

Ealdormere Rapier Combat Handbook

Version 6.2

Approved by Privy Council 15 October 2012, Amended 04 July 2015

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Introduction

The following rules are meant to supplement and extend the Society Rapier Marshal's Handbook¹, dated October 2013. The layout of this document mirrors that of the Society Rapier Marshal's Handbook, and details the Ealdormerian implementation of those rules that have elements that are left up to individual kingdoms to decide. Also detailed here are those rules for which Ealdormere has decided to augment or make more restrictive than the Society minimum, and those rules that Ealdormere has added.

Note that the section numbering in this document is not contiguous in some places. This is intentional, and matches the corresponding section in the Society Handbook for ease of reference.

Rules are designed to promote safe rapier combat in the Society. However, no matter how clear or accurate, rules cannot replace common sense, good judgment, and concern for the participants. If a question arises when applying these standards, choose the answer that promotes the greatest degree of safety for all participants.

These rules are not complete without the Society Rapier Marshal's Handbook. Marshals should also reference the Ealdormere Earl Marshal's Handbook² and the Ealdormere Rapier Marshal's Handbook³.

¹ http://www.sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/rapier/rapier_handbook.pdf

² http://www.ealdormere.ca/files/ealdormere_earl_marshals_handbook_2011.pdf

³ forthcoming

Conventions

2 Behaviour on the Field

- B. Disagreements with the marshals overseeing the field shall be resolved through the established mechanisms outlined in the Ealdormere Earl Marshal's Handbook, Section 3: "Arbitration and Grievance Procedures."⁴

3 Use of Weapons and Parrying Devices

- A. Valid blows are struck by:
- i. For Heavy Rapier: Thrusting with the point of the blade (thrust); sliding the edge of the blade by drawing (draw cut); sliding the edge of the blade by pushing (push cut); or placing the tip of the blade upon and then drawing it across an opponent (tip cut).
 - ii. For Cut and Thrust: All valid blows from Heavy Rapier, with the addition of percussive cuts. Percussive cuts must always be delivered with sufficient control so as not to injure the opponent while still delivering the necessary impact for a valid cut.

4 Acknowledgement of Blows

- E. A valid blow to the arm will disable the arm. A valid blow to the hand will disable the hand and the arm. The arm may be allowed to hang limp, but may not be used to actively parry a blow⁵.
- F. Valid blows to the leg or foot:
- i. For Heavy Rapier: A valid blow to the foot or leg will disable the leg. The fighter must choose to fight from a sitting or kneeling position and remain in that position. The fighter may not rise up, change from kneeling to sitting, sitting to kneeling, fall forward or intentionally move from this position except for reasons of safety or courtesy. The fighter is allowed to rotate on the ground, while sitting or kneeling, to engage their opponent⁶.
 - ii. For Cut and Thrust rapier: Valid blows to the leg or foot are considered incapacitating and ends the bout.

⁴ Overriding society recommendations to use established Ealdormere procedures

⁵ Society allows Kingdoms to determine whether a blow to the hand disables only the hand, or both hand and arm. In Ealdormere, a blow to the hand disables the entire arm.

⁶ Society allows a fighter who has received a blow to the leg to fight sitting, kneeling or standing on one leg. In Ealdormere, a fighter who has received a blow to the leg must fight from the ground, while sitting or kneeling, and may not rise up or move from point A to point B. The fighter may rotate on the ground in their chosen sitting or kneeling position to engage their opponent.

