

***Practical
Airsoft
Tactics***

2006 Edition

THE AirSoft PRESS

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Preface

Airsoft has been well established in Asia for over 20 years, but only in recent years has there been much interest in the Western world. Most professional literature on Airsoft were written in Japanese, with very few translated works available. Even though we are seeing more and more tech tips (in English) popping up on the internet these days, too many of them were written by newcomers who don't really know what they are talking about.

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Airsoft skirmish VS real steel battle



Airsoft skirmish is no child's play. It is a serious sport with a TacSim nature. The Practical Airsoft Tactics e-book is specially developed to provide guidance for beginners to skirmish more effectively.

Shooting in an airsoft game is different from that of any real world op. The reason is because in airsoft the distance is close and the action is generally fast. You know in advance how many opponents you have. You also know in advance the exact layout and landscape of the skirmish site.

The skills presented in this ebook are applicable to airsoft shooting and skirmishing, provided that you have a realistic expectation on the achievable field performance. With airsoft guns you can't shoot people 100 yards away. And due to the relatively close distance between both sides, it doesn't make sense to bark out commands and stuff. Stealth action and fast reaction are critical in airsoft (be sure to check out the section on drum mag in this guide).

It is always assumed that your airsoft gun is reasonably accurate and powerful. Based on our experience, your gun must be able to produce a FPS of at least 265~280 with 0.20g BBs in order to be practically useful. And there is absolutely no point of aiming at



anything when the BBs can't fly straight enough to hit the targets.

Please note that the methods for handling and using airsoft rifles are not necessarily the same as those for hand guns. The principles, theories and examples shown in this guide were developed with airsoft rifles in mind.

Also note that certain concepts presented in this guide may be perceived by some as insignificant or irrelevant. For example, some airsofters believe that breath control is not an issue at all for airsoft shooting, while some do. These matters are highly subjective. **Therefore, you should only follow those guidelines that make you feel comfortable. Try them out, and have fun!**



Safe Airsoft Handling

- Keep your airsoft gun unloaded (and the battery disconnected) until you are ready to start the game.
- During the game you should always treat your airsoft gun as if it were fully loaded, and never rely on any mechanical device for safety.
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Never point your airsoft gun at anyone or anything you don't want to shoot. Keep your fingers and other parts of your body away from the muzzle. Always carry your airsoft gun in a way which will allow you to control where the muzzle is pointing, should you stumble or fall.
- Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until you are pretty ready to engage.
- Be alert at all times. Never joke around or engage in horseplay while handling airsoft guns. And never mix alcohol or drugs with shooting.
- Safeguard your sight, hearing and health by wearing eye and ear protection.
- If you see unsafe behavior any time when airsoft guns are being handled, speak up and take action to correct the unsafe behavior at once.
- Positively identify your target and the threat it poses before firing at it. Know what is behind your target (what if your shot misses?).
- Never shoot at a hard surface, since your shot may glance off, ricochet and injure someone accidentally.
- Never shoot at glass bottles, living trees, or inappropriate targets which would create a hazard for other persons or damage the environment.



- At a range, obey the commands of any individual calling 'cease fire,' at once.
- Don't prop or lean a loaded airsoft gun against a tree or other surface which may allow it to slide.
- Don't turn a game into a fight. You will almost always meet some real shitty people at the airsoft events. You know, the punks who buy the most expensive guns and gears, then bark out commands like they own the field, and bitch and moan at you when they get shot. These guys always blame the others, and they always sound like it's never their fault. Unfortunately, you will need to tolerate these hot heads and get used to them because they are gonna be there every weekend. Remember, you participate in airsoft events to make friends and have fun, not to make enemies and have fights. You don't need to take shit from anyone, but you also don't need to fly off the handle. Always keep your emotional state in a steady pleasant and non-exciteable mode and concentrate on the skirmish, doing as professional as possible.



Carries and Guard Positions

Weapons carries are assumed in response to a specific threat situation. They provide an effective way to handle the rifle while remaining alert to enemy engagement.

Make sure you choose a rifle which you are truly comfortable with. If the rifle does not suit you, you won't be able to handle it effectively. Taking into account the fact that airsoft players can be as infant as 10- yrs old or as mature as 60+, the following factors must be thoroughly considered:

- A long rifle with full stock (and full size battery) and metal body is damn heavy. Do you have the body power to carry it with you for the duration of the event? What if the airsoft field has terrains all over the place that require you to run uphill and downhill with this piece of heavy weapon in your hands?*
- A short person (no discrimination here, just my personal experience as I'm not a tall guy myself) with a long rifle -> seriously, in a jungle/woodland with trees, leafs and grasses everywhere, a long rifle will make it very hard for a short person to move and turn with flexibility. In fact it is also not a good choice for battle field with a slippery ground (imagine a short person with a long M16 in his hands – when he runs and slips, his rifle's barrel is at risk).*

Simply put, always select an airsoft weapon which is physically viable for you to carry.



Tactical Carry



Go for this when you need to be in control of the rifle while moving. With Tactical Carry, you place your left hand on the handguards and your right hand around the pistol grip, with your trigger finger straight along the receiver and your right thumb on top of the selector switch. You then place the buttstock along the side of your body at approximately hip level. Angle the muzzle upward about 45 degrees in a safe direction, then position the muzzle in front of the eyes (slightly below eye level) and move the head and the eyes with the muzzle as it moves.



Alert Carry



Go for this if enemy contact is likely and that faster engagement is expected. With Alert Carry, you place your left hand on the handguards and your right hand around the pistol grip, with the trigger finger straight along the receiver and the right thumb on top of the selector switch. You then place the buttstock in the shoulder. Finally, angle the muzzle downward about 45 degrees and point it in a safe direction or the general direction of likely enemy contact.



Ready Carry



Go for this if enemy contact is imminent and that immediate engagement is expected. With Ready Carry, you place your left hand on handguards and right hand around the pistol grip, with the trigger finger straight along the receiver and the right thumb on top of the selector switch. You then place the buttstock in the shoulder and point the muzzle in the direction of the enemy. You also lower the sights to just below eye level so that a clear field of view can be maintained (and that a target may be easily identified).

Guard Positions

Closely related to Carries are the Guard Positions.

Ready Position

With a Ready Position, your gun is unholstered and aimed forward at



approximately a 45 degree angle to the ground. Your trigger finger is off the trigger until you are ready to fire. You seldom shoot from this position.

Retention Position

With this position, you have your gun drawn back into the side of your abdomen at about a 45 degree angle to your body. This position is good when you need to hold your gun for very long periods with little arm fatigue. Again, the trigger finger is off the trigger until you are ready to fire. You can technically shoot from this position.

Threat Position

This is the drawn position with the sights on the target and the trigger finger in the trigger guard. Upon evaluation of the threat, the trigger is pulled and the shot is immediately fired. You usually shoot from this position.



Basic Rifle Marksmanship



*Enemies are seldom visible except when assaulting. Combat fire should be directed at an area where the enemies have been detected (or where they are suspected of being located). However, you must realize the difference between a real firearm and an airsoft replica. Most high power airsoft replicas can produce an effective shooting range of max 35~50 meters (we are talking about effective range, NOT maximum flying distance), which is far below that of a real rifle. Practical implication: For stock gun, the range at which your enemy can be effectively engaged rarely exceeds 30~40 meters. **

** It is technically possible for a heavily upgraded gun to shoot and hit a target that is 60~70 meters away. However, such a range is often a range-in-dispute since there is no way for you to visually confirm the hit. Based on our experience, honesty exists only when visual confirmation can be maintained ☺*



Before approaching the firing line, you must be able to establish a steady position that allows observation of the target. Aim the rifle at the target by aligning the sight system, and fire the rifle without disturbing this alignment (that means you need to exercise proper breathing and trigger squeezing).

Shooting position elements



Typical steady position elements shall include:

- Nonfiring hand grip (or a RAS foregrip) - the rifle handguard should rest on the heel of the hand in the V formed by the thumb and the fingers. The grip of the nonfiring hand is light, and slight rearward pressure should be exerted.
- Rifle butt (stock) position - the butt of the stock should be placed in the pocket of the firing shoulder. Since most



non-blowback airsoft replicas do not produce recoil effect, the purpose of doing this is mainly for ensuring a steady position.

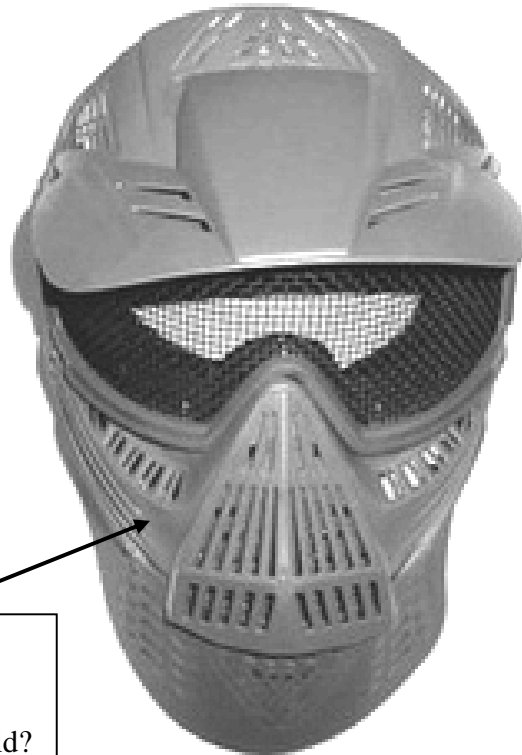
- Firing hand grip (the pistol grip) - The firing hand should grasp the pistol grip so that it can fit the V formed by the thumb and forefinger. The forefinger should be placed on the trigger so that the lay of the rifle is not disturbed during trigger squeeze. A slight rearward pressure should be exerted by the remaining three fingers so that the butt of the stock can firmly remain in the pocket of the shoulder.
- Elbow placement - the location of the firing elbow is important in providing balance, but the exact location really depends on the firing/fighting position as well as the specification of the rifle currently in use. On the other hand, the nonfiring elbow should be positioned firmly under the rifle to allow for a comfortable and stable position that is free from support most of the time.
- Stock weld – Stock weld is the point of firm contact between the cheek and the stock of the rifle. As an integral part of various positions, the stock weld should provide for a natural line of sight through the center of the rear sight aperture to the front sight post (and to the target). A proper stock weld is facilitated by the placement of your cheek against the stock in a firm and consistent manner.

If you have to host the battery externally using a battery bag, be careful when selecting the proper place to attach the bag. You don't want the battery to block you from forming a proper stock weld.

If you are about to wear a protective face mask, check to ensure that proper stock weld is possible with the face mask in place. Based on our experience, most protective masks in the market are too big and too hard



for a comfortable and natural stock weld to be established.



Does this block you from posing a comfortable stock weld?

- To “pose” a good stock weld, your right elbow should be positioned naturally to provide balance to the position and create a “pocket” in the shoulder for the butt stock. Your neck should always be relaxed when firing, thus allowing your cheek to fall naturally onto the stock. Do note that even though the exact placement of the elbow would vary with each shooting position, you must try to have the position remains consistent from shot to shot.
- Eye relief – it refers to the distance between the rear sight aperture and the aiming eye. Normal eye relief (for regular rifle without special sighting device) is two to six inches from the



rear sight aperture. While eye relief can vary slightly from one position to another, you should try to have the same eye relief for all shots fired from a particular position.

- If you are using rifle scope: due to the safety considerations associated with proper eye relief, it is always recommended that you mount your scope as far forward as possible.



Demonstrations, showing steady positions with different types of rifle:



A M4 with RAS style foregrip



A standard M16





A bullpup AUG

Proper body support



Proper support and consistent stock weld are critical - with these elements established, you can have your rifle and sights aligned naturally on the target, thus achieving a correct body-rifle-target



alignment.

Keep in mind that the body's skeletal structure provides a stable foundation to support the rifle's weight. To attain a correct shooting position, you must have your body's bones support as much of the rifle's weight as possible (proper use of the sling can provide additional support). **The weight of the weapon should be supported by bone rather than muscle because muscles fatigue whereas bones do not.**

By establishing a strong foundation using bone support, you can relax as much as possible while minimizing weapon movement due to muscle tension and other factors.

Once proper bone support is achieved, you may have your muscles relaxed. Muscular relaxation helps to hold the rifle steady and increase the accuracy of the aim.

If artificial support from objects such as sandbags, logs, and stumps are available, use them to steady your position and support your rifle.

Do not ignore the effect of breathing. Breathing causes chest movement and a corresponding movement in the rifle and its sights. You should learn to apply proper breath control so that this movement and the effect it has on aiming can be minimized.



Sighted shooting



Aiming and sight alignment - Having mastered the task of holding the rifle steady, the soldier must align the rifle with the target in exactly the same way for each firing to maintain consistency.

Always practice aiming with your goggles on (coz you will have to shoot with the goggles on during an airsoft game). Certain over-sized goggles can make your aiming effort less comfortable and less natural. You better try things out prior to the skirmish.

How Do Bullets Find Their Targets?

A good airsoft rifle should be capable of launching projectiles in relatively straight lines. In order for the BB bullets to hit the target, the muzzle has to be aligned with the target at the time that the bullets exit the barrel.

Generally speaking, the need for precision in this alignment increases as the distance to the target increases. At the very closest of ranges you could actually hold the muzzle against your assailant



and put the bullet into him. As the distance grows you can still get a fairly good alignment with your target as long as it is not moving radically merely by body position. When your distance from the target continue to increase, it usually becomes necessary to use a visual index (such as the sights), meaning you need to exercise sighted shooting.

Note: many people use the term "sighted fire" to imply the use of the sights and "aimed fire" for a coarser visual index using the shape of the rifle.

Advices on zeroing

Different airsoft rifle replicas may require slightly different zeroing techniques, but (generally speaking) proper rifle zeroing usually requires: i, ensuring that your rifle/scope system is in good working order; and ii, having the right facility to allow for a solid rest.

You shouldn't sight in your airsoft rifle 5 minutes before game start. You should sight it in when you have plenty of time and when you have access to a solid rest, such as a shooting bench. With the airsoft gun solidly rested and the target aligned in the center, perform adjustment as needed. The gun will likely shift position when you do the adjustment, but there is no need to worry - simply go back and realign the gun and recheck the adjustment level. Keep in mind that you don't move your head to align the target. Instead, move the gun to align the target.

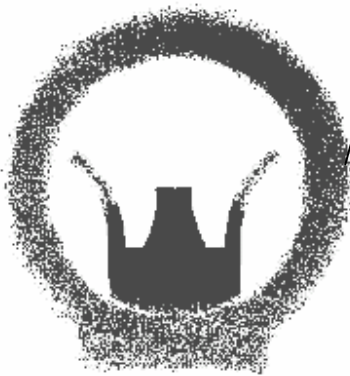
Sometimes you need to also adjust the hopup in order to obtain the best possible result. Always keep the effective range in mind - the effective range of a typical airsoft gun is much much shorter than that of a real rifle.



Proper eye focus and NPOA

Natural Point of Aim (NPOA) refers to the point at which the sights settle when in a firing position. Since the rifle becomes a natural extension of your body, it may be necessary to adjust the position of your body until the sights settle naturally on the desired aiming point on the target.

Suggested eye focus using M16 / M4 as an example:



Your eye must be focused on the tip of the front sight post. This can cause the target to appear blurry, but don't worry, it is okay because:

- Through focusing on the tip of the front sight post, it will be easier for you to maintain proper sight alignment.
- A greater chance of aiming error can exist if the front sight post is blurry due to focusing on the target or other objects.

Sight alignment

Sight alignment refers to the relationship between the front sight post and rear sight aperture and the aiming eye. Alignment of the rifle with the target involves placing the tip of the front sight post in the center of the rear sight aperture.





Do keep in mind that any alignment error in between can repeat itself for approx every half a meter the bullet travels.

Sight picture

A sight picture refers to the placement of the tip of the front sight post in relation to the target while maintaining sight alignment. A correct sight picture should have the target, the front sight post, and the rear sight aligned.



