

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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STUDENT HANDOUT

SMAW FIGHTING POSITION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a. **TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE**

(1) Given a designated position, a sector of fire, and an assigned weapon, while wearing a fighting load, construct a fighting position in accordance with FMFM 6-5. (MCCS.15.01)

b. **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

(1) Given a sector of fire and assigned weapon, while wearing a fighting load, emplace aiming stakes in accordance with FMFM 6-5. (MCCS.15.01a)

(2) Given a sector of fire and assigned weapon, while wearing a fighting load, clear fields of fire in accordance with FMFM 6-5. (MCCS.15.01a)

1. PURPOSE OF A SMAW FIGHTING POSITION

a. The SMAW is employed by the platoon commander to provide anti-mechanized vehicle protection for the platoon area, and as part of the coordinated company anti-armor defense plan. The platoon commander will select the general fighting position and a sector of fire for each of his SMAW weapon systems. These fighting positions should cover the most likely mechanized vehicle avenue of approach into the platoon area, and should afford anti-armor defense in depth for the platoon. The platoon commander will select alternate and supplementary positions. Fighting positions should be selected to take maximum advantage of the range of the weapon, and it should provide for covered and concealed routes between positions. There are three types of defensive positions.

(1) The **primary position** is one from which a gunner or team can cover its sector of fire. It should have observation, cover, and concealment. It should also have good fields of fire.

(2) The **alternate position** is to a flank or slightly to the rear of the primary position. The gunner or team must be able to cover the same sector of fire as the primary position. It is used when the primary position can no longer be occupied.

(3) The **supplementary position** covers avenues of approach and any remaining TRP's other than those covered by the primary and alternate positions. It is usually close enough to the primary position to have mutual support with other positions.

2. CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SELECTING A SMAW POSITION

a. After receiving a sector of fire and firing location from your squad leader, prepare and position your weapon to cover the sector. As required, clear your sector of fires, ensuring that you clear only what is necessary.

b. In preparing a fighting position for a SMAW remember:

(1) Ensure that you have clear fields of fire.

(2) Ensure that you observe the minimum safe engagement ranges.

(3) The area directly behind the launcher should be clear of personnel, obstructions, and loose objects for at least 30 meters. Solid objects in the back blast danger zone can deflect shock waves and/or debris towards you.

3. CONSTRUCT A SMAW FIGHTING POSITION. To construct a proper fighting position you should follow the following steps:

a. Clear field of fire forward of the position.

b. Clear the back blast area behind the fighting position of all personnel, obstructions, and loose objects.

(1) The back blast area extends 90 meters behind the launcher

c. The assistant-gunner provides security.

d. The gunner marks off an area for the fighting position orientated towards the sector of fire.

e. The gunner digs the standing area 2 feet from front to rear, 6 feet wide, and armpit deep.

i. The gunner places all the dirt from the fighting position in front and to the sides of the position for protection from direct fire.

j. Top View

(1) The standing area is approximately two M16A2 rifles from side-to-side and approximately 2 Kevlar helmets, front-to-rear.

(2) The elbow shelf is approximately one-half of a Kevlar helmet wide at the sides and at the front. It is approximately 2 Kevlar helmets long.

4. AIMING STAKES AND SECTOR LIMITING STAKES: There are two basic types of stakes used, aiming stakes and sector limiting stakes.

a. Sector Limiting Stakes. The purpose of sector limiting stakes (right and left) is to define your sector of fire and to ensure mutual supporting fires between individuals and positions. Sector stakes prevent accidental firing into friendly positions. Tree limbs about 46 cm (18 in) long make good stakes. The stakes must be sturdy and must stick out of the ground high enough to keep your rifle from being pointed out of your sector.

b. Aiming Stakes. The purpose of aiming stakes is to help you fire into dangerous avenues of approach at night and at other times when visibility is poor. Forked tree limbs about 30 cm (12 in) long make good stakes.

(1) The following are examples of weapon systems organic to a rifle squad using aiming stakes and sector limiting stakes:

(a) M16A2: The following stakes are used with the M16A2.

1. Yoke Stake: The yoke stake is used as the central reference point for the firing of the weapon. It is either a "Y" shaped stake or two straight stakes driven into the ground crossing each other to form an "X". For the M16A2 it is the first stake(s) driven into the ground. The slip ring then rests in the "Y" or "X" of the yoke stake.

2. Sector Limiting Stakes. The sector limiting stakes are used to define the individual's sector of fire. They are two straight stakes approximately 1.5 inches in diameter and at least 18 inches long. The limiting stakes are driven into the ground so that when the weapon touches them, they fall on the six-inch barrel between the front sight assembly and the compensator. They should be driven into the ground so that they can withstand the erratic traversing of the weapon within the sector.

Reference and Pages: FMFM 6-5, Marine Rifle Squad, page/chapter 5-21 through 5-28.