

Safety Rules

Safety Rules Videos

(Part I) - (Part II) - (Part III) - (Part IV)

1. As a performer, "YOU" are ultimately responsible for the safety of the viewing audience, the safety of your fellow cast members and your own, PERIOD! The event managers and their crew are responsible for creating and maintaining safe conditions in the environment in which you will be performing but it is your right and your responsibility to insure the safest of conditions and to double check the "SET UP" and guarantee the safety of "ALL" involved!

2. It is each individuals' responsibility to be familiar with & adhere to all federal, state and local laws established in the areas you are performing or choose to wear a weapon, whether in wardrobe or not. This includes usage, handling thereof and transporting of any and all weapons.

3. Absolutely "NO" live ammunition will be allowed at any performance location (private or sanctioned) or on the person of any performer during the entirety of the event or while in wardrobe.

4. Nothing potentially dangerous is to be done, especially anything that could be categorized as "out of the ordinary", without the approval of the assigned Head Safety Officer (H.S.O.) at each and every event or individual performances.

Each team should have a designated H.S.O. for their group and an assigned S.O. for each and every performance the H.S.O. cannot attend. This could be the most knowledgeable, reliable and safety conscious member of the team that everyone feels comfortable trusting them to the task. It is your responsibility to explain what you want to do, show that you are knowledgeable and capable of accomplishing the feat and assure them that you know of what you speak of from your experience. It is NOT the H.S.O.'s responsibility to show you how to do something considered "out of the ordinary". Specific stunt work like hangings, horse stunts and/or technical issues like reloading on stage, blood effects, etc....., also come to mind.

5. Pyrotechnics will be allowed by "licensed/insured" experts only with the express written approval of event location officials and event coordinators/managers and with the complete cooperation of the designated H.S.O. for that specific event. This includes common fireworks, special effects devices such as gerbils or exploding squibs and/or homemade improvised explosives/fireworks. If you need an explosion in show, it is recommended that you use a double barreled shotgun with full loads. Keep It Simple Stupid (K.I.S.S.) is the simplest and safest policy. Once again, ALL federal, state and local firework display ordinances should be adhered to.

Weapons & Performance Ammunition

6. A. Every performer should be familiar with handling, wearing and/or using and all weapons that they will be asked to use in any performance. This would include proper maintenance, cleaning, care, proper loading, arming and unloading/dismanting of any and all guns/weapons. All performers must display the capabilities of insuring weapons that they use are operational, in safe condition and unloaded to the satisfaction of the assigned event S.O. upon request. (See information on Jr. Reenactor's Program at the bottom of these safety rules.)

B. All blanks used in any performance must adhere to the established safety distances of 15' (or 5 yards) for all pistols and 25' (about 9 yards) for shotguns/long guns (over 9") and be able to pass a splatter test at the appropriate distances. No exceptions. No crimped blanks will be allowed in any performances.

C. All loaded blank ammunition should be stored and transported in an ammo box, preferably a locking, metal container and in control of the teams designated S.O. or armory. All teams performance ammunition will be carried in this container only. The container should be available for inspection by the assigned event H.S.O. or their assigned assistant S.O.'s, in the designated loading/unloading area for the splatter test before the event or during the individual teams performance window.

NOTE: Performance window is defined as 10 minutes before and after each performance.

D. Blanks or casings/brass with live primers should never be carried casually on performers person either in their pockets or in bullet loops on cartridge belts.

The Performance

7. A. Safety Perimeters - Basically this is the area in which a show will be performed and should be established before any and all performances. All performers need to know the established boundaries and be conscious of the audience's location at all times during the performance. Stages, dance floors, streets on a parade route, an arena, etc....can all be designated and used as a show area. When performing for large audiences and especially crowds where small children are present, the usage of safety ropes/tape and line present S.O.'s for security should be used to insure the safety of all involved.

B. Disclaimers - A disclaimer should be used to start any and all performances.

Example: "Ladies and Gentleman, the blanks the performers are using can be quite loud and are filled with a powerful powder charge that can burn, maim or kill at close range. For this reason, we ask you the audience to please remain in your present location until the show has been announced over and all the guns have been picked up and secured. If you have children with you, please insure they are under your control at all times. We ask this for your safety and the safety of our performers.

