

## **Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard Safety Policy and Procedures**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to establish standardized Safety Policy and Procedures for the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution to be adopted by the National, State and Chapter Color Guards to promote uniformity for multi-state events and to facilitate the acquisition of liability insurance coverage for the Color Guard. State Societies may in their discretion adopt more stringent standards if desirable or required by the laws of their state.

### **Policies**

#### **A. Insurance:**

1. All chapter and/or state societies that have compatriots firing weapons shall have a liability insurance policy that covers events at which Black Powder is fired.
2. All liability insurance policies obtained by a Chapter or State shall name the respective State Society and National Society as additional insureds.

#### **B. Training:**

1. Before carrying a weapon at an SAR event, all compatriots will be trained in the safe handling of that weapon even if they are not firing.
2. Any compatriot who will be firing shall be additionally trained in the safe operation and firing of their firearm.
3. The recognized standards for training shall be (1) the National Park Service *Manual of Instruction for the Safe Use of Reproduction Flintlock Rifles & Muskets in Interpretive Demonstrations (1/21/2010)*, (2) the NRA NMLRA Basic Muzzle Loading Shooting Course or (3) an equivalent training course taught by an instructor who has been certified by the appropriate State Color Guard Commander. If the color guardsman receives training from an outside source such as the NRA or NPS, the State Color Guard Commander or his designee will examine the color guardsman for familiarity with SAR uses of a firelock and provide additional training as necessary.
4. Weapons training is the responsibility of the State Society with competencies certified by the State Color Guard Commander or his designee based on the following criteria:
  - a. Demonstrated knowledge of and compliance with the recognized safety standards for carrying a weapon
  - b. Demonstrated knowledge of and efficiency in safely loading and firing a weapon

#### **C. Firearm(s):**

1. Only muskets and rifles of the Revolutionary War era, including but not limited to the British Brown Bess Musket, the French Charleville Musket, the Spanish M1752 Musket and American Long Rifles, are permitted.
2. Only reproductions that are manufactured for black powder shall be fired.
  - a. Firearms shall have a flash protector and frizzen cover/hammer stall.
  - b. Firearms shall always be pointed in a safe direction and never at another person.
  - c. Firearms shall remain unloaded until instructed to load. Charged weapons shall be carried at half-cock.
  - d. A finger shall never be on the trigger unless firing the weapon.
  - e. A safety inspection shall be performed prior to any event and, if the weapon has been fired, immediately after an event.
  - f. Members of the general public shall not be allowed to handle a weapon that has been fired until the barrel has been swabbed out and the weapon has undergone a safety inspection.

- g. Members of the general public may handle a weapon that has not been fired or has been cleared after a firing provided that the compatriot maintains positive control of the weapon by keeping in positive contact with the weapon or its shoulder strap.

*D. Powder:*

1. Paper cartridge are preferred so as to maintain the appearance of historical accuracy; however, other materials used by reenactors may be utilized at the discretion of the local commander.
2. Powder loaded into a weapon shall not exceed the limits established by the National Park Service manual as follows:

“Brown Bess” Musket .75 Caliber	125 grains FFg
Charleville Musket .69 Caliber	125 grains FFg
American Musket .69 Caliber	90 grains FFg
Kentucky Rifle Variable	90 grains FFg
Pistols & Horse Pistols Variable	35 grains FFg
Fowler & Trade Guns .62 Caliber	80 grains FFg

3. While participating in SAR events a ball/projectile shall never be loaded into a weapon.
  - a. Wadding/patches are never to be used for Color Guard purposes.
  - b. Ramrods and/or other objects shall not be inserted into charged barrels.
4. Compatriots participating in a gun salute shall keep the powder cartridges in a leather covered pouch or box with a flap that completely covers the opening. The pouch or box should be worn external to the compatriot’s clothing (i.e. no cartridges should be kept in pockets or under coats).

*E. Edged Weapons:*

1. All edged weapons, including but not limited to swords, bayonets and tomahawks/hatchets, shall be kept in their scabbards until appropriate time for use.
2. At no time shall edged weapons be pointed at an individual.
3. Bayonets shall only be placed on muskets during outdoor ceremonies and parades.
4. Spontoons, halberds and pikes shall always be carried in the upright position and only pointed at the ground during a salute.