On the left: perfect alignment and perfect sight picture

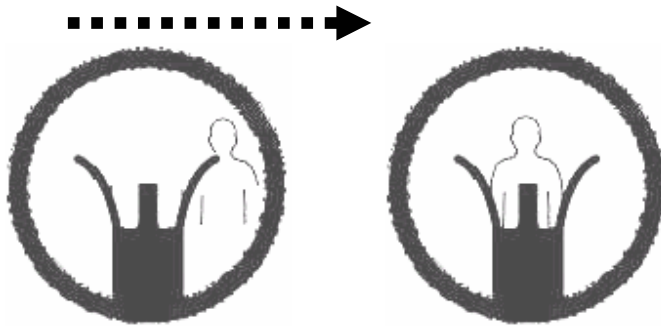
In the middle: error in sight picture

On the right: error in sight alignment

A technique to obtain a good sight picture is the side aiming technique – one that involves positioning the front sight post to the side of the target in line with the vertical center of mass, thus



keeping the sights aligned. The front sight post is then moved horizontally until the target is directly centered on the front sight post.



You may place the tip of the front sight post on the aiming point, but the eye must be focused on the tip of the front sight post.

In reality, placement of the aiming point can vary greatly. In fact, it all depends on the engagement range. However, for airsoft skirmish your options are limited due to range limitation - anything over 50 meters can become unrealistic. A short range like this can in fact make point shooting possible and sometimes desirable.

Point shooting may mean different things to different people. To some people it may indicate hip shooting, with the rifle well below the line of sight. To others it may imply shooting with the rifle at or near a conventional position for aimed fire but with the vision focused on the selected target, not on the sights.

Trigger squeeze

On a typical real steel trigger there are three stages - first the take up which is light, then the trigger pulls off the sear, then after the



sear releases the trigger is easily pulled until the trigger can't go farther. Along the process any sudden movement of the finger on the trigger can disturb the lay of the rifle and cause the shot to miss the target. Firing AEG is similar – you should practice trigger squeeze as much as you can.

The trigger finger is the index finger on the firing hand. It should be placed on the trigger between the first joint and the tip of the finger and should be adjusted depending on factors such as hand size and grip type. You are advised to experiment with many finger positions to ensure minimal disturbance to the aiming process.

A proper trigger squeeze should start with slight pressure on the trigger during the initial aiming process. You may apply more pressure after the front sight post is steady on the target and that you are holding your breath. As your skills increase with practice, you should need to spend less time on trigger squeeze.

The squeeze should be a steady increase in pressure on the trigger, and the trigger should be moved straight back. And remember, nothing is more important than gripping properly. Proper gripping + proper trigger squeeze = high accuracy.

You may want to practice trigger squeeze with a rifle by resting the gun on something or getting into a good supported position and balancing a coin on the end of the barrel. You should be able to press the trigger without the coin falling off.

A simpler way of practicing trigger squeeze: first open your hand and hold your fingers out straight, then drop your thumb down and have it representing the trigger. Place your index finger on your thumbnail, then press the thumbnail back and try not to move your other fingers.



Practice this anywhere with both hands. When you get to where you are pressing your thumb back without moving your other fingers, you are making pretty good progress.

You should never try to quickly squeeze the trigger while the sight is on the target. The best firing performance results when the trigger is squeezed continuously such that the rifle is fired without disturbing its lay.

Wobble area

Wobble area refers to the movement of the front sight around the aiming point when the rifle is in the steadiest position. Your position must provide for the smallest possible wobble area. If the front sight strays from the target when firing, you must try to keep the pressure on the trigger as constant as possible and resume.

Remember, your ultimate goal is to build up the capability of establishing a steady position and minimizing wobble under various conditions.



Firing positions

Supported fighting position



A supported fighting position provides the most stable platform for engaging targets. Basically you rely on external object(s) to help supporting your body, such as resting the nonfiring hand on the sandbag to the front of your position.



Prone unsupported position



To assume a prone unsupported position, you face your target, spread your feet a comfortable distance apart, and drop to your knees. Using the butt of the rifle as a pivot, you roll onto your nonfiring side, placing the nonfiring elbow close to the side of the magazine. You place the rifle butt in the pocket formed by the firing shoulder, grasp the pistol grip with your firing hand, and lower the firing elbow to the ground. The rifle rests in the V formed by the thumb and fingers of the nonfiring hand. You adjust the position of your firing elbow until your shoulders are about level, and pull back firmly on the rifle with both hands. To complete the position, you obtain a stock weld and relax, keeping your heels close to the ground.

Kneeling position





A kneeling position allows you to obtain the height necessary to better observe many target areas, taking advantage of available cover such as trees, rocks and sandbags.

Standing position

To assume a standing position, you face your target, execute a facing movement to your firing side, and spread your feet a comfortable distance apart. With your firing hand on the pistol grip and your nonfiring hand on either the upper handguard or the bottom of the magazine, you place the butt of the rifle in the pocket formed by your firing shoulder so that the sights are level with your eyes. You then shift your feet until you are aiming naturally at the target and your weight is evenly distributed on both feet.

With the standing position, the weight of the rifle should be supported by the firing shoulder pocket and the nonfiring hand.



Modifying positions

Once the basic firing skills have been mastered, you should try to modify positions in order to take advantage of any available cover, to use anything that helps to steady the rifle, or to make any change that allows more effective combat firing. Simply put, you need to modify positions according to differing environments and conditions. For example, firing from around corners could require you to fire from the opposite shoulder to avoid exposing yourself to enemy fire. The requirement for long-range observation can dictate that positions be occupied that are high above ground.



Expert Advice

When it is time to shoot, pay attention to the basics (sight alignment, sight picture, and trigger control)!



Combat Firing

Suppressive fire

In certain tactical situations you will be required to have your combat rifle fire directed to suppress enemy personnel or weapons positions. Rifle fire that is precisely aimed at a definite point or area target is suppressive fire. You rely on suppressive firing to control the enemy and the area he occupies. You also rely on it to prevent the enemy from observing the battlefield or effectively using his weapons.

Suppressive fire should be in the form of well-aimed and sustained semiautomatic fire.

The goal of suppressive firing is to have a sustained volume of accurate fire placed on enemy locations to contain him. When he is effectively pinned down behind cover, his ability to deliver fire can be reduced.

If you have difficulty seeing a definite target, you must fire at likely locations or in a general area where the enemy is known to exist. You need to control and accurately deliver fire within the limits of the suppressed area. Ideally you should have each aimed shot impacts within the desired area (such as objects within the area).

Suppressive fires delivered by a team: you and your teammates may align in an almost slight diagonal order so you guys can take turns doing the suppressive firing work. The first man starts, as soon he runs out of BBs, he runs to the back of the line, then the second man



starts firing. You can keep doing this until you feel you have pinned down your enemies enough.

In the real world, primary suppressing fires usually come from machineguns such as M-249, M-60s and the like. Real steel rifles are better for aimed fire, while machineguns are for suppressing fire. Rifles have too little magazine capacity and can become quite uncontrollable in anything but a rested or prone position. They also tend to overheat when they're used in that role. In the world of airsoft, mag capacity is less of a concern due to the availability of high cap mags. You do need to worry about gear stripping and overheated motor when doing suppressive fires (which holds true for any AEG, machinegun or not).

Rapid semi-auto firing

The tactical situation dictates the most useful rate of fire for suppressive firing, but you must consider the fact that you don't have unlimited bullets (unless you are using those 3000 rds drum mag). If you are using a standard hi-cap that holds several hundred rds of bullets, remember to make each round count. Given the high ROF an AEG can produce, a 300rd hi-cap can be emptied in 15 seconds or less.

Automatic fire should be used sparingly and only to gain initial fire superiority. Try to have the rate of fire adjusted so that a minimum number of rounds are expended. Remember, accurate fire can conserve ammunition while preventing the enemy from placing effective fire on friendly positions.



Rapid semiautomatic fire (instead of full auto) allows you to sustain a large volume of accurate fire while conserving ammunition. As a beginner, when you use rapid semiautomatic fire you may be sacrificing accuracy to deliver a greater volume of fire. However, the difference in accuracy between slow and rapid semiautomatic fire tends to diminish with repeated practice.

To practice, have firing begun at shorter ranges, then progress slowly to longer ranges as improved proficiency is demonstrated. Engagement times should gradually be shortened and the number of rounds be increased to simulate the need for a heavy volume of fire.

Rapid reload

One of the keys to sustained suppressive fire is rapidly reloading the rifle. Rapid magazine changes must be thoroughly practiced.

When there is a need to change the magazine, you do not move the selector lever to Safe. You do need to maintain a safe posture for yourself during the change.

Start by removing the index finger from the trigger and depress the magazine catch button while keeping a secure grip on the rifle with the non firing hand. Release the pistol grip, grasp and remove the empty magazine with the firing hand, and secure it. Grasp the loaded magazine with the firing hand and have it inserted into the magazine well. Make sure that the magazine is fully seated and locked into the rifle, and then return the firing hand to its original firing position on the pistol grip. Finally, return the index finger to the trigger.

It is never a good idea for everyone to fire together. You should coordinate with your teammate – when you shoot, your teammate reload, and vice versa.



If you are using hi-cap magazines, you better have them fully winded prior to game start. Magazine winding can be time consuming and bothersome during engagement.

Mag winding by hand is slow. Battery powered mag winding, however, needs not be significantly faster. In fact, when the motor does the winding, the noise generated can render yourself vulnerable to attack as your enemies are informed by this noise of what you are up to.

Full auto firing

Fully Automatic fire delivers the maximum amount of rounds into a target area when conserving ammunition is not a consideration. It is a specialized technique for particular purposes - you should not apply it to every combat engagement.

One reason why many airsofters prefer full auto all the time is that people tend to deny being hit until they feel the pain, and that the easiest way to produce significant pain for your target is to flood him with loads of bullets. This is sad.

Automatic fire is inherently less accurate than semiautomatic fire as high-cyclic rate of fire can place subsequent rounds far from the desired point of impact. Generally speaking, closely spaced multiple targets appearing at the same time may be engaged effectively with automatic fire. More widely spaced targets appearing at greater distances should be engaged with semiautomatic fire instead.

Full auto firing with a high ROF AEG has one major drawback – when the ROF is so high that the BBs are almost forming a line in the air, your enemies can visually trace the BB flight path and find out where you are shooting from. Therefore, do your full auto firing in the form of shorter bursts whenever



possible.

Maximum use of available artificial support is strongly recommended during automatic fire. Your rifle should be gripped more firmly and pulled into the shoulder more securely than when firing in the semi-auto mode for offsetting any potential progressive displacement of weapon/target alignment.

For maximum stability, deploy prone and supported positions. Since you will not have time to breathe between shots, you are advised to hold your breath for each burst and adapt your breathing cycle, taking breaths between bursts.

Quick fire

Quick fire is necessary when you are presented with close, suddenly appearing, surprise enemy targets or when close engagement is imminent. You may have fire delivered in the Semi-auto or Full Auto mode.

There are two techniques of delivering quick fire. With the Aimed technique, you bring the rifle up to your shoulder and quickly fire a single shot at the target. Your firing eye looks through (or just over) the rear sight aperture, and you use the front sight post to aim at the target. With the Pointed technique, you keep the rifle at your side and quickly fire a single shot or burst. You keep both eyes open and use your instinct and peripheral vision to line up the rifle with the target.

Both techniques have similar speeds of delivery. The difference in accuracy, however, is more pronounced. Generally speaking, the



Aimed technique offers better accuracy. In any case, these techniques should be limited to targets appearing at 25 meters or less.

The quickness of shot delivery prevents you from assuming a stable firing position. You must fire from your present position when the target appears. Adjustments for stability and support are difficult to be made before the round is being fired. Therefore, the key to the successful employment of either technique is repeated practice.

Engaging moving targets

An enemy normally moves by rushes from one position to another. While making the rush, he presents a rapidly moving target. However, for a brief time as he begins, movement is slow since many steps are needed for gaining speed. Many steps are also needed for slowing down at the new position. **A moving target is open to aimed fire both times.**

The two primary techniques of engaging moving targets are Tracking and Trapping. Tracking involves the establishment and maintaining of the aiming point in relationship to the target and maintaining that sight picture while squeezing the trigger. As the target moves, this technique puts you in position for a second shot if the first one misses. Trapping, on the other hand, is the setting up of an aiming point forward of the target and along the target path. The trigger is squeezed as the target comes into the sights. This is a technique that works on targets with relatively slower lateral movement.

To effectively engage moving targets on the battlefield, basic understanding on lead requirements is a MUST as targets moving



fast and laterally are led by some distance if they are to be hit. When an enemy is running X mph, Y degrees to a position at a range of Z meters, precise calculation is necessary to determine where to aim. To make this possible, you need to know bullet speed and how it relates to the range, angle, and speed of the target.

For airsoft guns, different models have different FPS. The weight of the BBs is another factor to consider, especially in windy days.

Generally speaking, the effects of wind vary depending on changes in wind speed and direction. Wind is typically classified by the direction it is blowing in relationship to the firer/target line. The clock system is used to indicate wind direction and value. Winds that blow from 9 o'clock or 3 o'clock are called full-value winds because they have the most effect on the bullet. Winds that blow at an angle from the front or rear area are called half value winds because they have less effect on the bullet relative to full-value winds. Winds that blow straight into your face or winds that blow straight into the target are no-value winds as their effect on the bullet is too small to be of any significance.

Effects of wind are much greater at longer ranges on lighter BBs. We recommend the use of 0.25g or 0.30g BBs when winds pose an accuracy concern.



Target Detection

In the jungles, you may rarely see your enemies, and that a noise (or any other suspicious behavior) in the bush indicates there are troubles. The birds and bees are your friends in that environment. If there are no birds and bees around there are potential troubles.

The ability to locate an enemy target depends on your position and skill in searching and maintaining observation of an area, and the target indications of the "enemy" during day or night.



With a good position, you can enjoy maximum visibility of the area while affording cover and concealment. The choice of position involves two considerations -- your tactical position in a location and your body position at that location.



Search techniques

Initial quick check

When you move into a new area, you should quickly check for enemy activity that could be an immediate danger. This search entails quick glances at specific points throughout the area rather than just sweeping the eyes across the terrain.

