

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SOCIETY LTD

GUIDELINES FOR RUNNING ACWS EVENTS

For the safe and well co-ordinated conduct of events, battles, skirmishes and re-enactment demonstrations, for the guidance and direction of Unit Commander, their 2 i/cs and above in the Society command & rank structures.

This Protocol is designed to make more professional and safer, and more relevant to the history we portray, the arena events, battles and/or public displays (“Shows”) carried out by The Society.

- 1) Care, courtesy & common sense will be used for all our shows by all participants.
- 2) NO hand-to-hand that is not pre-arranged, sanctioned in advance by the commanders of both armies & pre-rehearsed by those directly involved and is also part of the agreed scenario will take place.(ACWS Rules D7)
- 3)
 - a) Projects, in consultation with the Sponsor, will advise on contractual & other requirements for the Show that the Planning Meeting referred to in 3b) must take into consideration when deciding how the show will be run, outcomes, consequential actions and “who does what, when “(“The Plan “).
 - b) There will always be a show planning meeting in advance of any Show, preferably on site. The minimum participants will be The Army Commanders, their 2i/cs, Cavalry Rep, Artillery Reps, Pyro Rep, Army Sgt. Majors and medical team rep (if necessary) and The Narrator. If a particular arm of service is not involved in the Show, they do not need to be there.
 - c) So that there can be NO misunderstanding or miscommunication because all significant leaders will have been present at The Planning Meeting, the Army Commanders will mutually agree what is to be done & The Plan & they will enforce compliance by, firstly, issuing clear & unambiguous orders and instructions to subordinate unit commanders (Orders or “O” Groups) and, secondly, by enforcing compliance with those orders and instructions. The roles, use of and functions of The Cavalry, The Artillery & Pyrotechnics Team (as they may be involved) will be settled and agreed in The Planning Meeting, so that clear & unambiguous instructions are disseminated to and complied with by all such participants.
 - d) The final scenario decision will be made in the light of the available resources and Projects advice on the requirements of The Sponsorship Contract, by the Army Commanders, who will take such advice as they may need to conclude such matters.
- 4) Changes to The Plan shall not be made lightly. Whilst there has to be flexibility, any intentional changes to The Plan must be agreed and settled by The Army Commanders and then clearly communicated using the chain of command. That, for the avoidance of doubt, includes The Cavalry, Artillery Units, Pyrotechnics, The Narrator and anybody else who sensibly needs to know (as well as, obviously, all participant Infantry Units). Again – NO surprises or unplanned, not agreed, deviations from The Plan. However, common sense must prevail. In the event of an accident or medical or other emergency or other unforeseen circumstances, The Plan will inevitably change!
- 5) Ideally no single Show’s battle action element should last longer than about 20 minutes (due to the attention span of the public), but always depending on sponsorship requirements.
- 6) The Plan shall do its best to incorporate all available re-enactors at an event willing and able to participate and not otherwise required for other duties.

- 7) Units taking part in Shows will take realistic pretend casualties when it is obvious artillery and/or rifle fire is falling on them. Efforts must be made to discreetly re-cycle casualties, especially in the early stages of a Show (but not too quickly or obviously!). Unit commanders are to pay attention to ensuring compliance, and making an audience believe in the realism of the Show.
- 8) Subject to (4), deviation from The Plan will be accountable.
- 9) Unsafe practice on the battlefield / at a Show will be accountable for. This includes unsafe weapons handling, firing at people & horses at under the safe distances, firing across a line of fire or moving in front of a line of fire, or firing a cannon or detonating ground charges when people & horses are under the safe distance away.(ACWS H&S Guidelines 9b&c)
- 10) Behaviour that belittles or is disrespectful of that which we portray will also be accountable. This is to include making audible disparaging comments by Members at or in the crowd line and any other inappropriate behaviour on the field at a Show. Unit & Army Commanders are to be vigilant and instruct offenders as to correct behaviour and how to improve their impression initially.
- 11) Problems arising under (8), (9) and (10) above are to be escalated up the chain of command for disciplinary action. Something wrong? Tell them there and then. Use the Officers & S/NCOs (chain of command). Persistent offenders or serious breaches of the rules escalate to Army Commanders for action, but only after a proper investigation and all relevant parties have had a chance to put their case or explain themselves. Malicious or gross misconduct or deliberate disobedience of orders goes to the Board of Directors for disciplinary action (at their discretion) subject always to (a) The H&S Director having the right to STOP any unsafe practice or activity forthwith and (b) the leadership of the Society by its Chairman and ensuring grip & control by appropriate commanders and taking an over-view of what's going on and (c) issues/problems/complaints re one level of this Society always gets escalated to the next level up, initially, for remedial action. The usual best practice is to firstly give a verbal warning, then if the error(s) or bad behaviour persists, a written warning. This latter will probably involve the Society Secretary.
- 12) Army & Unit Commanders will cause written notes to be made of any infringements of these or The Society H&S Rules and lodge such information with that Army's Adjutant. Any individual Member or Unit can also complain and/or bring forward evidence of misconduct, to be similarly recorded and (if found to be true) acted upon. Individuals must put their complaint(s) in writing within 48 hours of the Show giving rise to the matter. Such evidence will be received by the Chairman and if considered sufficiently serious, to be referred to the Board for action whenever appropriate. Depending on the severity of the infringement, a Member or Members can be dismissed/suspended from Shows until the Board of Directors next meet or confer on the matter, adjudicates the matter and makes a decision on the referred offence. If an issue can be handled informally and immediately, that would be better (subject always to the severity of the matter and the interests of justice).

Finally, there is no excuse for bad practice, unsafe behaviour or unsafe actions, script deviations or unwarranted unplanned hand-to-hand. There are NO second chances for those that get punctured or burnt, slashed or fractured by the failures of others. Safety has to be paramount. The discipline, dedication and service of the original troops in the American Civil War is to be respected and emulated. By setting higher standards, being realistic (but SAFE) and working together to "play the game" and put on a good show for our public, we can still all enjoy our hobby and have a good time WITHOUT either sending folks off in an ambulance or looking ridiculous.