

# THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SOCIETY LTD

## HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTES

Last Updated February 2022

### 1. FIRE RISKS

- a) No open fires allowed in Family Camp Area (except domestic barbecues located and operated safely)
- b) Fire buckets, filled with water, are to be provided in Regimental streets in the Authentic Camps, minimum 1 bucket per 4 tents , PLUS at least 1 bucket per fire pit. **No buckets, no fires.** In addition, fire extinguishers to be placed in each camp (Union and Confederate), their location to be made clear to all camp occupants. Individuals encouraged to purchase their own fire extinguishers for stowage discreetly in their tents.
- c) Candles must always be in enclosed candle-lamps when lit
- d) No lit candles or naked flames shall ever be inside a canvas tent left unsupervised at any time.
- e) Each Regiment will have an appointed fire warden responsible for fire safety and practice drills and who checks the area/tents are clear when fire alarm sounded in camp (whistles blown vigorously). Senior NCO present will have a rollcall as soon as possible at assembly point at far end of street (gun line) subject to firefighting arrangements.
- f) Gas burners/gas powered camping stoves and/or paraffin heaters or paraffin lamps will only be lit in a tent when the tent is attended and will never be left unattended. Solid fuel heating stoves must have a chimney and be supervised and safe at all times. Adequate ventilation must always be provided for such items.
- g) Care must be taken to ensure external fire hazards e.g., dry grass or corn stubble in a field or risk of sparks from fires or cannon etc. are guarded against. Appropriate actions include digging a wider hole for firepit; judicious stoking of fires (minimum necessary); damping down of surrounds of fire.
- h) Open fires (one only per Regiment) are to be at head of tent street between A frames and officers' tents, with due allowance for adequate space to minimise fire risks. Open fires are to be guarded and supervised at all times whilst lit. Turf will be removed and stored safely for replacement and surface reinstatement at end of event.
- i) 'A' frame tents to be no less than 18" apart and wall tents to be no less than 3 ft apart, both on ALL sides, to minimise risk of fire spreading (or such greater distances as may in the circumstances be appropriate).
- j) Fires should be sited to reduce the risk of heat damage or combustion to surrounding objects.
- k) Fires shall be lit using conventional methods only e.g., manufactured lighters in reasonable numbers. In no circumstances are flammable accelerants to be used (lighter fuel, paraffin, petrol etc.)
- l) Only competent adults are to tend a fire, NOT children.
- m) At least one filled water fire bucket is to be placed readily available to a fire at all times.
- n) Lanterns can be left unattended **only if** they are safely suspended from a secure stake or pin. Lanterns must be kept at a reasonable distance from any combustible material.
- o) Lanterns using liquid fuel are only to be refilled when not lit, in an adequately ventilated area (outside a tent or vehicle) and using manufacturer's recommended fuel only.

## **2. TRIP HAZARDS**

- a) Fire pit holes - with or without fire in it - must either be roped and pinned off or attended to ward-off this danger
- b) Firewood must be kept in a neat pile and not left strewn around as a trip hazard
- c) Tent Guy ropes are to be so laid out as to minimise risk of trip hazards. Lanes must be left for pedestrians to walk through safely and where several tents grouped together using guy ropes (e.g., officers streets) are put up, it must be obvious which gaps are encumbered by guy ropes and which are the clear pedestrian route through
- d) Risk areas are to be lit at night by a lamp and troops should only use Regimental streets and colour lines for passage, not try and cut through tent rows because of the added trip risk at night
- e) Members must keep whatever area they are using clean, neat, and tidy and not leave kit, equipment and property strewn around to avoid trip risks. This also enhances good military order and discipline.

## **3. THE PUBLIC**

- a) Must be kept off the battlefield (double rope and pin and guard boundaries) and other hazards and away from the gunpowder store (guarded and "no-go" area roped and pinned). When the public are on authentic camps, fires must be supervised and attended. The Public must be guided away from hazards and kept to Company streets and colours lines.
- b) In authentic camps either each army or each Regiment (as appropriate) will ensure there is adequate camp security and provide a Site Manager to supervise (such as H&S rep, or Provo Guard or whoever Army Adjutant designates). By this means Public visitors also have a point of contact/someone with whom to talk.
- c) Spectators, children and pets, primarily dogs, must be warned before the battle that it is noisy, especially cannon and ground charges, and to keep children and dogs under control/on a lead and NOT to come nearer than the rope furthest from the battle, and not to pick anything up off the battlefield, and to stay behind the ropes at all times until the event is over and the battlefield cleared. Guards must also ensure this is so.
- d) Care and consideration must be given to the elderly and those with disabilities, and any risk assessments of a site or venue must include consideration of disability access issues.