*F. General Safety*

1. Consistent with National Park Service Policy, natural fiber fabrics or leather should be worn if a color guard member is firing or is next to a member that is firing. No clothing shall contain any materials that are flammable or can easily melt.
2. Eye protection, to protect against flashes or sparks, may be worn at the discretion of the Compatriot and may include either period or modern glasses.
3. Hearing protection may be worn at the discretion of the compatriot.

*G. Record Retention*

1. All required paperwork, including but not limited to, copies of insurance policies, list of trainers and lists of trained compatriots, shall be maintained by each State Society and shall be provided to the National SAR upon request.
2. Lists of trainers and those trained should be updated annually by each State Society.
3. The National SAR will maintain all National Color Guard Staff documentation.

**Event Procedures**

*A. General:*

1. The Color Guard Commander, or his designee, shall be responsible for enforcing all policies to the extent possible; however, each compatriot is ultimately responsible for his own health and safety.
2. It is the compatriot's personal responsibility to be aware of their physical limitations and to excuse themselves from parades or events exceeding their capabilities.
3. The Color Guard Commander, or his designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that proper permits and permissions for Color Guard activities have been obtained.
4. At no time shall a compatriot be impaired by alcohol or medication while firing.
5. Provisions for adequate water for Color Guard participants should be made by the sponsoring State Society or Chapter in the event of high heat and/or humidity.

*Site Safety:*

1. The Commander, or his designee, shall inspect the assembly area, route of march, and ceremonial area and take such steps as might be appropriate to mitigate any existing hazards.
2. A minimum 150 feet buffer zone free of observers is in front of the firing team shall be established.
3. Careful consideration should be made when firing between buildings or structures that will contain the blast and resonate the sound.
4. A Safety Officer, who may be the commander, must be present at every event where firing occurs.

*Firearm Inspection:*

Pre-Event: The Color Guard Commander, or his designate, shall perform a musket safety check prior to any use of a weapon in a SAR Ceremony. Such safety check shall include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Weapons shall be confirmed to be in a safe and functional state with all parts being free of visible defects (including, but not limited to stock cracks or splits, secure bands and pins, etc.) and that all appropriate safety equipment is attached such as flash guards and frizzen covers / hammer stalls.
2. If the weapon will be fired, the lock must not fail in the half-cock position and the hammer not catch at half-cock when the trigger is pulled. If the lock fails, the weapon will not be allowed to fire.
3. During the safety check, weapons shall be confirmed to be unloaded by pinging the ramrod.

**Post Event/Misfire Safety Check**

1. After every firing event the weapon shall be confirmed to be unloaded by pinging the ramrod.
2. If the weapon still has a charge then that weapon shall be taken away to a point of safety. A safety officer shall watch the clearing to ensure that all safety precautions are observed.
3. The pan shall be re-primed and the musket fired.
4. If the weapon still does not fire, the charge will be removed from the barrel. Once the weapon has the charge removed, another ramrod check shall be done to assure there is no latent powder remaining in the barrel.

*Firing Commands:*

*It is encouraged that the firing commands be standardized to those presented in as presented in the National Park Service Manual of Instruction for the Safe Use of Reproduction Flintlock Rifles & Muskets in Interpretive Demonstrations (1/21/2010). \**

*Firing Muskets in parades:*

1. The Color Guard Commander, or his designee, shall ensure that the parade officials will allow the firing of muskets and that appropriate precautions to inform adjacent units and public safety officials of any firing have been taken.
2. All other safety procedures shall apply during parades.
3. A Safety Officer shall be assigned to monitor the safety of the Color Guard and the public near the firing. This officer shall inform observers to taken precautions prior to any firing.

4. The Color Guard Commander, or his designee, shall ensure that the preferred distance of one hundred fifty (150) feet separates the participants in front of the color guard from the color guard.
5. Firing shall be aimed directly forward with muskets pointed upward with at least a forty-five (45) degree angle and never over parade observers. Firings should only occur in open spaces, such as major intersections, where the concussion will not damage building windows.

\*The National Park Service *Manual of Instruction for the Safe Use of Reproduction Flintlock Rifles & Muskets in Interpretive Demonstrations (1/21/2010)* may be found online by searching for it by name or at the following address <https://www.nps.gov/stri/upload/18thcmusketmanual2010-01-21.pdf>. This manual is incorporated into this Policy by reference.