

N·A·Re·S

National Association of Re-enactment Societies

Guidance notes - Drill and Training

1. Definitions

A re-enactment is a physical representation, or reconstruction, of historical events. It may take the form of either military or non-military activities.

A battle re-enactment shall be a representation, or reconstruction, of an historical form of combat.

A drill display shall be a representation, or reconstruction, of military manoeuvres which does not involve combat.

2. Recognised Training System

All training and assessments should be supervised by a Recognised Training Officer, who has been certified as competent to conduct training by the officer in charge of combat training for the society. Training should be conducted against a published syllabus, to ensure that members are aware of the training open to them, and the requirements to complete each element of the syllabus.

Training should be conducted using the equipment which will be used during displays. This should be of a design which is accurate for the period portrayed, within safety limits. The use of equipment which is heavier/lighter, more durable, or safer than that to be used in displays should be limited to an introductory period.

3. Legal and Safety Requirements

Persons involved in re-enactment must be made aware of the risks and possible dangers to health involved with this pastime. They must also accept responsibility for, and attempt to minimise, all such risks and dangers to health related to their own actions whether those risks and dangers affect themselves or others. (N.B. In some cases these responsibilities are enforceable by law). Specifically, it is recommended that persons involved in melee combat, or likely to be struck by projectiles, should wear an appropriate amount of armour or protective equipment.

Members under the age of 18 (16 in Scotland) must not be allowed to engage in any combat activity without the express written consent of their parent or guardian, who must be made fully aware of the risks and dangers involved in re-enactment. Further, it is recommended that members under this age be restricted to private training sessions under close supervision, to remove

any threat to public safety, for which the supervising Training Officer may be deemed legally liable.

4. Supervision

All new members of re-enactment societies should be supervised at all times by a competent person, and should be trained in the use of any weapon they elect (or are allowed) to use.

Members should also be supervised by an appropriate person when using any weapon type with which they are not familiar, regardless of their experience with other weapon types.

At no time should an untrained member, or any non-member including members of the public, be allowed to use any weapon, either against a re-enactor or other target, or in a public space. In particular, members should take care to prevent the taking and use of weapons by the public, and especially by children.

5. Training Location

The supervising Training Officer should ensure that training is conducted in a safe and appropriate place. Specifically, obstacles such as cars, spectators, buildings, tents, etc should not encroach on the training area, to prevent injury or damage to property.

At all times, environmental conditions should be considered. This should include, but not be limited to, the temperature, footing conditions, and wind speed. Where conditions are deemed to exceed safe parameters, training should not be permitted.

6. Insurance

Public liability insurance should be provided to include cover for official training sessions, and should protect against damage to property, and injury to third parties.

Where events involve the participation of members of the public, such as in drill training, target archery, and similar activities, this participation must be closely supervised at all times. Societies are strongly advised to ensure that their public liability insurance specifically covers such activities.

7. Safety Assessments

Before being allowed to use any weapon without supervision, either in a training session, combat display, or drill display, members should be assessed to ensure that they have achieved a satisfactory level of safety with that weapon. This assessment may be carried out informally, but must be completed by an appointed training officer who is competent to judge the safety of the candidate.

The assessment requirements must be made known to the candidate in advance, and in particular they should be given an explanation of how the

assessment will be conducted, and what actions will result in the candidate failing to pass the assessment.

8. Repeat Assessments

Candidates who have been assessed and ruled to have failed to meet the standard required should be given the opportunity to repeat the assessment as many times as is necessary. Between assessment attempts, it is expected that some remedial training will be undertaken to attempt to correct the faults found in previous assessments.

9. Combat and Drill Rules

Societies are encouraged to publish their combat rules, weapon specifications, and other regulations relating to re-enactment combat and drill in a form which is accessible to all members of that society. All members should be aware of the rules and regulations governing their actions, and a check on this knowledge should be included in any weapon safety assessment the member undertakes. In particular, members should take responsibility for the safety of their own weapon, and should be aware of the designated target and non-target areas for contact with a weapon on an opponent.

10. Disciplinary Action

Societies should maintain and publish a disciplinary procedure to be followed in the event of injury or complaint as a result of combat. This should include the power to ban members from combat on a temporary or permanent basis, if such action is deemed necessary. After a temporary ban, members should be re-assessed to ensure that appropriate remedial action has been taken to resolve the problem.