## **4. GUNPOWDER/EXPLOSIVES**

- a) Must only be handled and distributed by properly licensed Members.
- b) The gunpowder store (for amounts greater than 25 kg) must be cordoned off (ropes and pins) and display warning signs and have suitable firefighting equipment available and be guarded by two ACWS Members at all times when it contains any gunpowder. Guards are to have whistles or other communications devices so that they have means of alerting others in case of emergency.
- c) Regiments shall be responsible for having a suitable, secure and fire/spark hazard free area for making up rounds at events.
- d) The storage and transport of gunpowder shall only be by means of H&S authorised safe storage containers suitably hazard labelled.
- e) Pyrotechnic effects and ground charges shall be the responsibility of the Pyrotechnics officer and team. Laid charges prior to a battle shall be suitably guarded. Trip hazards e.g., firing wires laid on ground and holes in ground surface from blown charges, shall be avoided and holes

filled in made safe as soon as practicable. The storage handling and firing of pyrotechnic effects shall be in accordance with all relevant H&S Explosives Rules and in a safe manner and shall cause no harm or injury to members of the public and their property.

- f) Records of all gunpowder transactions must be kept at all times and gunpowder will only be issued on the basis of "got proper current licences, then sign for it and you can have it BUT no licences = no gunpowder".
- g) Combatants will only be allowed to use gunpowder cartridges after adequate instruction has been given and the soldier is deemed competent.
- h) Acquire-only licensees must return all unused ammunition to designated supplier (holder of Acquire and Keep license) or store.
- i) Ammunition/explosives must be guarded at all times and never left unattended.
- j) Ammunition/cartridges shall be made of safe amounts of gunpowder for the weapon in which they are to be used. Weapons will never be overloaded. Cartridges will be made of light paper glued and/or folded. Staples, heavy duty tape, sellotape will not be used. Only gunpowder will be loaded down rifle or pistol barrels - no paper or wadding.

## **5. BLADES/WEAPONRY**

- a) Saws, axes and other sharp implements used around fires must be put away safely when not in use and not left lying around. Only competent adults should use them and NEVER children under the age of 14.
- b) Swords and bayonets may only be drawn during a re-enactment and as part of a proper military procedure. All swords, guns, bayonets and knives will be put away securely and not taken off camp during a re-enactment W/E. Particular attention to NOT taking blades or weapons into a civilian environment (e.g., down the pub on Saturday night) notwithstanding you are wearing 1860's dress/uniform.
- c) Bayonets and knives (Bowie Knives) may not be drawn during a battle. They must be tied to the person, so they do not come loose and become a danger.
- d) Wood cutting equipment shall only be used for the purpose the tool was intended for and must be kept in a serviceable and safe condition.

## **6. GAS BOTTLES AND CANISTERS**

- a) Reusable gas bottles with isolation valve (that is a gas bottle that you can turn the gas off at the bottle) may be changed with in a tent providing there is adequate ventilation (i.e., tent flap open).
- b) Reusable gas bottles which are empty should be stored away from any heat source or naked flames.
- c) Single-use gas canisters must not under any circumstances be changed within your tent. They must be done in a safe area away from any tents, fires or buildings.
- d) Gas canisters should be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and NEVER burnt.
- e) At no time should any gas cylinder or canister be changed while the appliance is still alight.
- f) Only competent adults should change gas bottles or canisters and manufacturer's instructions must be followed at all times.

## **7. WEAPONRY**

- a) Firearms and edged weapons i.e., rifles, handguns, knives, swords and bayonets etc. are the

owner's responsibility and shall be kept secure at all times.

- b) Current licensing laws must be observed at all times.
- c) Weapons that requiring licensing (Firearms/Shotguns etc) may only be used by authorised persons in possession of the correct valid license. Members must therefore always bring their licenses to all events.
- d) No firearm or edged weapon (gun, knife or sword) should be left unattended.
- e) When not in use all weapons should be secured away from the general public.
- f) Only weaponry that has been deemed to be in a safe and usable condition shall be allowed on the battlefield or used at an event.
- g) All weapons are subject to inspection at any time by the CO or his designated representative or ACWS H&S Officer.
- h) Cleaning of weapons should be carried out as per the manufacturer's guidelines. Any cleaning products used should only be used as directed by the manufacturer.
- i) It is recommended that all cleaning products used shall be in date and have a readable label showing what is inside the container.
- j) Take extra care when using solvents. Avoid naked flames or contact with skin.
- k) In the event of an accident with any cleaning product or solvent refer to the manufacturer's guidelines and take the relevant action. If in doubt, contact the Medical Officer.