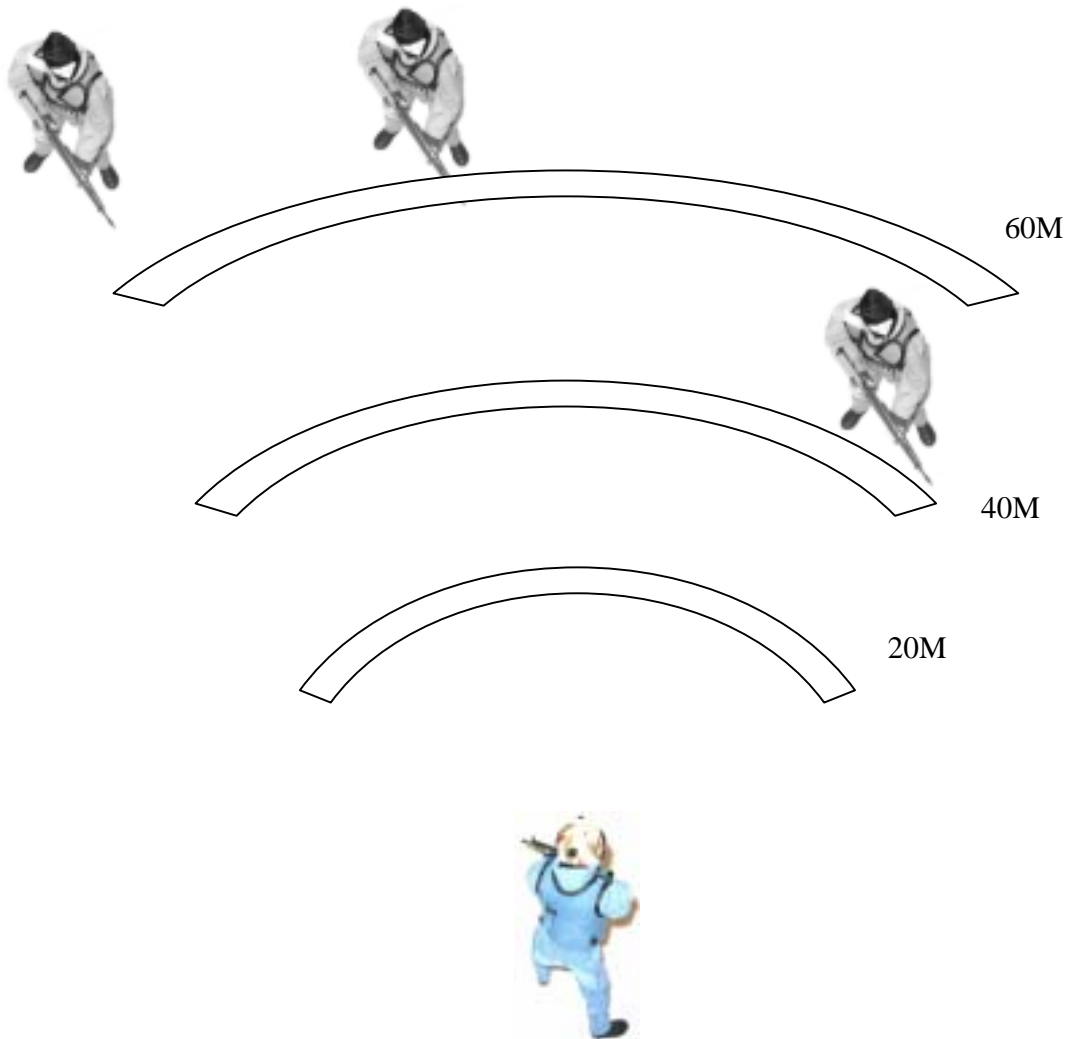
Systematic search

If no enemy is located during the initial search, you may begin a systematic examination known as the 50-meter overlapping strip technique of search.

This technique requires that (from either flank) you search the terrain to your front in an almost 180-degree arc that is 50 meters deep. After reaching the opposite flank, you search over a second 50-meter strip farther out but overlapping the first strip by about 10 meters. This process is repeated until the entire area has been searched.

Due to the range limitation of Airsoft guns, the use of 50-meter strips may be a little impractical. Consider to cut them short (such as cutting down to 20 meters each).





Generally speaking, the area nearest you offers the greatest danger. Therefore, the search should begin with the terrain nearest your position.

You should routinely repeat a systematic search of the area. You should immediately conduct this systematic search when your attention has been distracted from your area of responsibility for whatever reasons.



Target indicators

Target indicators reveal one's position. Since these indicators apply to both sides of the battlefield, you must learn target indicators from the standpoint of locating the enemy and must also prevent the enemy from using the same indicators to locate you. Keep in mind that:

- Potential targets indicated by sounds of footsteps, coughing, or equipment noises usually provide a direction and general location.

A rifle with a drum mag – try to run or quickly move with the rifle when your drum mag is half-full – can you hear the annoying noise (BBs flowing around inside the drum – you are effectively telling your enemies where you are).

Many beginners like to bring along bottles of BBs for immediate refill during games. Again, try to run with a half-filled bottle – is it damn noisy?

- Slow and deliberate movements are difficult to notice than those that are quick and jerky.
- Poor use of camouflage and concealment are indicators that reveal most targets on the battlefield. Light reflecting from shiny surfaces or a contrast that presents a clearly defined outline are easy indicators.



Target marking

When a target has been located, you should mark its location in relation to visible terrain or a man-made feature. If several targets are observed, you must mark their locations for later engagement (since you can't shoot them all at once).

To properly mark the location of a target, use an aiming point which is a feature directly on line between the soldier and target (such as a tree trunk or a man-made object).

Range determination

Range determination significantly affects target engagement accuracy. It refers to the process of finding the distance between you and your target. It is an important skill since it heavily affects combat marksmanship proficiency. Many techniques are used to determine range in the battle field, such as measuring distances on maps, pacing the distance between two points, or using an optical range finder. Most of the time, however, a map or a range finder is out of reach. Therefore, you must do it "by hand".

The "Map Method"

Most established airsoft fields have site maps available for examination in advance, thus making the "map method" preferable. To use the map method, you measure the distance from your known location to the enemy's location on the map to determine range. This method is usually accurate within 200 meters. You do have to constantly track your location and rapidly determine the location of your target.



The map method should be used during planning by predetermining the location of engagement areas and suspected enemy positions, providing yourself reference points to determine range.

Appearance-of-Objects

The Appearance-of-Objects Technique determines range by the size of the object observed. If you know the size and detail of personnel and equipment at known ranges, you may compare these traits to like objects at unknown ranges based on the belief that when the traits match, so do the ranges.

Front Sight Post Estimation

You can use the front sight post to estimate range. There are some easy guidelines to follow:

- if the target looks way bigger than your front sight post, with an UPGRADED airsoft gun he may be able to hit you (depending on how far away he is).
- if the target is less than the full width of the front sight post, he is real far away and should pose no immediate threat at all.
- the above guidelines were devised based on the M16/M4 series rifles. Other rifles have different front sight post sizes, so you must conduct your own rifle-specific measurement accordingly.



Expert Advices

Use your senses to look for target indicators. Do not dismiss your other senses. Your sense of smell as well as touch can sometimes provide essential clues about the whereabouts of your enemy during your search.

Just as you seek target indicators during your search, you must strive not to produce them yourself. It is about 50% hunting and 50% avoiding being hunted!



Cover and Concealment



*One practical way to conceal yourself is with good clothing and camouflage selection. Make sure that every part of your body is covered in some manner, including your hands and face. Face paint camouflage is in fact a good idea even for airsoft scenarios.**



**You can buy good camouflage kits from <http://www.camouflagepaint.com/>.*

General advices

The general advices for cover and concealment are:

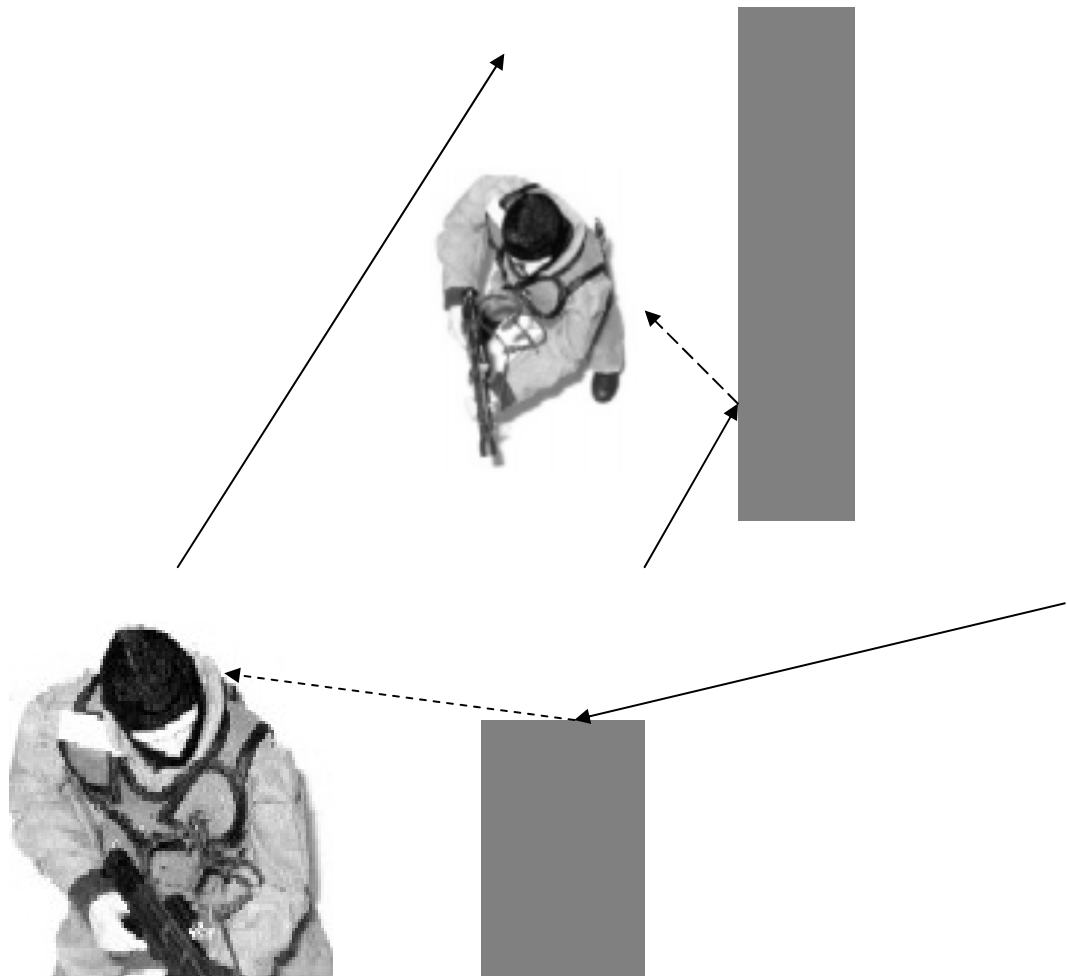


- You should minimize exposure of any part of your body to fire. Be especially aware of the head, right elbow, knees or any other body part that may extend beyond the cover.
- To minimize exposure and maximize the cover's protection, you should fire from the right side of cover (if you are right-handed) or from the left side (if you are left-handed).
- When you need to fire over the top of cover (which provides a wider field of view and lateral movement), try to have your position supported and stabilized by resting the handguard or the left forearm on the cover. You should keep as low a profile as possible (meaning the rifle should be as close to the top of cover as possible), and at the same time ensure that the muzzle is high enough to clear the cover (meaning that the cover does not obstruct the muzzle).



- Beware of combat ricochet – some positions are not as safe as you think.





** Some games do not count combat ricochet as legitimate hit. You should first reach an agreement with all other players on this.*

BEWARE: Based on most established airsoft rules, when hit by a bb the hit player will have to immediately call out "hit". This will almost for sure reveal the locations of those teammates who have been shooting by his side...



Engaging targets from behind cover

To locate targets when behind cover or to ensure the area is clear before moving, you will need to expose a little of yourself to the enemy and get ready to fire if a target is located. In order to engage targets from behind cover, you may use the pie technique or the rollout technique, which can help you minimize the exposure to enemy fire while placing yourself in a position to engage targets or to move to another location if needed.

The Pie Technique

1. Staying behind cover, move back and away from the leading edge of the cover. This is done because staying too close to cover decreases the area of observation. But don't stay too far back either, or you may unknowingly expose yourself to the enemy.
2. Assume a firing position and lower the rifle sights enough to have a clear field of view. Do orient the muzzle on the leading edge of the cover.
3. Taking small side steps, slowly move out from behind the cover, covering the field of view with the aiming eye and muzzle of the weapon.
4. Continue taking small side steps and moving out from cover until a target is identified or the area is found to be clear. If a target is identified, engage it.

The Rollout Technique

1. Staying behind cover, move back and position your body so it is



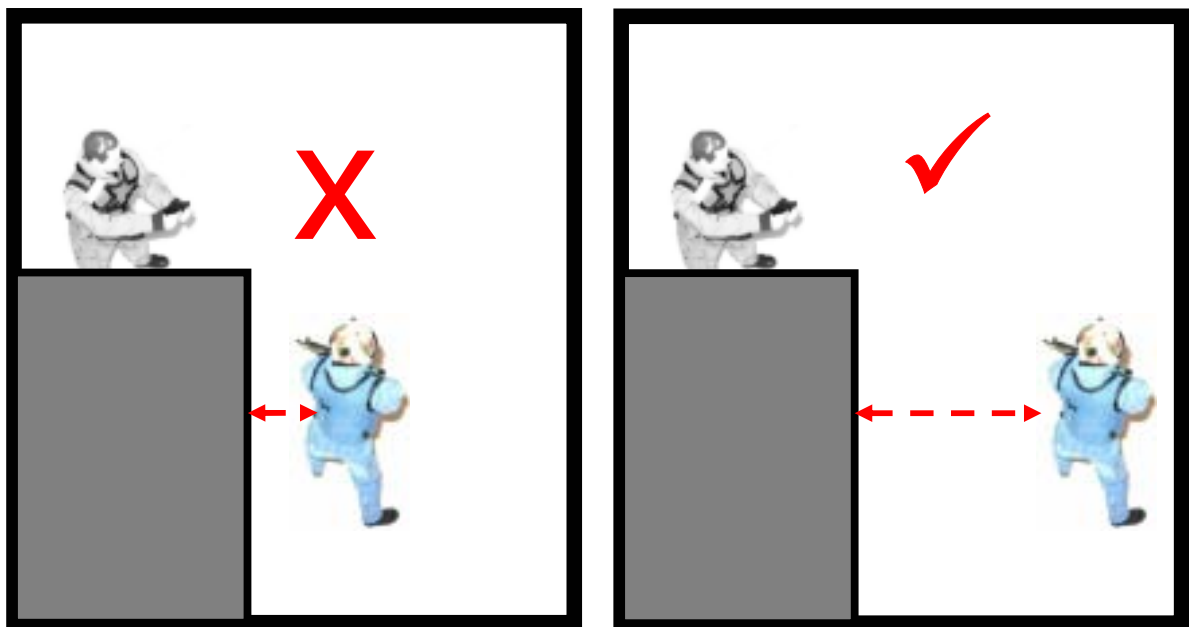
in line with the leading edge of the cover. No part of your body should extend beyond the cover.

2. Assume a firing position and come to the Ready, ensuring the muzzle is just behind the cover.
3. Canting the head and weapon slightly, roll your upper body out to the side just enough to have a clear field of view and allow the muzzle to clear the cover.
4. Keeping the feet in place, push up on the ball of one foot to facilitate rolling out.
5. Continue rolling out until a target is identified or the area is found to be clear. If a target is identified, engage it.



Expert Advice

Always maximize your distance from potential threats. Stay away from corners and any other area that you cannot see beyond.



Team Coordination

General advices for beginners

Beginners tend to get distracted quite easily:

- they start to get impatient and lose concentration when nothing had happened in the past 10 minutes or so.
- they tend to turn to the same direction when, let's say, one teammate gets shot from that direction.
- they tend to shoot the same target when that target is detected by one of the teammates.

Remember, it is very important for teammates to trust each others. If you have a teammate watching your left, you should rely totally on him to defend the left hand side and keep your focus on the front. If he calls for help from you and if you are sure there is no threat from the front, you may go ahead and help him out. But if he doesn't request for help, then don't help and don't even turn your head to the left. Keep watching the front. If your teammate is shooting at a target, rely on him to hunt that target down. There are always other targets waiting for you somewhere.

Hand signal is a good way of communication in a battle but can become impractical at a distance with visual obstacles such as grasses and leafs around. Therefore, use hand signals only when your teammates are staying pretty close together.

Armies of different countries have different hand signal variations,



and sometimes you can even devise your own set of hand signals. The key is to ensure that everyone in the team is using the same set of hand signal so that chance for confusion can be minimized.

Don't break your team into too many "sub-units". And don't assign your teammates into too many different attack routes. Most beginners can't even coordinate well with those standing right next to them, so don't have any expectation that they will coordinate well when being physically too far away from each others. Radio doesn't always help – with radio people can communicate remotely, but verbal communication alone doesn't constitute proper coordination.

In a jungle with leafs and grasses all over the place, it is very difficult to visually distinguish between a teammate and an enemy (even at a relatively short distance). Therefore, poor coordination often results in hits from "friendly fire". You don't wanna get shot by your teammates, do you?