A simple disclaimer like this can protect against lawsuits and will help make audience members aware of our safety consciousness!

C. Safety - In the event of an unsafe situation, an audience member walks into the show area, a performer is injured, etc.....shows should be stopped with the use of a designated code word such as "SAFETY". An S.O., a judge or any performer that recognizes a safety concern may yell out so these issues can be corrected. Performers freeze and when the threat is removed/corrected, the S.O. can yell "ACTION" and the show may continue.

D. Shooting a Gun at a Performer - While firing blank ammunition at another performer, the gun should never be pointed directly at the individual being shot at. The gun should be pointed in the general direction of the intended target and slightly off toward their backstage side. This gives the audience the illusion that the gun is being fired directly at the person being shot. Appropriate safety distances should always be adhered to (15' for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns). This includes the intended target and all other players on set...

If shooting from a door of the set or in front of the set at a performer in the direction of the ropes/audience, the target should be stage left or stage right and the gun should never be fired closer than 30' from the audience. All other gunfire should be directed parallel to the audience or directed away from them. No gun should be fired within 10' of the audience - this is the audience buffer zone!

At no time should a gun be fired at an individual standing, kneeling, sitting or lying within the blast pattern of the approved safety distances. The blast pattern is an imaginary cone that expands from the end of the barrel of the gun being fired and extend out to the appropriate safety distances (15' for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns).

NOTE: Anyone firing a gun on stage should be familiar with the 180 degree "blocking" rule (see diagrams). If any performer is within the half circle that extends from the end of the barrel at the appropriate safety distance for the gun being fired, adjustments need to be made before firing. The splatter from a gun can be inconsistent and can cover a large area, depending on the type of blank, so a little more room is better than not enough.

E. Pointing a Gun - No loaded gun should be pointed at another performer within 5'. No loaded gun should be cocked or ready to fire at another performer until the appropriate safety distance is reached for the gun being fired (15'for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns).

No loaded gun should ever deliberately sweep or be pointed at the audience. Anyone who is careless in the use of a gun/weapon, especially firing towards the audience for a laugh or to intentionally draw attention to themselves.... S.O.'s, judges, group leaders should immediately stop the show to disarm the individual and remove them from the show area. A blatant act such as this could also result in the disqualification of a team in a competitive situation and definitely be grounds for the revocation of said member from RGA roles if they are indeed a member. Intimidation of another player or addressing the audience with a loaded gun should be done by pointing the brandished gun toward the sky. A good rule of thumb for this technique is to leave the gun un-cocked and keep your finger off the trigger.

F. Dead Gun - A loaded gun that has been dropped, falls out of a holster or the barrel comes in direct contact with the ground (dirt, gravel, etc...) is considered to be a dead gun. Guns properly secured in a holster with a hammer thong, tie down for fights/falls, will not be declared dead unless they become obstructed in the action (dirt, gravel is packed into the holster or gun mechanism).

If a gun becomes dead by said definition, do not leave it laying on the set where someone else can fall on it. Unless it is the finale of the show it should either be removed from the set or secured by placing it out of the action area (on a chair/box, up against the sets, etc....). A dead gun cannot be used for the rest of the show or in any shows following until it has been properly inspected and cleared for use by the SO.

For a gun to remain in play off of a dead body or shot player, the gun should remain in the holster with a thong or tie down to secure it and the dead/shot player should fall on the opposite side of the holster so the gun can be easily retrieved by another performer. Also, the un-cocked gun must come to rest on the chest or belly of the wounded/dead player for the gun to remain in play.

G. Dummy Guns - A dummy gun is either a non-firing replica or an unloaded and cleared gun (inspected by the S.O. or a judge during the performance window before the show begins) that can be used for cocking and pointing at any distance less than the appropriate established distances for loaded guns at another performer. Dummy guns can be dropped, knocked out of someone's hand or holstered and reused since they are not able to fire and/or remain unloaded.