## **8. CONSUMPTION OF LIQUIDS**

- a) Troops 'in the field' (i.e., re-enacting) must carry full water bottles of good quality drinking water. Care must be taken not to de-hydrate, especially when undergoing physical exercise and/or in warm weather. Officers/NCO's need to ensure troops (and themselves) regularly drink enough water. Also, in the event of burns, a ready supply of water is useful in treatment.
- b) Drugs and other illegal substances (other than prescribed "over-the-counter" medicines) must not be consumed at any time. The consumption of alcoholic substances and/or being under the influence of drink, drugs or intoxicating or mood-altering substances whilst in possession of or handling weapons and explosives is expressly prohibited and can lead to instant dismissal from the Society. The consumption of alcohol is only acceptable after battle or training or work for the day is done and when weapons and explosives are cleared away and locked up. Consuming alcoholic substances after midnight (i.e., when the next day starts) is prohibited. This is to ensure clear heads for drill and firing the next day. Any camp noise must decrease to a low level after midnight, in order that others may sleep undisturbed. This is of particular importance at multiperiod events where our reputation for respectful behaviour towards fellow reenactors of other periods is at stake. We must be good neighbours.

## **9. OTHER MATTERS**

- a) Medical Cover is available from the qualified medical team. Whistle blasts during a battle indicate a real casualty ("no duff"). Everybody stops what they are doing until the casualty is identified and the medics attend and deal with the problem. First Aid kits are with each army HQ usually or at signing in point, and then with each gun line during a battle. The overnight medical cover is at the tent in the authentic camp with the brightest lamp showing (up a tall flagpole). The medical kit from the family camp is to go to the commentary box during a battle. A large yellow flag with a blue H on it indicates the Field Hospital. Individuals should carry a personal medical kit with plasters, antiseptic cream, antihistamines or other personal medications as necessary to the individual.

- b) Units or individuals on a battlefield will not pass in front of a gun line within the 25 yards danger area of the muzzles unless by agreement with the artillery AND the guns are unloaded (NEVER in any event when loaded). Every effort must be made not to march over ground charges and their detonation wires, but if inevitable, then warnings must be given to troops to mind the wires/ground charges. While commanding officers should in general be obeyed, it is the responsibility of each individual to avoid unsafe practises should any officer mistakenly order an unsafe manoeuvre of any kind.
- c) Safe distances for firing - never closer to firing Infantry weapons than 15 yards, or cavalry and artillery = 25 yards - must always be maintained. Infantry must stand still and not run about if caught by charging cavalry in the open - to give the cavalryman a chance to manoeuvre round you.
- d) Before commencing battle each army commander will ensure the site for the battle is safe and clear of anybody or anything that should not be there.
- e) At the end of a battle/any firing exercise - all weapons will be checked by (i) capping off and (ii) springing rammers. Artillery pieces will be swabbed. Pistol chambers will be visually checked to ensure they are empty. Re-enactors will clear the field (in a line) by walking the ground and pick up all cartridge papers and litter, paying especial attention to removing any undischarged ammunition or any lost property
- f) Before occupation of a site by ACWS Event Organiser, Events Director or other person responsible e.g., H&S representatives, will check it is safe for use and its purposes. Relevant responsible officer will carry out a specific-to-site risk assessment and ensure re-enactors are briefed as necessary via the chain of command
- g) Vehicles movements on any campsites must be slow and careful. Care must be taken to avoid collisions with people and property on campsite environments. Drivers must exercise extreme caution.
- h) Campsites are provided with fresh clean (potable) drinking water at a water point, wood for authentic camp cooking fires, a rubbish skip and adequate toilet facilities. The chain of command is responsible for ensuring all participants are aware of the locations and arrangements. H&S representatives are responsible for ensuring safety and cleanliness arrangements are satisfactory.
- i) Care must be taken when rain makes grass slippery and/or mud prevails on a re-enactment site. H&S representatives must ensure appropriate safety measures are put in place promptly.
- j) Care must be taken at all times to prevent or mitigate against theft. Weapons and ammunition, kit and equipment may be particularly attractive. Unlicensed members of the public must not handle weapons and ammunition. ACWS Members must take care and be vigilant. Cars and Caravans must be locked when not in use/occupied. Tents are more difficult to secure but closing flaps so that contents are not visible and having spare personnel acting as camp guards - particularly when the public are about - is mandatory.
- k) Any site that has been recently used by animals (especially dogs or sheep) must be treated with care to ensure droppings do not cause crypto sporidium contamination to re-enactors and visitors to the event
- l) At the end of an event, all rubbish must be removed from site or put in the rubbish skip. All fires must be safely and fully extinguished and fire pits dampened down and turf properly and as neatly as possible replaced and watered down. The site must be left in pristine condition when ACWS departs. Each re-enactor will be responsible for ensuring the part he/she occupied/used is put in this state before they go home.
- m) All accidents/incidents (however caused) shall be recorded in a unit's accident book.

- n) Only closed top "Zippo" style lighters or matches kept in a safe/secure container are to be used. Open or disposable type lighters may become contaminated with black powder and shall not be used.
- o) All members but especially those who are regularly in contact with loud noises at events (e.g., artillery crew, infantry, explosives officers, cavalry) are warned that continued exposure to such loud noises makes them at risk of impairment to hearing over time. Participants at events do so at their own risk, but are reminded to wear appropriate ear protection, such as ear plugs. Bright coloured visible ear defenders and earmuffs are not recommended for authenticity reasons.