

Changes to the Discussion accompanying the Manual for Courts Martial, United States

(a) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 101(c):

“DISCUSSION

Discussion was added to these Rules in 2013. The Discussion itself does not have the force of law, even though it may describe legal requirements derived from other sources. It is in the nature of treatise, and may be used as secondary authority. If a matter is included in a rule, it is intended that the matter be binding, unless it is clearly expressed as precatory. The Discussion will be revised from time to time as warranted by changes in applicable law. *See* Composition of the Manual for Courts-Martial in Appendix 21.

Practitioners should also refer to the Analysis of the Military Rules of Evidence contained in Appendix 22 of this Manual. The Analysis is similar to Committee Notes accompanying the Federal Rules of Evidence and is intended to address the basis of the rule, deviation from the Federal Rules of Evidence, relevant precedent, and drafters’ intent.”

(b) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 301(c):

“DISCUSSION

A military judge is not required to provide Article 31 warnings. If a witness who seems uninformed of the privileges under this rule appears likely to incriminate himself or herself, the military judge may advise the witness of the right to decline to make any answer that might tend to incriminate the witness and that any self-incriminating answer the witness might make can later be used as evidence against the witness. Counsel for any party or for the witness may ask the military judge to so advise a witness if such a request is made out of the hearing of the witness and the members, if present. Failure to so advise a witness does not make the testimony of the witness inadmissible.”

(c) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 312(b)(2)(F):

“DISCUSSION

An examination of the unclothed body under this rule should be conducted whenever practicable by a person of the same sex as that of the person being examined; however, failure to comply with this requirement does not make an examination an unlawful search within the meaning of Mil. R. Evid. 311.”

(d) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 312(e):

“DISCUSSION

Compelling a person to ingest substances for the purposes of locating the property described above or to compel the bodily elimination of such property is a search within the meaning of this section.”

(e) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 312(f):

“DISCUSSION

Nothing in this rule will be deemed to interfere with the lawful authority of the armed forces to take whatever action may be necessary to preserve the health of a servicemember.”

(f) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 314(c):

“DISCUSSION

Searches under subdivision (c) may not be conducted at a time or in a manner contrary to an express provision of a treaty or agreement to which the United States is a party; however, failure to comply with a treaty or agreement does not render a search unlawful within the meaning of Mil. R. Evid. 311.”

(g) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 314(e)(2):

“DISCUSSION

Where a co-occupant of property is physically present at the time of the requested search and expressly states his refusal to consent to the search, a warrantless search is unreasonable as to that co-occupant and evidence from the search is inadmissible as to that co-occupant. *Georgia v. Randolph*, 547 U.S. 103 (2006).”

(h) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 314(f)(2):

“DISCUSSION

Subdivision (f)(2) requires that the official making the stop have a reasonable suspicion based on specific and articulable facts that the person being frisked is armed and dangerous. Officer safety is a factor, and the officer need not be absolutely certain that the individual detained is armed for the purposes of frisking or patting down that person’s outer clothing for weapons. The test is whether a reasonably prudent person in similar circumstances would be warranted in a belief that his or her safety was in danger. The purpose of a frisk is to search for weapons or other dangerous items, including but not limited to: firearms, knives, needles, or razor blades. A limited search of outer clothing for weapons serves to protect both the officer and the public; therefore, a frisk is reasonable under the Fourth Amendment.”

(i) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 314(f)(3):

“DISCUSSION

The scope of the search is similar to the "stop and frisk" defined in subdivision (f)(2) of this rule. During the search for weapons, the official may seize any item that is immediately apparent as contraband or as evidence related to the offense serving as the basis for the stop. As a matter of safety, the official may, after conducting a lawful stop of a vehicle, order the driver and any passengers out of the car without any additional suspicion or justification.”

(j) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 314(g)(2):

“DISCUSSION

The scope of the search for weapons is limited to that which is necessary to protect the arresting official. The official may not search a vehicle for weapons if there is no possibility that the arrestee could reach into the searched area, for example, after the arrestee is handcuffed and removed from the vehicle. The scope of the search is broader for destructible evidence related to the offense for which the individual is being arrested. Unlike a search for weapons, the search for destructible offense-related evidence may take place after the arrestee is handcuffed and removed from a vehicle. If, however, the official cannot expect to find destructible offense-related evidence, this exception does not apply.”

(k) A new Discussion is added following Mil. R. Evid. 315(a):

“DISCUSSION

Although military personnel should adhere to procedural guidance regarding the conduct of searches, violation of such procedural guidance does not render evidence inadmissible unless the search is unlawful under these rules or the Constitution of the United States as applied to members of the armed forces. For example, if the person whose property is to be searched is present during a search conducted pursuant to a search authorization granted under this rule, the person conducting the search should notify him or her of the fact of authorization and the general substance of the authorization. Such notice may be made prior to or contemporaneously with the search. Property seized should be inventoried at the time of a seizure or as soon thereafter as practicable. A copy of the inventory should be given to a person from whose possession or premises the property was taken. Failure to provide notice, make an inventory, furnish a copy thereof, or otherwise comply with this guidance does not render a search or seizure unlawful within the meaning of Mil. R. Evid. 311.”