H. Dead Bodies - If a body is removed from the stage for any reason (dead, drunk, injured, etc....), steps must be taken to insure that no firearm (dummy guns would not apply) is dropped or falls to the ground while moving the body(s). The firearm should either be secured with a thong/tie down, removed from the body or another approved method. Performers should never fall with a gun that is still cocked. Fire the gun off at another performer within appropriate safety distances for that gun, towards the set where no one is effected, in the air to clear properly before the fall, etc. Never fire a round directly into the ground to prevent potential shrapnel that can cause damage or injury.

Props/Special Weapons/FX Equipment

8. Any of these items that are used in the performances or as tools should be serviceable, safe in every manner of thinking especially pertaining to the security of these items. They should never be left unattended and when worn they should have a tethered line, thong, tie down, etc.... to prevent them from falling or inadvertently dropped and to keep unwanted hands (children and immature adults) from handling them.

Weapons intended for use in performances should only be used within the protected confines of the stage/show area with the full knowledge and permission of event coordinators and the H.S.O. Things like whip snappers should be changed regularly and kept in safe working condition at all times.

Knives - Any knife used in fight scenes or worn/used by any performer who is scripted or tasked to fall down, be shot or engaged in a fight must have a safe rounded edge and tip. Stunts like this can be extremely hazardous even with a dull knife if proper preparation and the appropriate training and practice is not strictly adhered to. There are also many types of prop knives available on the market with effects that vary for different uses. Make sure the weapons/ props used are designed appropriately for the intended use.

This rule allows the possession and use of sharp knives both in gunfight/living history performances and while in an encampment as long as the character being portrayed is not scripted or tasked to take a fall, be shot or engaged in a fight. Common sense should dictate that no one fall with a sharp knife, sheathed or otherwise. These knives are to be considered as tools (whittling, cutting food, throwing knives, etc....) that may have an appropriate edge for which they are/were designed. Sharp knives should only be used in stage/show areas or in encampments for general use or demonstration purposes.

9. FIRES - Fires are subject to all federal, state and local ordinances. Fire's only with permits, (if required), owner/manager permission and approval of event manager/coordinator and S.O. You must have a 5 gal bucket of water at hand and a small fire extinguisher for emergencies. You must return the area to it's original condition when breaking down. Fires must be completely extinguished before leaving the area. All fire pits will be covered/buried and please save the sod so it can be replaced. Fires should be attended to at all times. Large audiences or high traffic areas should use a rope as a perimeter around areas with fires to keep folks from knocking something over or getting burned.

10. ALCOHOL and DRUGS - This should already be an accepted practice of each and every group but here it is in writing so there will be "NO" misunderstandings. At no time during any performance, (private functions, events or competitions), should any performer be under the influence of any drug, illegal or legal. After you have completed your performance and all guns have been secured for the evening, then and only then should any adults of legal age decide to imbibe in accordance with local laws and regulations. Individuals who are carrying weapons and appear to be inebriated will be asked to leave the area immediately. Upon the review of the board, individuals who seem to have a problem abiding by the safety rules related to alcohol and drugs can lose the right to membership permanently and will only be taken under consideration for re-application after presenting documentation of rehabilitation. This is serious folks!

The Junior Reenactors Membership Program

Note: Individuals who are over 14 can start training as Jr. Reenactors and between the ages of 16 -18, upon completion of all requirements, can carry and use a gun in performances. The following requirements are necessary for certification.

- * Must always be accompanied by parent or legal guardian (proof required), until the age of 18 and parent or guardian must be a member of RGA in good standing.
- * Must be a child member in good standing.
- * Must have age verified by documentation (birth certificate, drivers license, etc...)
- * Must pay an adult membership once certified to carry a gun..
- * Must attend a minimum of 2 competitions or gatherings where other groups are performing and perform in 4 shows witnessed by members in good standing that are of no relation nor on the same team.
- * Must be approved/certified by H.S.O. at each event (all 4 shows) and display proficiency with the gun they will be allowed to carry "during performances only". Jr. Reenactors can and will be questioned by the S.O. on general information pertaining to gun safety and RGA safety rules during the events and can be asked to perform splatter tests, load, unload and clear their gun in the presence of the H.S.O. or assigned S.O.
- * Must be recommended by the state S.O. (or other unrelated S.O.), 2 unrelated RGA members in good standing from their team and 2 unrelated RGA members in good standing from another team who has seen them perform.