Plan your retreat routes

We found that many beginners have the tendency of not willing to retreat when under attack. Keep in mind, a lot of the time a retreat is a strategic move (rather than an escape) necessary for controlling the "flow" of a battle. Instead of being forced by heavy enemy fire to retreat, try to proactively retreat when necessary so that you can retain control over the progress of your team. In fact, it is recommended that you plan your retreat routes early at the time you plan your attack (most people seldom think about the route they need to take for a safe and quick retreat).



Tactical Movement

Many airsoft game scenarios are characterized by speed, diversion, and surprise, during which you and your teammates must maintain aggressiveness, momentum, team work and fast accurate shooting. This is when tactical techniques become essential.

Basic guidelines

Inexperienced airsofters like to run and shoot simultaneously, which is definitely NO GOOD. Remember, trained soldiers can MOVE, aim and shoot at the same time. However, they can't RUN, aim and shoot. How can one accurately aim when running?

What constitute proper Tactical Movement?

- When moving, keep your gun in a position to fire instantly at any threat. Always allow your muzzle to cover the potential danger areas as you encounter them.
- Observe the Three Eye Principle - your gun must be oriented at whatever it is that your eyes are looking at. Wherever your eyes go, your weapon must also go.

You never look away from your gun. Keep your gun in front of you at all times. Don't look anywhere that your gun is not pointed. If you head moves, your gun must go with it.



- Keep your gun in a ready position so that it does not obstruct your vision while you search.
- When moving through open areas, do so briskly and don't run unless you are under fire. Move at a brisk walk unless approaching a specific danger area (quick and silent movements are preferred over running, as running is usually more noticeable and "noisy"). Be sure to stay low and present as little of target as possible to your enemies while moving.
- When closing in on a potential danger area, move by using shuffle step. Avoid crossing your feet at such times as it can impair your ability to respond in all directions. Remember to keep your gun in a firing position, but with a relaxed grip. You don't have to make yourself too tense. In fact, tenseness often does more harm than good as it can cause premature firing and a lot of missed targets due to poor aiming.
- Running is usually a last resort. Run only if your team is compromised and that you need to get some cover to engage and neutralize the enemies.
- Covering areas is a crucial aspect of tactical movement. If you approach an open hallway, staircase, intersection or some form of open area, it is best to have your movement covered.



Expert advice

If you need to run or move from one location to another, always ask your teammate to provide cover fire. When you run, you should only run and do nothing else. Don't even think about shooting prior to reaching your destination.



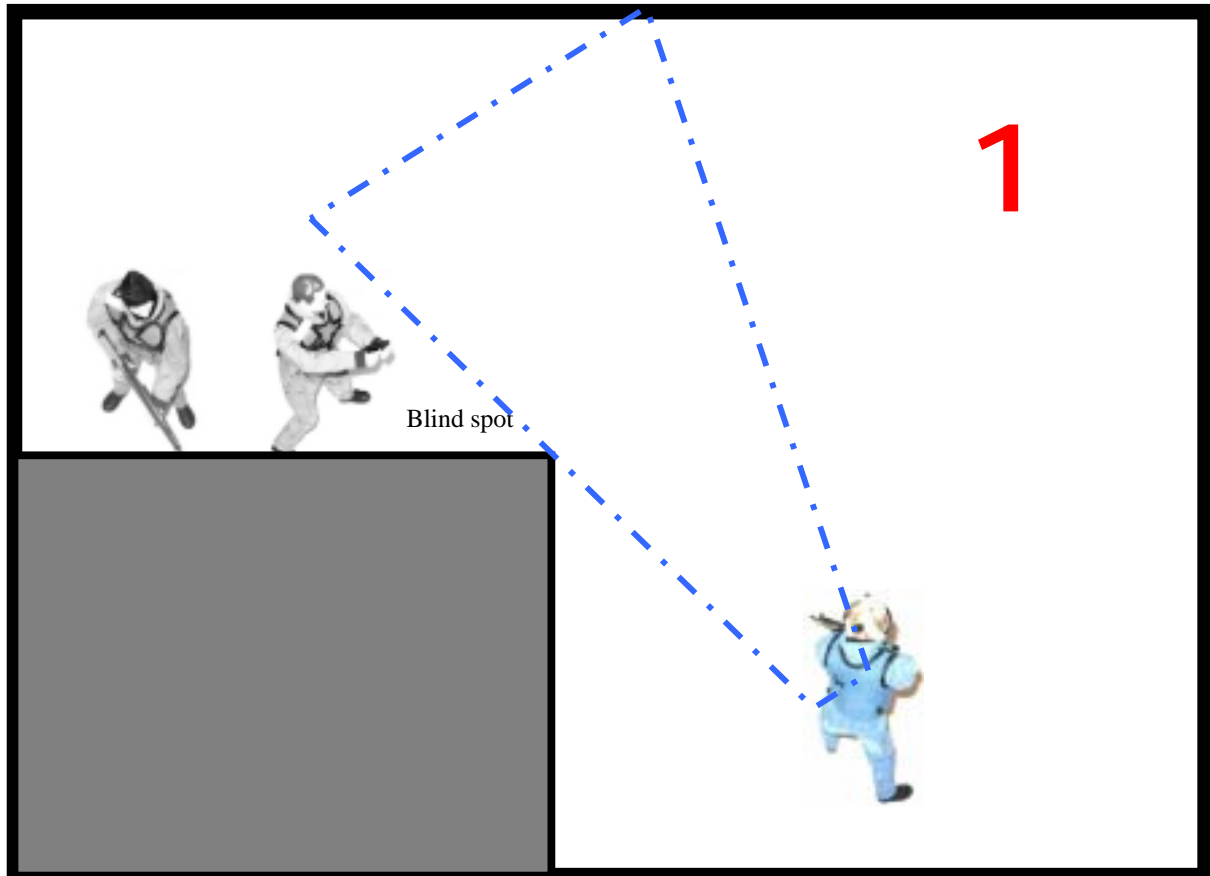
Tactical movement graphical illustrations

We have produced a number of illustrations for demonstrating several of the most important tactical movement techniques. Even though many of them were originated from SWAT for indoor use, they were found to be of high practical value for different types of indoor and outdoor situations.

Note that Solo techniques are for times when you are on your own, while Team techniques involve both yourself and your teammate(s).

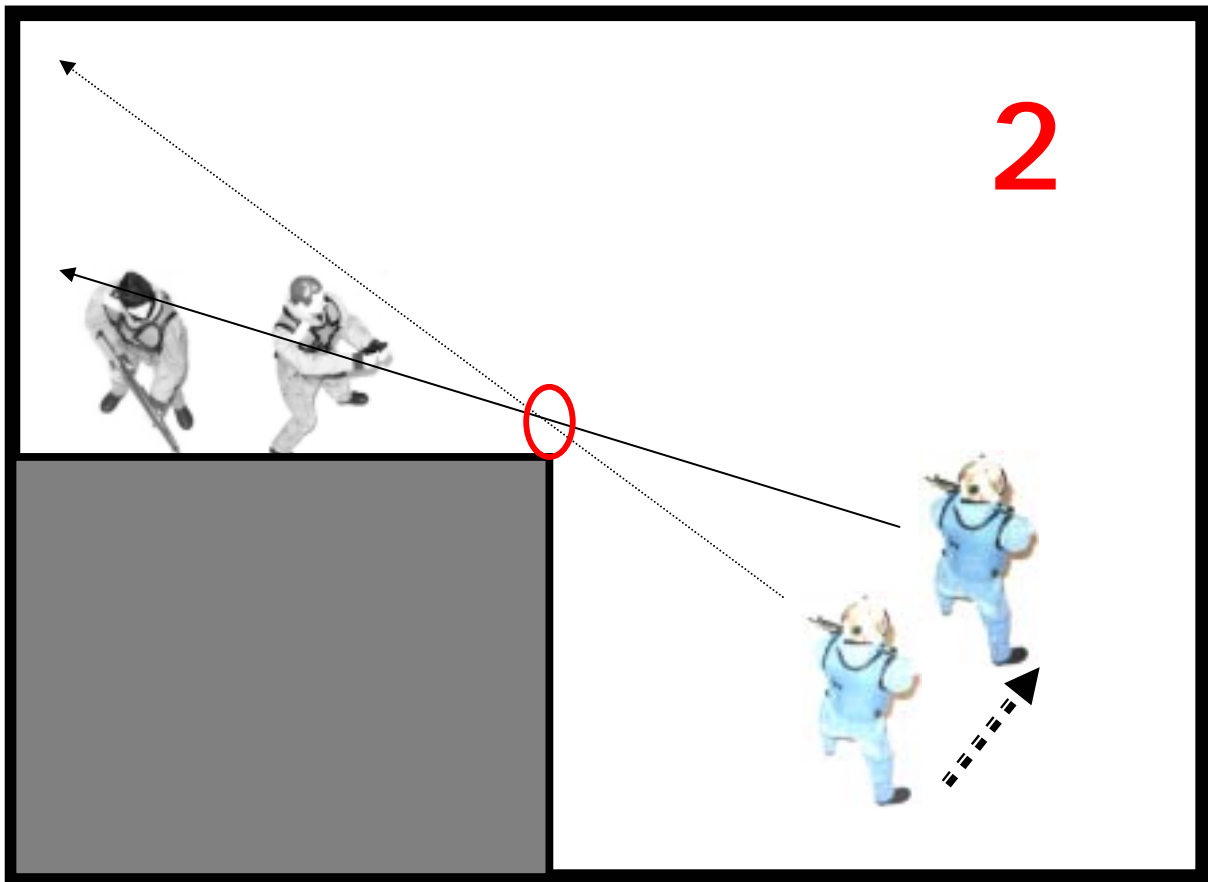


Cornering (solo)



Prior to approaching a corner, always check for threats. This can be done by with a wide angle search. When "pieing" the corner, keep maximum distance between yourself and the corner. Never hug a corner or a wall or you become in risk of physically encountering any persons hiding around the corner.

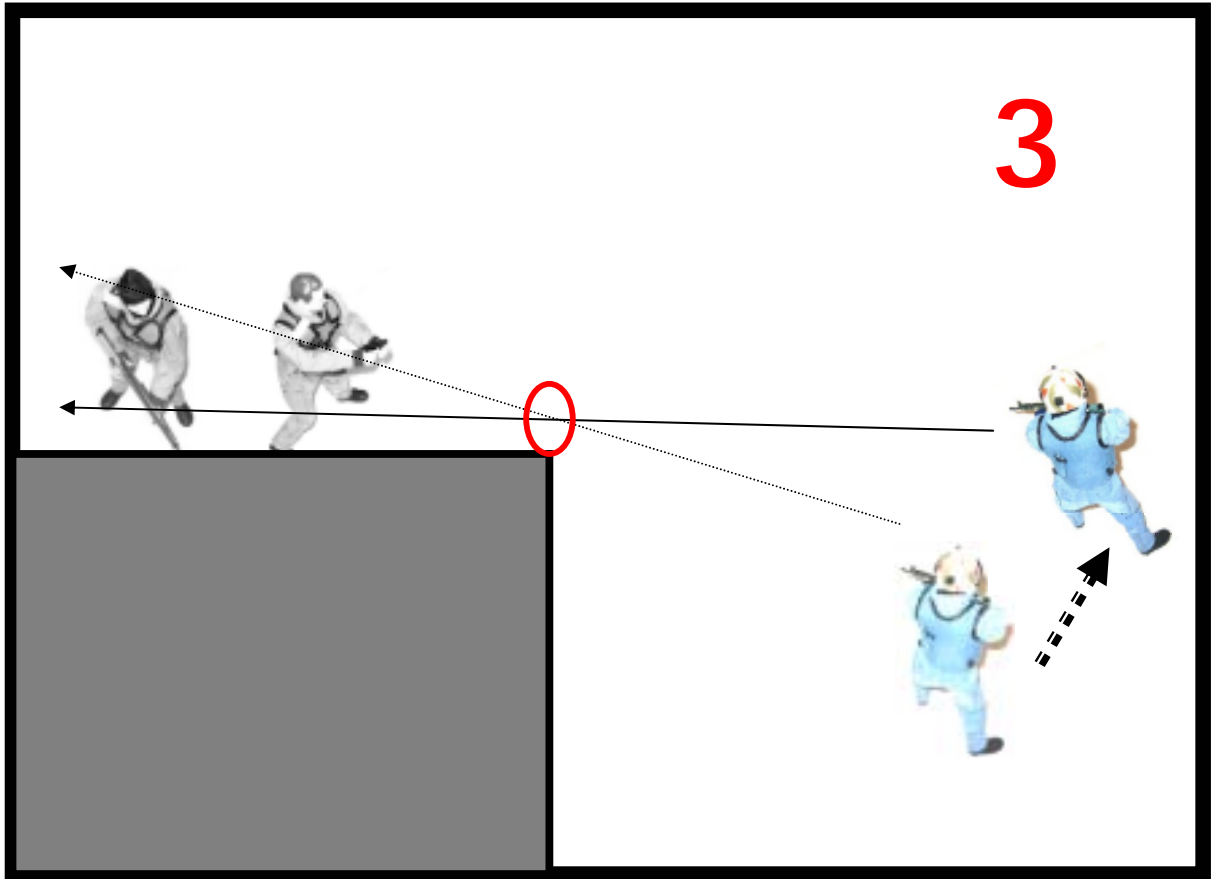




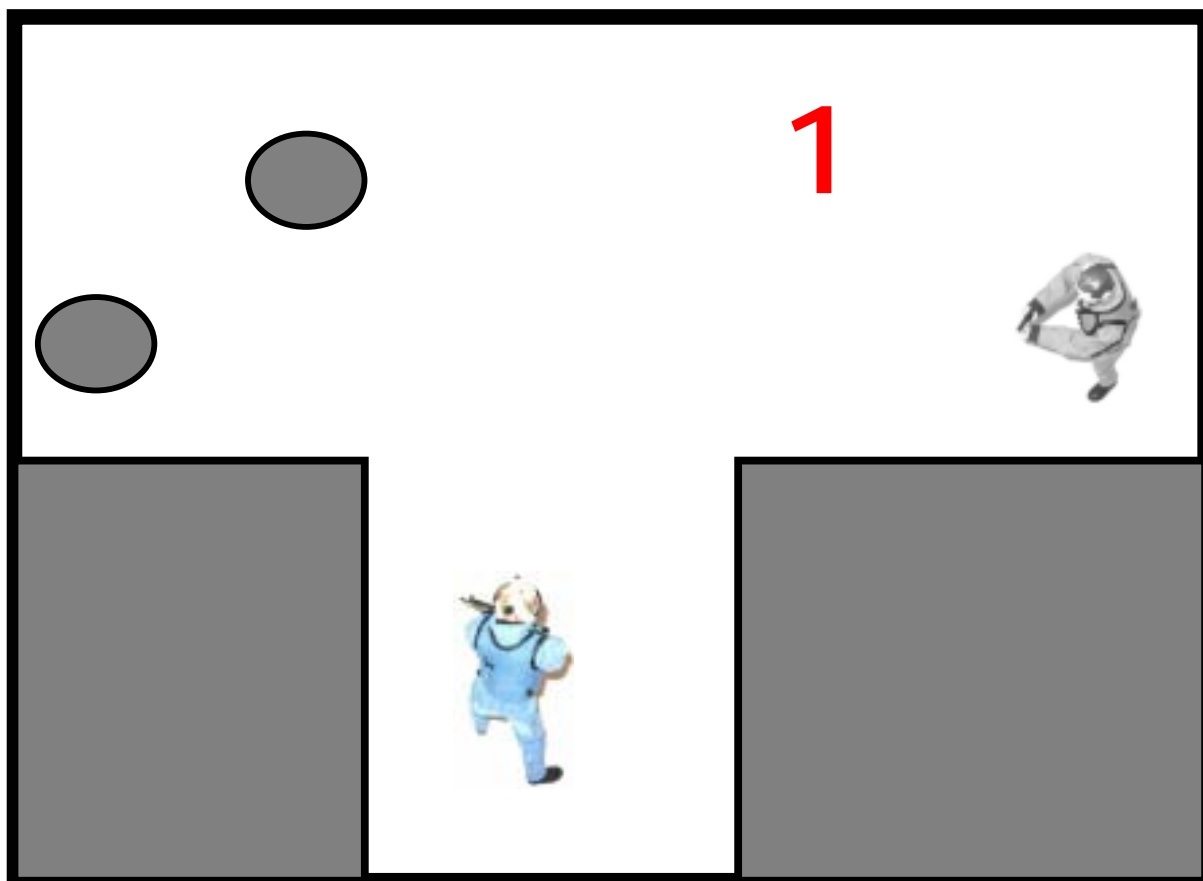
Slicing the Pie - by moving at an oblique angle, your visibility is increased with a minimum amount of body exposure.