For battlefield discipline, all members should be aware of who is responsible for which aspects of safety and discipline at all times. Where numbers prevent the easy identification of designated officers, existing command structures should be used wherever possible.

11. Regular Practice

Users of weapons, and missile weapons in particular, should be encouraged to practice regularly to maintain the accuracy and control they have gained in the use of their weapon. Where members have lapsed from regular practice for some time, they should be re-assessed to ensure that their accuracy and control remains within the required limits.

12. Accident Records

An open record should be kept of all accidents and injuries, to include the names of those involved, and details of the circumstances of the incident, including the weapons being used. This accident record should be open to inspection by any member on request. A published procedure should also exist for the follow-up of incidents to identify common factors and participants, and to suggest ways to minimise re-occurrences. All equipment in use at the scene when an accident occurred should be checked immediately to ensure that it was in a safe state.

13. Review Process

All rules, regulations, and the training syllabus should be subject to regular review, with a published procedure for proposing and adopting changes to these documents. In this way, members may contribute to the improvement of the systems of the society, and thus to its safety record.

14. Equipment Standards

All equipment should be fit for its purpose, and should meet the standards specified by the society. The supervising Training Officer should carry out checks on all equipment before each event or training session.

15. Equipment Storage

When not in use for training or combat displays, all weapons should be stored securely and in a safe manner. In particular, all tension-driven projectile weapons must be stored with the tension removed (e.g. bows should be unstrung). Where possible, equipment should be stored out of sight and in a locked container when not in use, to prevent its theft or misuse.

The carrying of weapons outside of the designated event area (such as to a local pub) should be discouraged, as subject to the interpretation by the local constabulary this could result in the items being confiscated as offensive weapons.

Where equipment is on display during an event, but is not being actively used (such as polearms stacked in a camp area), these should be placed in such a way as to minimise the risk of interference from non-members. In particular, the risk of stacked weapons collapsing must be considered, and if necessary a barrier should be placed around such items. Stacked equipment should be supervised at all times.

16. Equipment Transport

All weapons and other items of combat equipment should be transported in a secure manner. Where possible, they should remain in a locked container at all times. Where this is not possible (for example where weapons are stored in a trailer with a canvas cover), the items should not be left unattended at any time.

It is recommended that any items carried by hand should be disguised where possible to minimise public curiosity - carrying in a sports bag or other

container may be appropriate. Where locks or ties are available to secure the container, these should be used for additional security.

17. Weapons and the Law

Under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, and as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 1988 and the Offensive Weapons Act 1996, any item held to be an offensive weapon in the judgement of the police may be confiscated, and the bearer arrested without a warrant. Where the item is required to conduct the legitimate profession of the person concerned (such as a forester with an axe), this may be presented as a valid reason for its possession. While re-enactment does not necessarily qualify under this definition, all members should be issued with, and be encouraged to carry, a membership card showing that they are a current member of a re-enactment society. Where the police insist on confiscating a member's equipment, they should not argue with this decision. However, it is highly recommended that they accompany the items to the police station, and that they insist on a receipt for them from the responsible officer. Under such circumstances, they should then approach the Training Officer of their society, who may assist them in persuading the police to return the items. The Training Officer of their society should also notify the Chair of the NAReS Edged Weapons Sub-Committee of the incident.

18. Safety of Sharp Implements

Where sharp implements are in use as part of a display, they should be used only by those who are competent to do so, and who have received basic instruction in the use of the equipment. In particular, children should not be allowed to chop wood or to cut food without close supervision.

Where sharp weapons are used in a display (such as target archery using broadheads or piles), these should be kept separate from blunted weapons at all times, and should be completely removed from the area before any subsequent activity. Where sharp arrows are used, these should be counted into and out of the display area to ensure that none remain behind.

Sharp weapons must never be carried during combat training or during a battle re-enactment. Where sharp knives are desirable for emergency safety use, they should be carried as part of a first aid kit or by an appointed person, and should be of a modern design with a folding blade so that it is impossible for them to be accidentally used in combat.

NAReS guidance notes are based on what is believed to be current good practice. They are not intended to be exhaustive in their content and are open to revision.

These notes are intended for guidance only and should not be construed as being mandatory, or applying to all circumstances which may arise. They are designed to work in conjunction with any member groups' own rules, regulations or recommendations.

NAReS cannot be held responsible for the actions of other official bodies, or for the imposition or effect of any legislation/regulation of which it was unaware at the date of issue of this guidance note.