own requirements concerning biennial weapons inspections, in the period 2010 to 2016. However, the study shows that the inspection periods were very long, because neither the police districts nor the departments of the Danish National Police presented all weapons for inspection at the time requested. Since the purpose of the weapons inspections is to determine that all weapons are in the custody of the police and in serviceable condition, this is considered unsatisfactory by Rigsrevisionen.

The study also shows that the Danish National Police has established only general requirements concerning safekeeping of weapons and ammunition, and that only three out of eleven police districts have implemented the requirements in their local guidelines. Many of the police districts have not restricted access to the armouries to specific members of staff, nor have they decided whether the armouries should be monitored. Rigsrevisionen is of the opinion that failure to address these issues entails a risk that weapons and ammunition are not safely stored.

Last the study shows that stolen weapons or weapons handed in by citizens are not managed in a satisfactory manner at the police districts. Rigsrevisionen counted the number of seized/handed in weapons in safe storage at five central police stations, and at none of the stations did the actual number of weapons correspond with the records held by the police.

The Danish National Police has informed Rigsrevisionen that it is currently elaborating new guidelines in order to improve the management of weapons and ammunition. The Danish National Police is also working on a new concept of supervision that is intended to strengthen its supervision of the police districts. The Ministry of Justice has acknowledged the shortcomings referred to in Rigsrevisionen's report and will follow up on the action taken by the Danish National Police to address these.