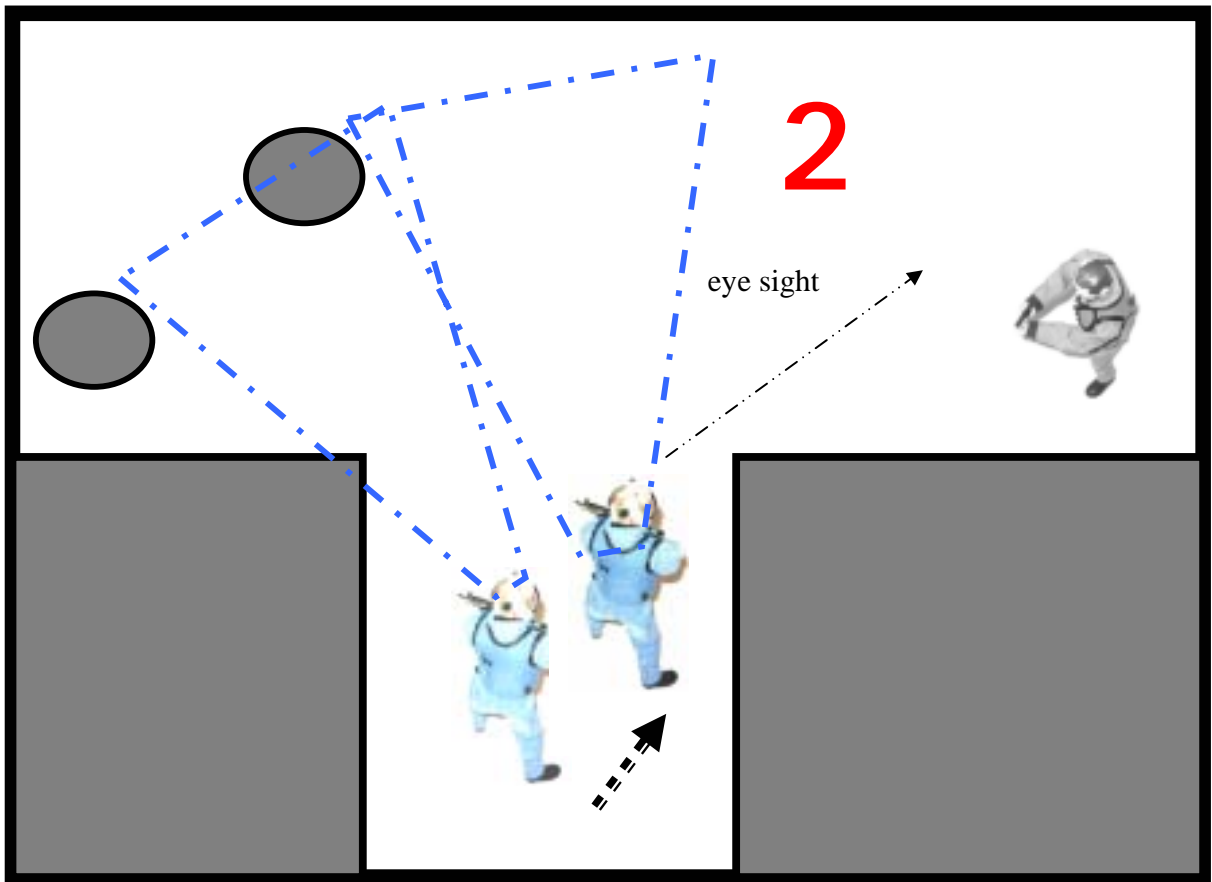
Slicing the pie is a technique for maximizing one's view while limiting the reaction time of the enemy. It involves making a 90 degree movement around the corner. In other words, you take a step back from the corner and turn your body so your point of view is looking directly past the edge of the corner. You then side step and have your body turned slightly as you move to maximize your field of vision.

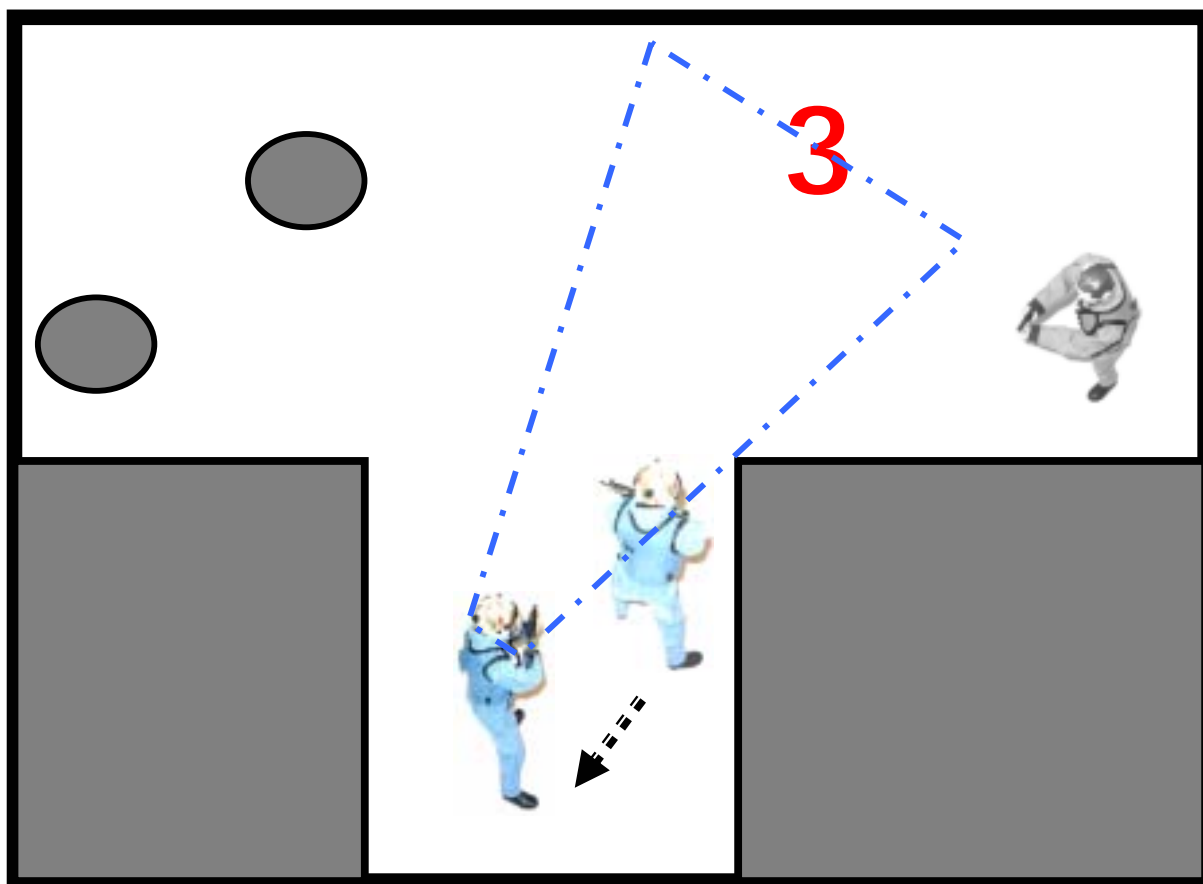


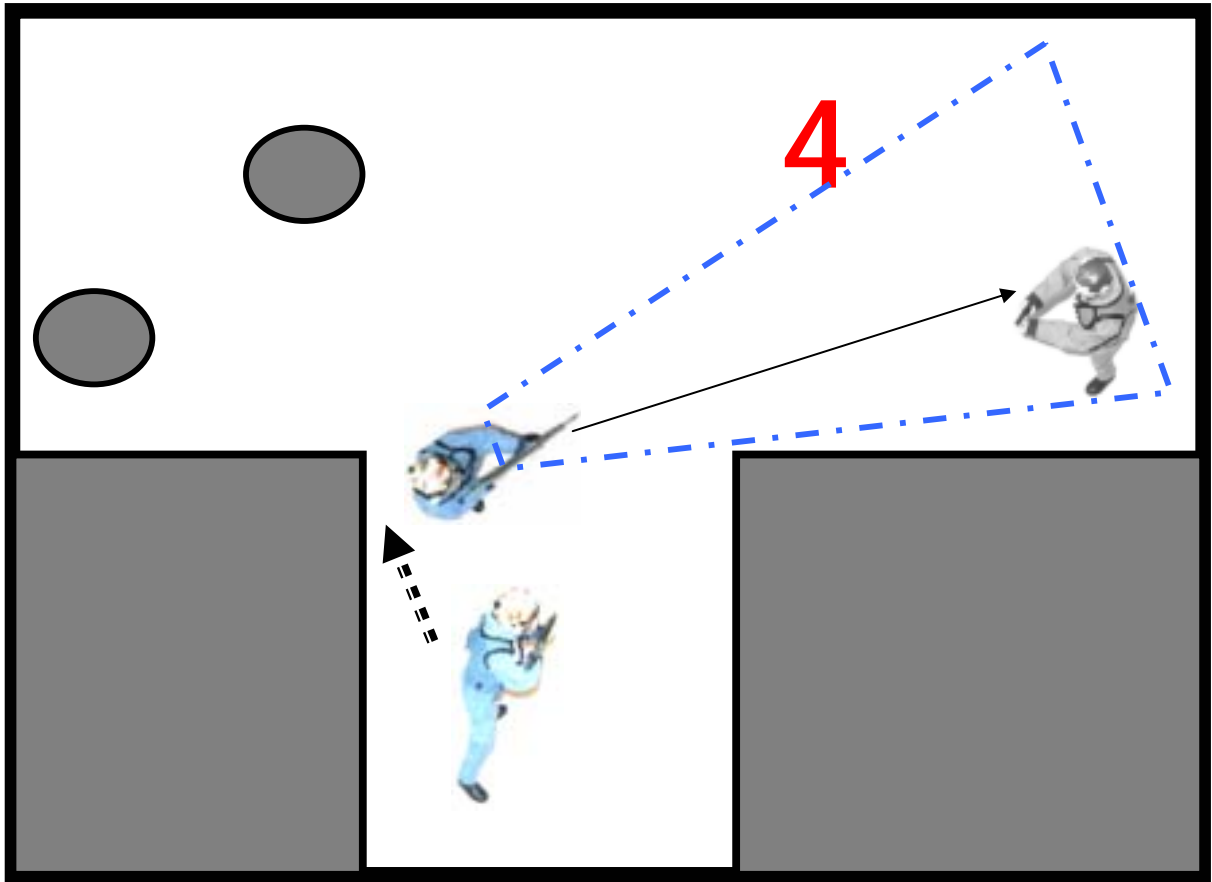


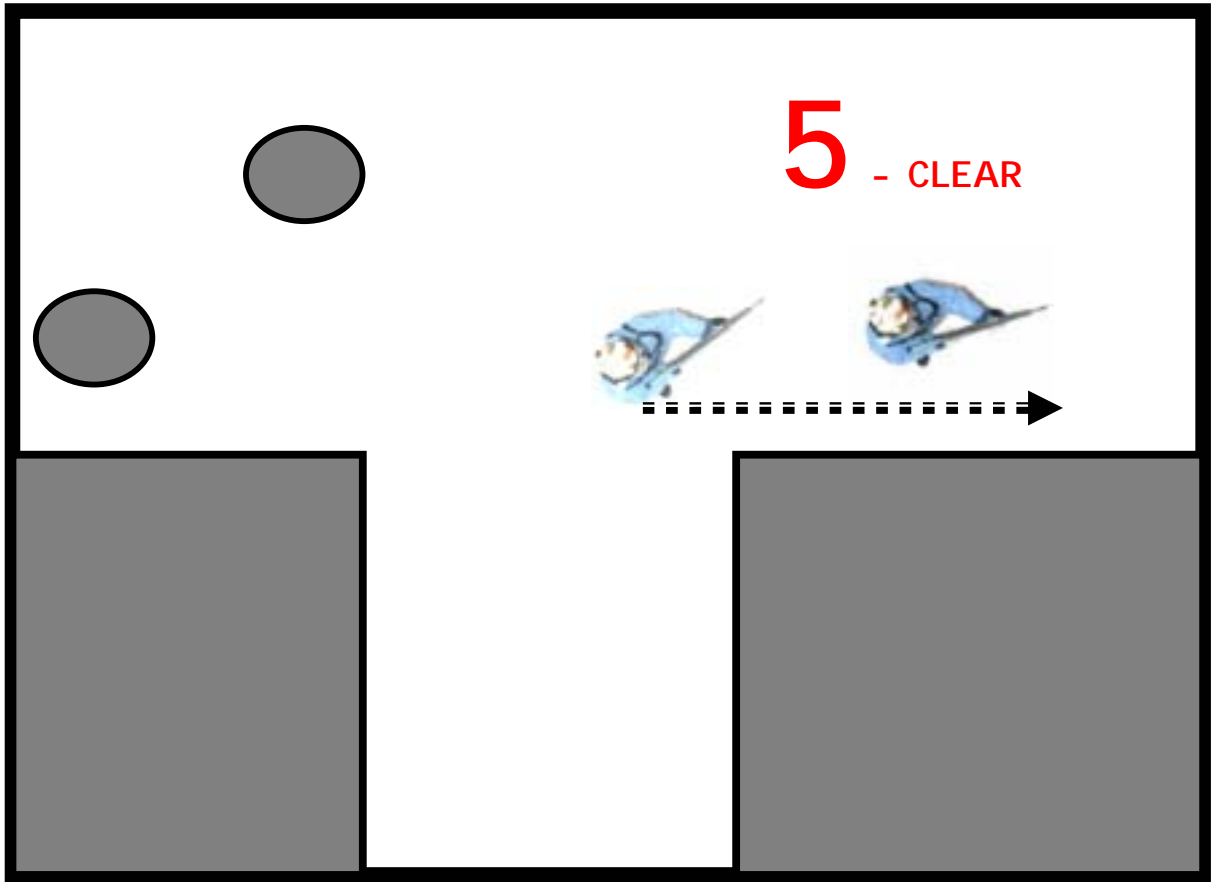
T-Intersection (solo)



