

WEAPONS

The *Ley Federal de Armas de Fuego y Explosivos*, Federal Firearms and Explosives Law, regulates the use of firearms, defining which are of civilian, military and police use. The law does not permit private guard services to carry guns, except by authorization of the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional (Sedena)*, Secretariat of Defence. By law, the *Tolete (PR24)*, a baton, is also exclusively reserved for use by police forces. In theory, tear gas is reserved for use by the military. Many private security companies violate these regulations. A tear gas made in the United Kingdom is widely used, and many companies also issue firearms.

The law does not specifically cover personal protective products such as pepper spray and electric-shock guns. This lack of definition has created a market for such products. An informal market has emerged, not so much because the products are illegal, but because it is often street-merchants, who do not pay taxes, who sell them. An illegal black-market exists for firearms.

PRODUCT STANDARDS

Many security and safety products are covered by Mexico's *Normas Oficiales Mexicanas (NOMs)*, system of official standards. In these cases, prior to importation a *NOM* certificate must be obtained from the *Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial (Secofi)*, Secretariat of Commerce and Industrial Development. Products must be tested by an accredited Mexican laboratory, although under a phase-out provision, Canadian laboratories will be able to do this in the future.

Technically, these requirements apply to the importer, but as a practical matter the onus is on the exporter because the certificate of compliance is required before the goods can cross the border. The list of products subject to this requirement is constantly being revised, and prospective exporters should depend on their Mexican customers or distributors to keep them informed of the requirements. They include a wide variety of fire detection and fire-fighting products, as well as personal protective equipment.