Once all above requirements are fulfilled, the certified individual will be allowed to carry a gun until the age of 18 (when he/she will be eligible for regular membership), while accompanied by their parent or legal guardian at all private shows, events and competitions. State and federal laws will take precedence when the Jr. Reenactor is carrying a gun and it is the responsibility of the guardian to guaranty said laws are followed (see rule #2). Failure to do so will result in dismissal from RGA. A regular membership card will be issued upon completion when the permit is submitted to the Director.

It is the parents responsibility to insure that their child is familiar with RGA safety rules and guidelines and the information below before the age of 16 so they can be approved as soon as they reach the appropriate age.

[Click here to download permit.](#)

Gun Safety Rules:

<http://www.nrahq.org/education/guide.asp>

Parents Gun Safety info:

<http://www.nrahq.org/safety/eddie/infoparents.asp>

Gun Safety Brochures/Classes etc..

<http://www.nrahq.org/youth/resources.asp>

Prop Gun Deaths:

http://www.moviegunservices.com/mgs_propdeaths.htm

Firearms Safety on Movie Set:

http://www.moviegunservices.com/mgs_safety.htm

http://www.moviegunservices.com/mgs_fsm.htm

Rules & Guidelines for all Animals/Livestock

It is the owners who are ultimately responsible for ALL animals brought to an RGA event.

* Horses must have a current negative Coggins test; dogs must have current state-regulated vaccinations, etc. The SO may ask for papers proving both/either at his/her discretion. Failure to provide documentation may result in the removal of the animal(s) in question.

* All animals whether ridden, lead or driven must not be skittish around gunfire during any and all performances. Animals must be cleared by the SO prior to the event and the intended use of the animal must be clearly detailed. Safety checks for animals can be accomplished during splatter tests to prove that the animal is conditioned to gunfire and thereby not a safety threat.

* Unattended animals shall be tied, secured or enclosed to protect visitor. The SO has the final say on a case-by-case basis. Their requests are to be adhered to or removal of animal and/or owner may be requested for non-compliance.

NOTE: The Safety Officer, State Rep and/or Event Manager each have authority to request removal of any animal brought on location if the animal's behavior is deemed as disruptive or dangerous in any way to the general public and/or performers/performances (ie, biting, kicking, barking, growling, etc.). They also have authority to request an owner to modify their own behavior with said animal in terms of abuse or dangerous activity! Cruelty to animal, dangerous use of animal or being in an unauthorized location will not be tolerated! Failure to comply could result in the removal of animal and/or owner if requested.

Final Note

These rules are established to reduce the level of possibility for an accident to occur. As professionals, we must adhere to maintaining a safe environment for all reenactors and any and all of the viewing audience. If your individual groups feel it necessary to expand these rules or implement rules that are more stringent for your own performances, please feel free to do so. If a safety concern is discovered that you feel needs to be reviewed/considered, provide an example in writing and submit it to your state director for that consideration. The board will give it thorough consideration and if it is something that they feel is necessary it will be added to the

RGA safety rules and guidelines for all groups and individual members to adhere too.

Any violation of the safety rules in a competition will result in point deductions and a verbal reprimand will be issued to the performing group or individual involved. Any obvious neglect of the RGA safety rules and guidelines or obvious continued violations by the same group or individual will result in a review by the RGA board and membership can/will be in jeopardy. A continued lack of responsibility will not be tolerated and an individual and/or group can be removed from the role upon board's request. If asked for a reference from RGA, any and all groups who have shown to have an unsafe performance record will be considered a danger to the public.

It is important that ALL groups and individual members be able to and have prepared a safety demonstration that can be done any place, at any time. Safety IS and should be our main concern above anything else and NEVER must the show go on if safety is a concern, period! Once corrections have been put into place to ensure the safety of all participants and the general public then by all means, let the show go on!

Play safe and have fun!!