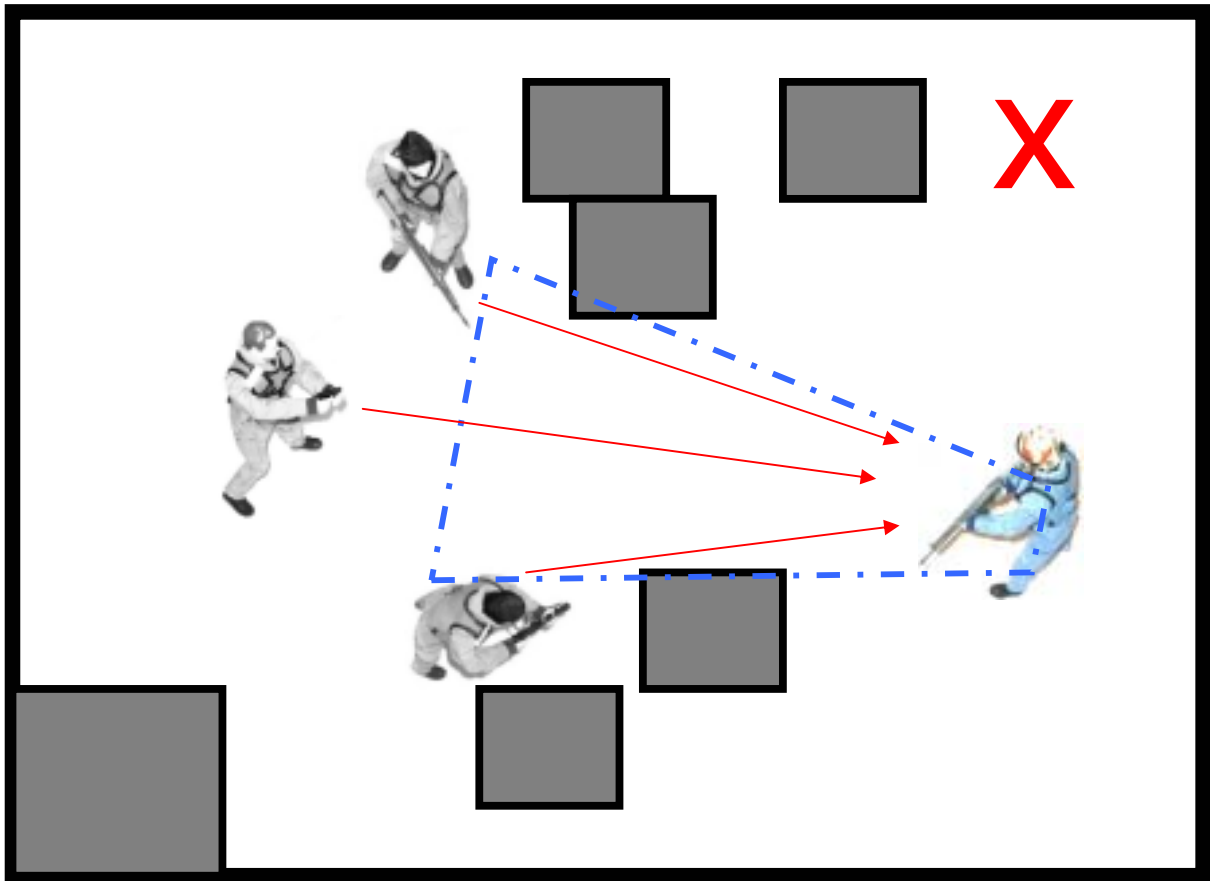






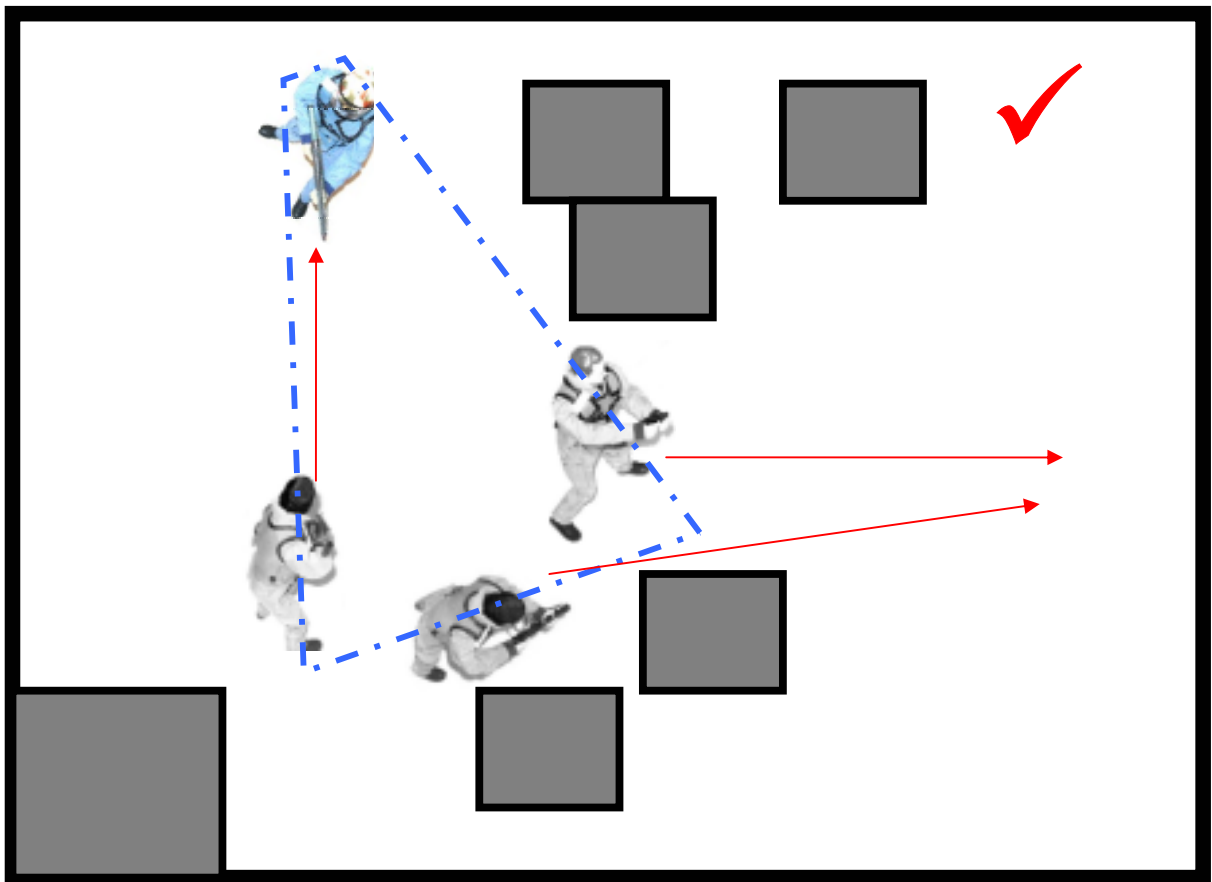


One-against-many (Solo)



You probably cannot handle multiple enemies all at once.

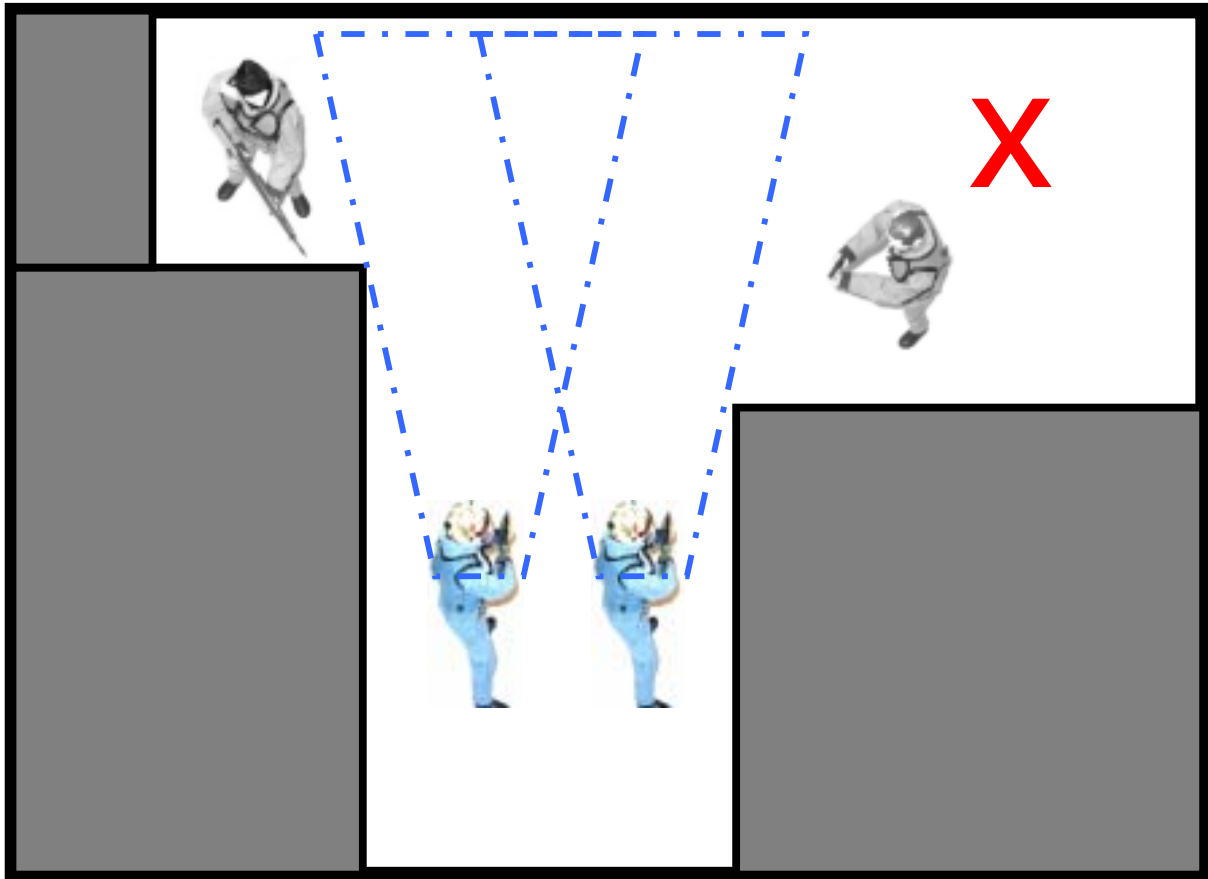




By shooting from a good position you can effectively engage the enemies one by one.



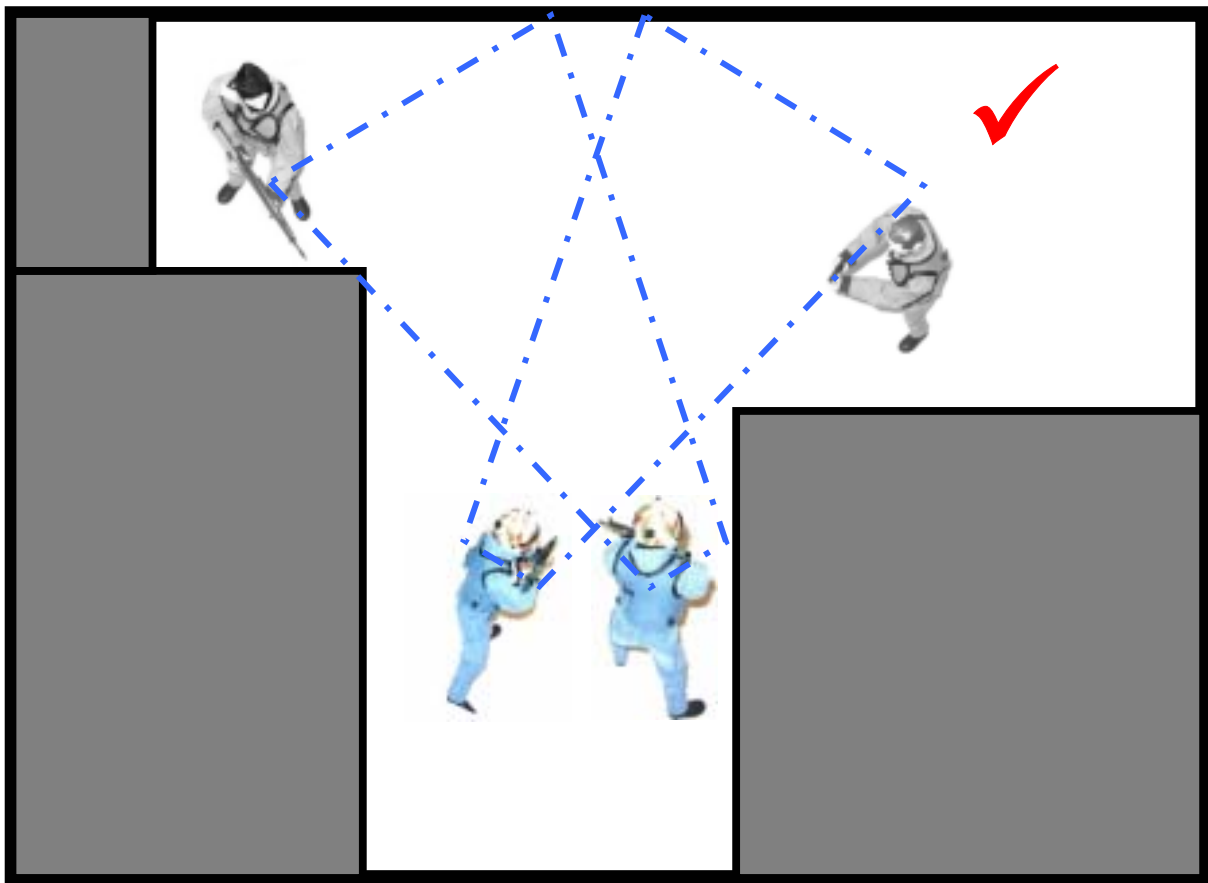
Hallway 1 (Team)



Prior to entering any hallway or an intersection, always check for threats. This can be done by with a wide angle search around the corner leading to the hallway or the intersection. When "pieing" the corner, it is best to keep maximum distance between yourself and the corner. Never hug a corner or a wall or you become in risk of physically encountering any persons hiding around the corner.

Refer to the illustration above, take note on the area of coverage possible – there are blind spots on both sides of the hallway, which can be extremely dangerous for you and your teammates.





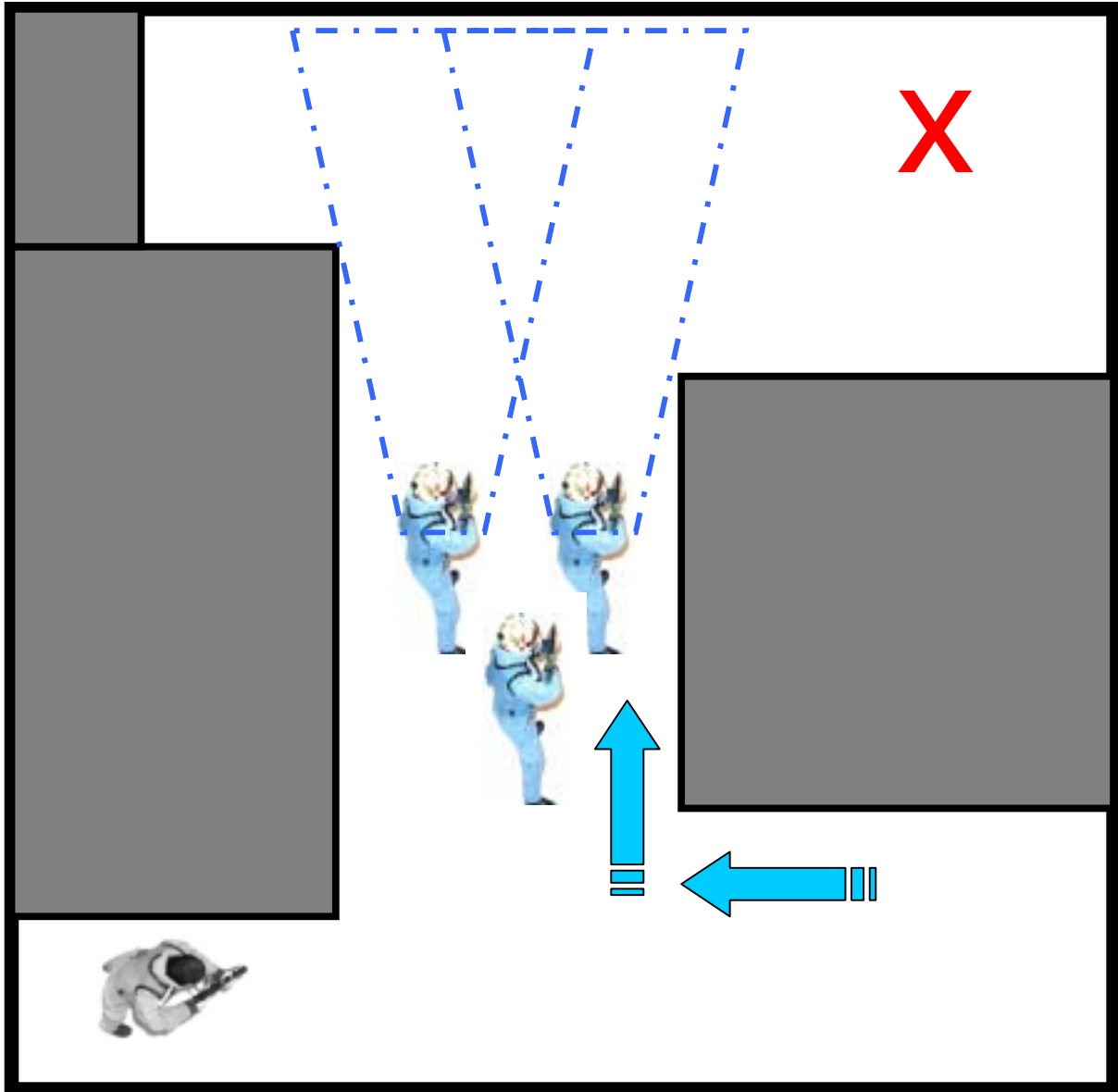
A form of cross fire provides the best possible coverage.

