

DoD Directive 3000.09: Autonomy in Weapon Systems

January 25th, 2023

Summary:

[DoD Directive 3000.09](#) establishes DoD policy for the development and use of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). It was originally issued in November 2012, but was updated in January 2023. The directive does not explicitly ban LAWS nor require a human-in-the-loop, but establishes strict requirements for the use of LAWS.

Original Requirements:

The directive orders that any DoD agency that wishes to develop a LAWS will be required to have it undergo a “rigorous hardware and software verification and validation and realistic system developmental and operational test and evaluation.”

Any proposed systems must also be reviewed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

2023 Updated Requirements:

Autonomous and semi-autonomous weapon systems will be designed to allow commanders and operators to exercise appropriate levels of human judgment over the use of force.

Persons who authorize the use of, direct the use of, or operate autonomous and semi-autonomous weapon systems will do so with appropriate care and in accordance with the law of war, applicable treaties, weapon system safety rules, and applicable rules of engagement.

The weapon system has demonstrated appropriate performance, capability, reliability, effectiveness, and suitability under realistic conditions.

The design, development, deployment, and use of systems incorporating AI capabilities is consistent with the DoD AI Ethical Principles and the DoD Responsible AI (RAI) Strategy and Implementation Pathway.