



Medieval Combat Society

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WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY POLICY

1) Purpose and Scope of the Weapon and Equipment Safety Policy.

- a) Due to their nature, some of the equipment used by The Society (especially weapons) are inherently dangerous, but are also vital to the presentations and activities of The Society.
- b) It is therefore desirable to hold a set of safety rules and guidelines which are specific to the standards for this equipment in addition to The Societies general safety rules.
- c) The Weapons and Equipment Policy consists of a set of rules which The Society will follow with regard to the suitability, care, and upkeep of weapons and equipment for the protection and safety of its members and the public.

2) General Equipment Rules

- a) The final decision as to the suitability of an item of equipment for use in combat activities rests with The Society's Combat Master.
- b) The final decision as to the suitability of an item of equipment for use in archery activities rests with The Society's Archery Master.
- c) The final decision as to the suitability of an item of equipment for use in any other activities rests with The Society's Costume / Depiction Master.
- d) All equipment must be safe to use, well maintained and fitting for the period of time as portrayed by The Society. However, in any situation where a conflict exists between the need for authenticity and the need for safety, then the need for safety will take priority.
- e) All weapons armour and equipment including shields should be kept free from rust, dirt, nicks, burrs and other sharp edges.

3) Weapons

- a) Edged (Blade) Weapons: (Swords and Daggers)
 - i) An Edged Weapon used as a primary weapon (Sword) must have a blade length over 18 inches long;
 - ii) An Edged Weapon used as a secondary weapon (Dagger) must have a blade length less than 18 inches long.
 - iii) All Edged Weapons must have points rounded to no less than the contours of a pound coin and impacting edges with a width of at least 2mm.
 - iv) Edged Weapons must feature a full tang, beaten hilt. Bolt / Screw designs are not suitable for combat.
- b) Short Blunt Force Weapons: (Axes, Maces, Hammers and Mauls)
 - i) Will consist of a weapon head fitted on a shaft of no more than 4 foot in length.

- ii) These weapons should feature shafts made of ash, hickory or other fibrous woods which will split down their length before shearing off. Non-fibrous, man-made, woods will shear away allowing the weapon head to fly off.
- iii) Heads on Short Blunt Force Weapons must have impacting edges with a width of at least 3mm and no sharp points. Any point on a blunt force weapon must be rounded to no less than the contours of a pound coin or ‘tipped’ with a rounded bead of no less than 5mm.
- c) Pole Weapons: (Spears, Bills, Glaive, Bardische, War Hammer, Great Axe).
 - i) Consist of a weapon head fitted on a shaft over 4 foot but less than 8 foot in length.
 - ii) These weapons should feature shafts of Ash, Seasoned Pine or other flexing woods. Ramin is not acceptable for pole weapon shafts due to its tendency to shatter.
 - iii) Heads on Pole Weapons must have impacting edges with a width of at least 3mm and no sharp points. Any point on a blunt force weapon must be rounded to no less than the contours of a pound coin or ‘tipped’ with a rounded bead of no less than 10mm.
 - iv) Heads on Pole Weapons must be sturdy enough to not bend (in elastically) under pressure (bending eventually results in breakages by metal fatigue).
- d) Flail Weapons
 - i) Consist of a chain or chains with weighted ends attached to a short handle.
 - ii) Flail weapons may be used only through a majority vote made by the Knights present at any event excluding the flail user and with the prior agreement of the opponent. This vote must be repeated on an event by event basis.
- e) Projectile Weapons (Bows and Crossbows).
 - i) Bows used must be English long bows, Norman short bows or non-machine wound crossbows in order to fit in the Societies time period. Recurve bows and compound bows are not acceptable.
 - ii) Arrows must feature a hardwood shaft with self or horn nocks. Ramin or dowel is not acceptable as an arrow shaft due to its tendency to shatter. Plastic nocks are not acceptable.
 - iii) Due to the relatively short ranges at which The Society shoots, arrows must feature a minimum of 4” shield fletching. “Speed fletched” arrows and parabolic fletching are not permissible. Points used should be of a black “mod-bod” design. Brass points and field points are not acceptable
 - iv) Arrows to be used for combat or on the battlefield must feature a minimum of 5” full feather fletching, and use a Red (Red Head) or Green (Eco-Blunt) blunt head over a flat ended shaft. A blunt head of any type must NEVER be placed over a regular arrow point. The use of Black (Speed Blunt) blunt heads is not allowed at society events and it is recommended that members do not use them if provided at an open event due to concerns over the safety of these types of blunt.
 - v) Arrows must be used which are appropriate to the draw length of the archer and the draw weight of the bow being used. Under length arrows can be drawn inside the bow, over length arrows are inherently inaccurate and therefore dangerous.

4) Armour

- a) The minimum armour standard for ALL combat activities is a helmet and hand protection gauntlets. A padded jack for body protection is highly recommended.
- b) Metal used for plate armour must be steel of a minimum thickness of 16 gauge. It is recommended that helmets are made from steel with a minimum thickness of 12-14 gauge. Aluminium is not suitable for armour.
- c) All helmets must be able to stop a heavy (accidental) blow. As The Society allows headshots helmets must be sufficiently constructed to withstand repeated blows. They should also be suitably padded to cushion your head against these impacts.
- d) Gauntlets must be constructed from mail or plate, and should be sufficient to withstand a blow across

the hand preventing injury.

- e) Padded armour should have a minimum thickness of ½". If a sleeveless jack is worn, the arms must be alternatively covered so that no bare flesh is visible.
- f) The amount of armour worn over other areas is discretionary. Avoid defensive equipment which appears to offer more protection than it does. Inadequate “look-a-like” armour, be it mail, plate or padded, sends the wrong signals to your opponent, and is often worse than no armour at all. Be aware that a surcoat without body protection can be misleading, particularly if armour is visible on other locations.
- g) Shields should be constructed from (1.6mm) steel over plywood or (2mm) steel, or banded heavy plywood. Heater and round (targe) shields are appropriate for The Societies time period, kite and jousting shields are not.