Note: In many real world situations, crossfires are usually meant to deny an area to an enemy or to keep his head down, i.e. just to make sure your enemy won't be able to return fire or move past there.

One very important aspect of team airsoft shooting is fields of fire. Each team member needs to have a pre-assigned field of fire - the area that the team member is going to concentrate on when moving. If your team has more than 2 members, when you fire in your field of fire it is always good to let your team know who is firing by calling out "contact!"

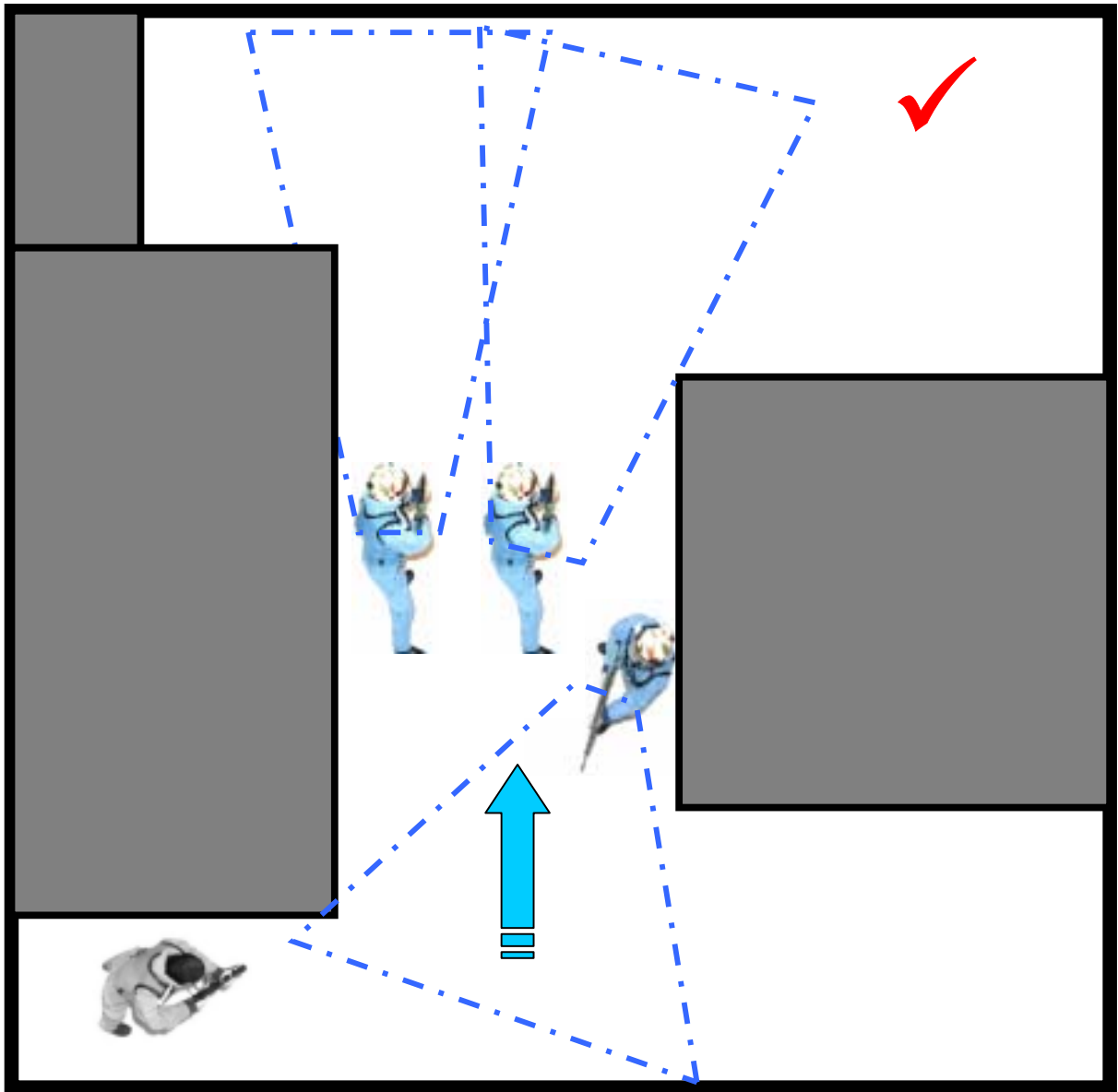


Hallway 2 (Team)

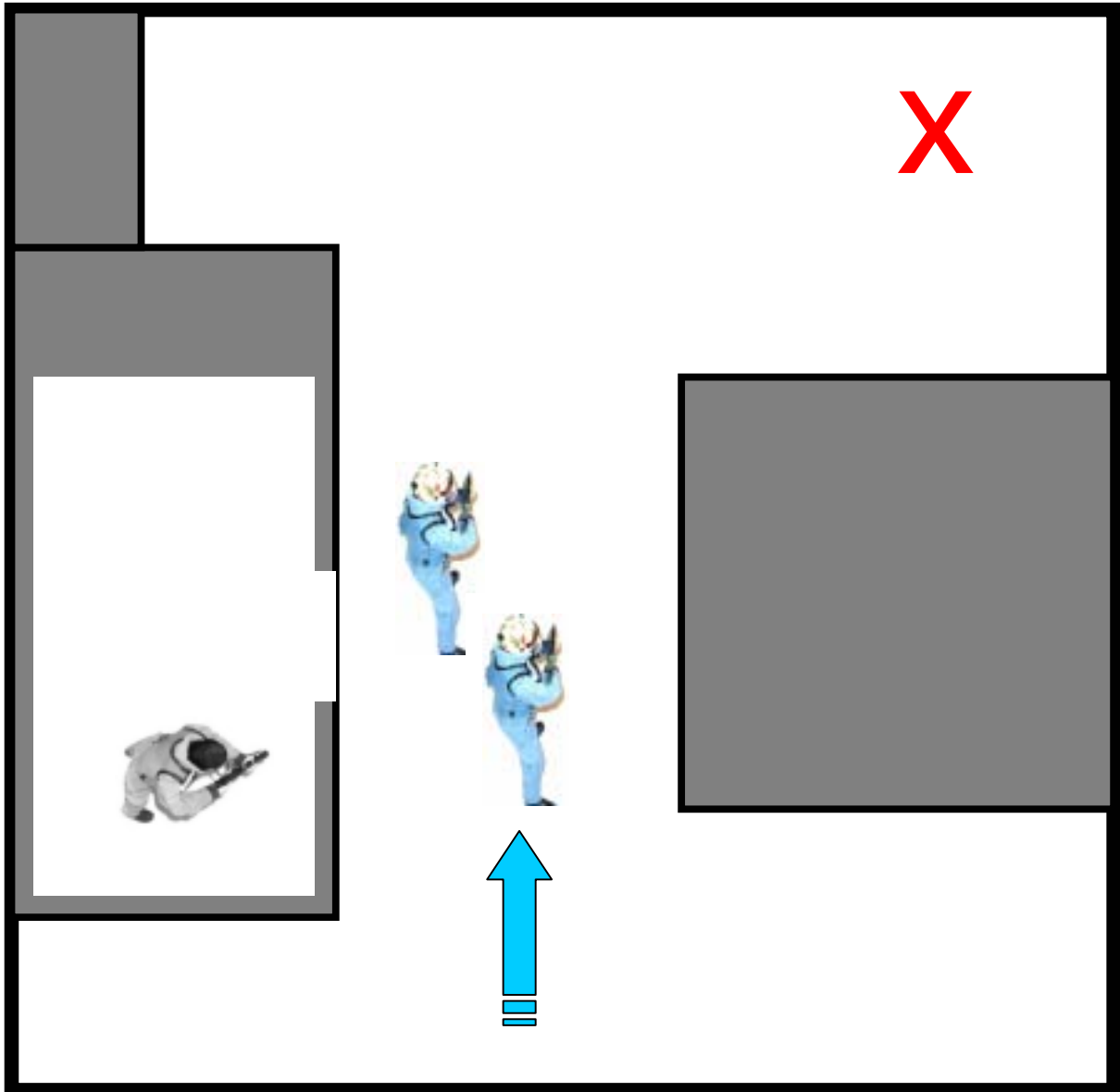


Watch your back! Always have a teammate (who is usually the last man in formation) as the rear security team member to cover the rear of the team. This is an important position because the most common guerilla tactic is to engage a larger force from behind.





Doorway (Solo or Team)



To minimize exposure when moving through a hallway, it is a good idea to use cleared rooms (if available) for cover. However, NEVER cross the doorway of an uncleared room.

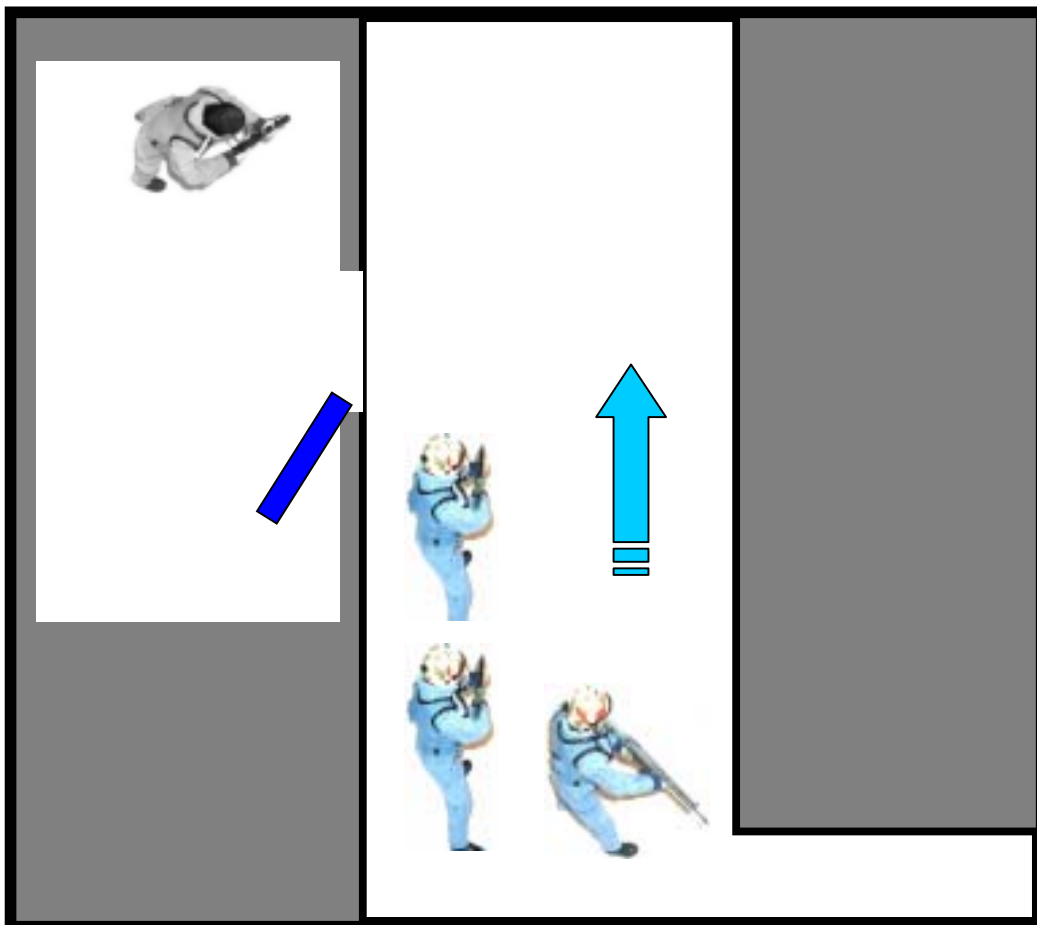
Always clear as much of the room as possible – uncleared room presents serious



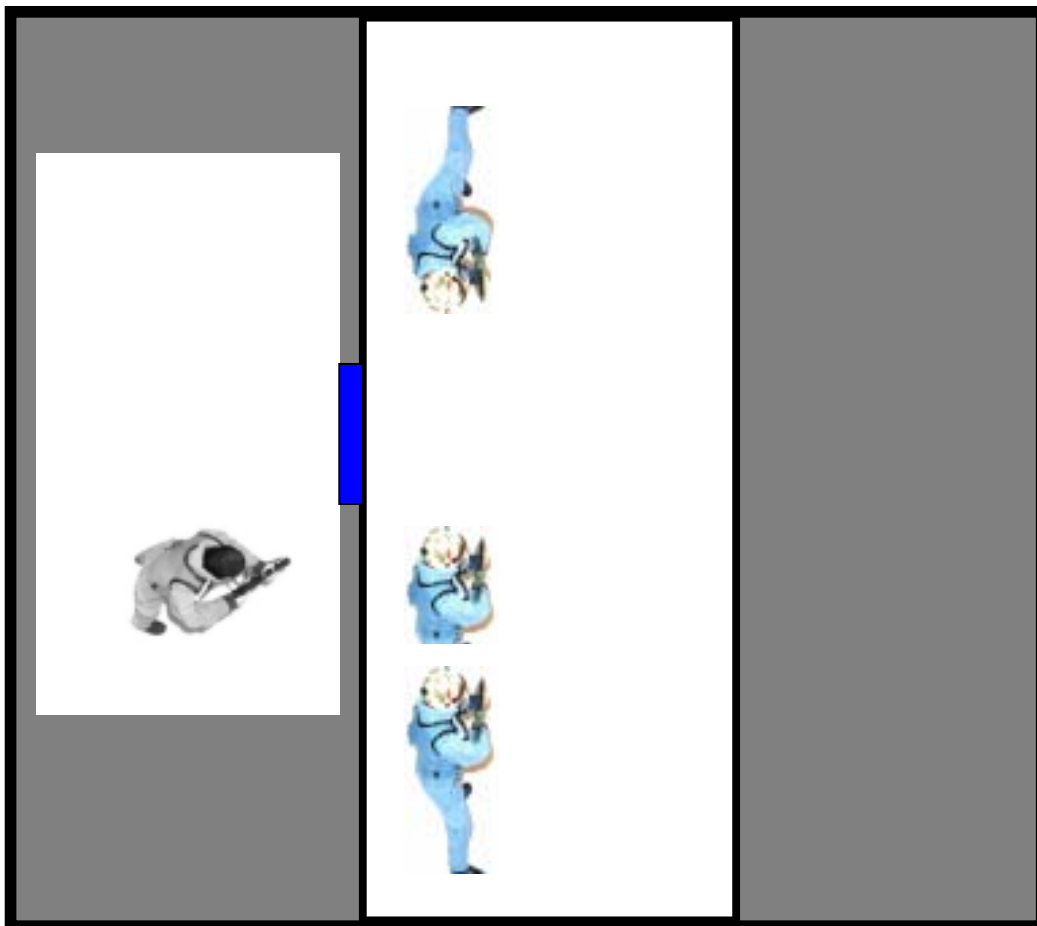
source of risk. If necessary you may either lean or rolls out further from the outside corner to enhance your view of a potentially uncleared room.

Room Entry (Team)

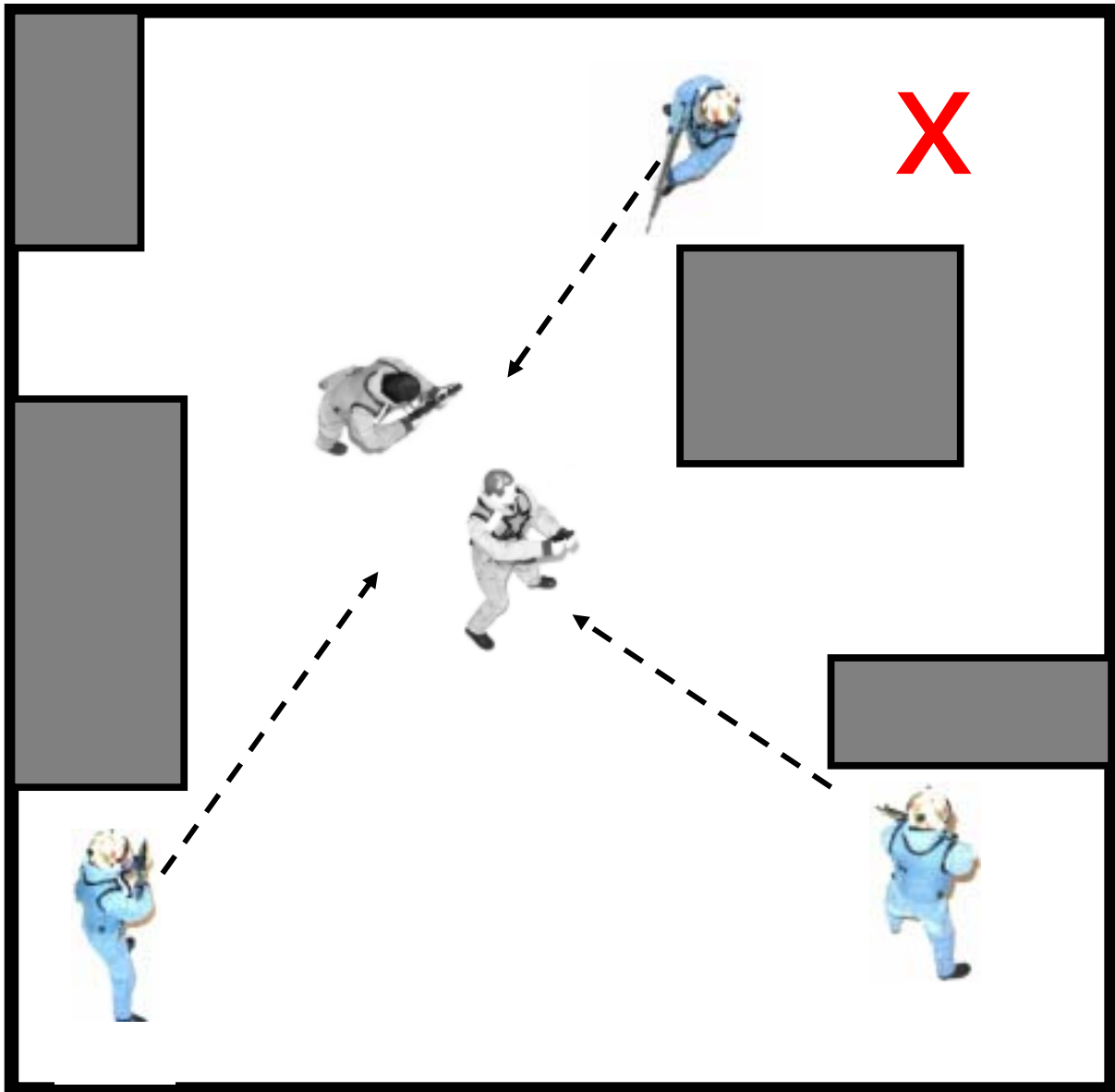
When confronted with an open door to a room which is not yet cleared, you should stop short of the doorway and assumes a ready position. Your teammate should stop behind you and ready himself. At this point, you may do a wide angle search on the door coupled with a lean. Once the probability of an immediate threat is dismissed, you can step in across the doorway, followed by your teammate who button hooks into and across the doorway.



Confronting with a closed door to a room which is not yet cleared - once you cross the closed door you should turn around and position yourself facing the door. Your teammates may stack up short of the door and prepare themselves in ready positions. You open the door. Once the door is open, the first teammate in the stack can initiate a wide angle search for threats.



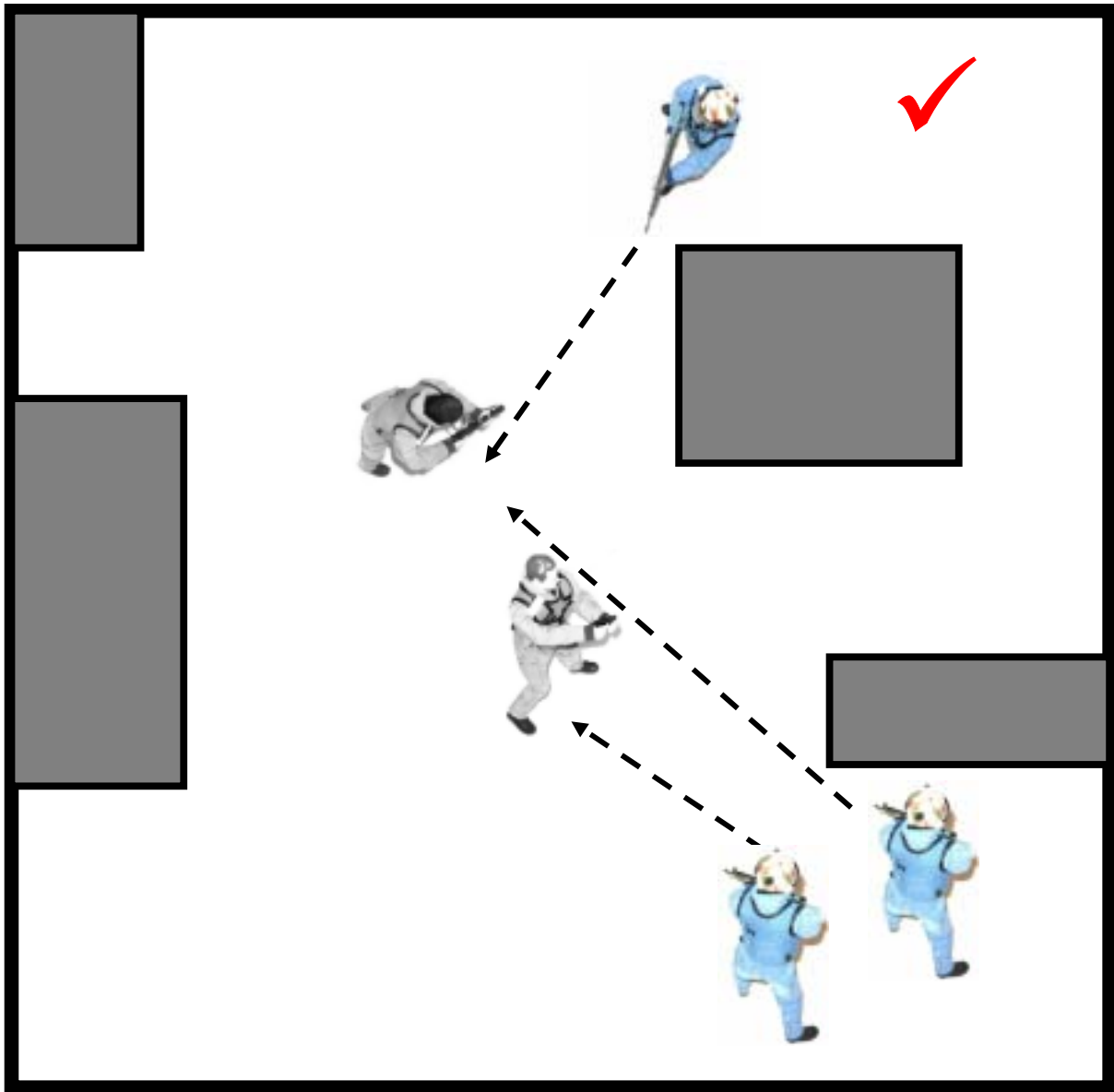
Cross Fire (Team)



Cross firing can be dangerous if shooting is done from the wrong positions.

When clearing a room or an area that is relatively small and crowded, never engage targets of opportunity. Instead, only engage targets that lie in your path. If you turn to shoot the enemies, you may also hit your own man.





You need to ensure that while cross firing there is no way you can hit your own teammate. Ideally you should always have strict fields of fire maintained.



Fighting in the dark

In the context of airsoft, flashlight can be used as an aid in low light navigation and movement as well as for the identification and assessment of threats in the dark. A general light can render your sight visible. A bright high intensity light can even destroy the night vision of an enemy temporarily (a person is legally blind when going from bright light to darkness). However, these benefits fade the closer you are to the enemy, and unless you have been properly trained, the chance of fumbling with the gun and the light will be quite likely. Even worse, your light can tell your enemy where you are located.

Proper flashlight usage

When using a flashlight, always use short flash exposures. Try to vary the location from top to bottom, side to side; and NEVER leave the light on in a constant predictable movement (which means changing directions whenever you can). Turn OFF the light when you reload!

When choosing a flashlight, don't go for a cheap one. A cheap flashlight will just fail to produce any of the intended benefits.

The light output of a cheap flashlight:





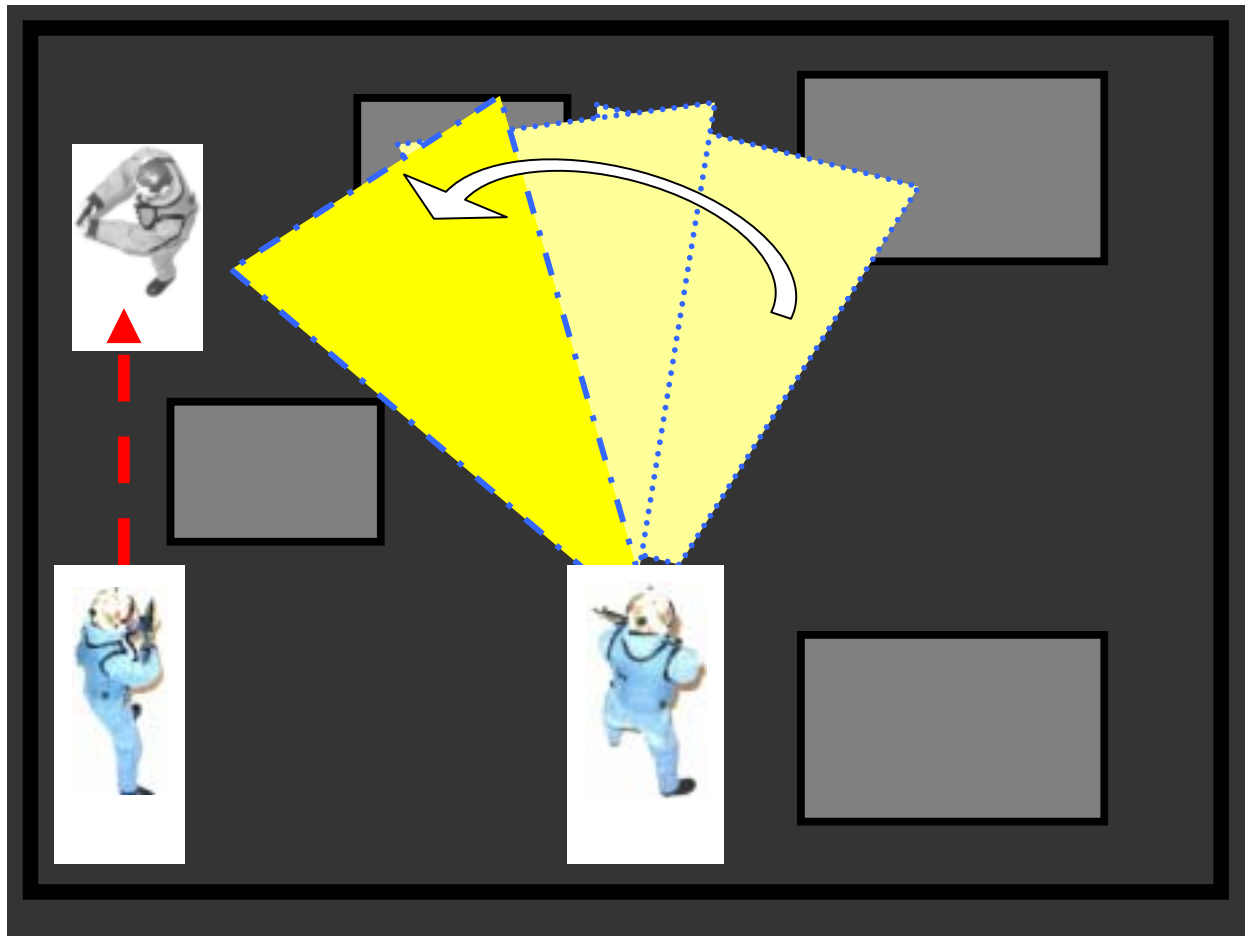
The light output of a high quality flashlight:



Psychological tactics

A powerful flashlight allows you to exercise psychological tactics. Refer to the illustration below, you are effectively “driving” your enemy to the corner as he tries to hide himself from the light. Given proper coordination with your teammate, your enemy can be “driven” to a deadly position.





Appendix I – The role of sniper

A good sniper has to be very stealthy. He must have excellent determination and concentration. He must be capable of firing from a number of positions since no one sniper position is the same as the next. In fact, you will always want to have the most experienced and trained member of your team act as the sniper.

A sniper's purpose in most airsoft scenarios is to cover the movement of the teammates and take out difficult targets that may put the teammates in danger. To achieve this, he needs to have a position that provides proper cover and concealment. It is a good idea for him to have a radio with direct contact to the team leader for coordinated actions to be taken. For example, when a sniper makes contact with an enemy, he should, whenever possible, first report this to the team leader before taking any action unless the enemy poses direct threat to himself. Remember, a sniper has to be stealthy. This is especially true when the difference in range between different airsoft guns is minimal. As a matter of fact, a sniper in the real world is usually a last resort that serves for intelligence purposes more than anything else.

More information on Airsoft Sniping will be available in our forthcoming title – Practical Airsoft Sniping.



Appendix II – Breath Control & Sighting

Contributed by John Cronk (aka Johnny Do)

Correct breath control during firing is important because when your lungs move so does the rest of your body and your gun. Your muscles are no longer in a controlled state and your accuracy will suffer. It is best to shoot in between your breath cycles i.e. in between fully exhaling or full inhaling (because it is best to fire in a relaxed state rather than a state of muscle tension).

There are a few methods in this school of thought that is dependant on the person who is shooting. One is to take 3 deep breaths, and in the middle of the third breath exhale you stop and pull the trigger. During the deep breaths you are focusing on the front site and lining up your target. Once you are in the middle of the exhale you should have your target fully acquired and relaxed enough that you are prepared to shoot. The second method is to do the same as above however you fire the gun in the middle of the third inhale. Third method is, instead of stopping during the third exhale/inhale, you shoot during the middle of the breath in one fluid motion. The main point is that during the time when you are 100% filled (or 100% empty) of breath your muscles are more tense and your body is not able to hold steady enough for firing accurately. This is especially important for snipers where that one shot is what counts.

Another trick that helps a lot of people is training your eyes as to not having to squint or close one eye while looking through your sites or scope. With practice and mental effort, a person should be able to keep their dominate eye focus on the sites and provide accurate target acquisition while the other eye is having an open peripheral view of the terrain while watching for other possible threats. People also find that squinting (keep one eye shut) provides a situation where all your muscles are not relaxed and will cause you to not be as accurate in your shots.





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