Weapons and Parrying Devices

2 Blades⁷

- A. *In order to be acceptable for use in rapier combat, it must meet certain criteria. If a blade does not meet the criteria established below, it may not be used for any form of rapier combat in the Society, unless it is first approved by the Deputy Society Marshal for Rapier Combat and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If a blade meets the criteria below, it is considered acceptable for use by default unless specifically banned. A list of approved exceptions and banned blades may be found at: <http://sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/rapier/bladetypes.pdf>.*
- i. *For light rapier: Foil, epee, double-wide epee, and musketeer blades from established commercial manufacturers are acceptable for use.*
 - ii. *For Heavy Rapier, and Cut and Thrust rapier:*
 - a. *Blades must be made of steel*
 - b. *Blades must be no longer than 48" as measured from the tip to the top of the tang (i.e. where the tang and forte meet)*
 - c. *Blades must be reasonably flexible. Heavy Rapier blades must flex at least 1 inch (25 mm) when tested per the procedures in the Appendix, section 1.B. Dagger blades (those under 18 inches), and Cut and Thrust blades must flex at least 1/2 inch (12.5 mm). Any blade 18 inches or longer, being used in melee combat, must flex at least 1 inch (25 mm).*
- B. All blades are subject to the following:
- viii. All blade ends must be capped with rubber, plastic, or leather
 - a. Tips will have a blunt striking surface, presenting a cross-section of at least 3/8 inch (9mm) diameter, *and must contain a rigid metal barrier between the blade and the tip to prevent wear-through*⁸
 - xi. Orthopedic (or "Pistol") grips will not be used unless the fighter has approval from the Kingdom Rapier Marshal for medical reasons, supported by documentation from their health care provider
- C. Light rapier blades may only be used for the purpose of practicing for out-of-kingdom events. These blades may not be used at any event or demo in Ealdormere⁹.

3 Parrying Devices

- D. Offensive bucklers are not permitted in Ealdormere¹⁰
- E. A mail glove is considered a standard Parry Device. While worn on the hand, it will be considered protection against cuts, but not against thrusts.

4 Projectile Weapons¹¹

- A. Mock-gunnery gear (such as rubber-band guns) may be used in rapier melee combat, at the discretion of the marshal in charge.

⁷ Section 2.A content is in effect as of February 2012. Italic text to be removed in a future revision now that the Society Rapier Handbook has been updated to include it.

⁸ Enacted in 2003

⁹ Ealdormere allows for the use of epees at practice only, for the purpose of training for inter-kingdom or out of kingdom events.

¹⁰ Offensive bucklers are designated non-standard devices, to be approved on a case by case basis by individual kingdoms.

¹¹ Society allows Kingdoms to permit combat archery, thrown weapons, and/or mock-gunnery gear to be used in rapier melee combat, as long as safety standards for those arts are met. Ealdormere permits mock-gunnery gear but not combat archery or thrown weapons.

Protective Gear

1 Terms¹²

C. *Puncture-resistant material: any fabric or combination of fabrics that will predictably withstand puncture. Examples include, but are not limited to:*

- *four-ounce (1.6 mm) leather*
- *four layers of heavy poplin cloth*
- *ballistic nylon rated to at least 550 Newtons*
- *commercial fencing clothing rated to at least 550 Newtons*
- *ring mesh (e.g. “butcher” or “shark” mail) that will not permit the 5/32” (4mm) probe of a drop tester to pass through its gaps*

Kevlar is not an acceptable material, as it degrades rapidly. These materials need only be tested at the marshal’s discretion; all other materials must be tested the first time new gear is used, or if no marshal on the field knows a given piece of gear to have been tested. (Refer to Appendix 1 on Testing Standards.)

D. *Rigid Material: puncture-resistant material that will not significantly flex, spread apart, or deform under pressure of 12 Kg applied by a standard mask tester, repeatedly to any single point. Examples of rigid material are:*

- *22 gauge stainless steel (0.8 mm)*
- *20 gauge mild steel (1.0 mm)*
- *16 gauge aluminum, copper, or brass (1.6 mm)*
- *one layer of hardened heavy leather (8 ounce, 3.18 mm)*

2 Armour Requirements

B. HEAD AND NECK

- vi. Additional throat protection is also required¹³; it shall consist of rigid material, as noted above, covering the entire throat, *including both the carotid arteries and the jugular veins*¹⁴, and shall be backed by either puncture resistant material (as a hood), one-quarter inch (1/4”, 6 mm) of open-cell foam, or their equivalents. The cervical vertebrae shall also be protected by rigid material, provided by some combination of gorget, helm, and/or hood insert.

¹² Section 3.C and 3.D references to leather have been modified as of June 2012. Italic text to be removed in a future revision now that the Society Rapier Handbook has been updated to include it.

¹³ As epees are not the standard weapon in Ealdormere, throat protection is mandatory, not optional.

¹⁴ Enacted in 2010/2011

Authorizations

- A. The following primary rapier authorization categories shall exist in Ealdormere:
 - i. Heavy Rapier (HR) - Fighting with a single Heavy Rapier.
 - ii. Cut and Thrust (CT) - Fighting with a single Cut and Thrust weapon.
- B. The following secondary rapier authorization categories shall exist in Ealdormere:
 - i. Parry Device (PD) - All parrying devices that comply with the guidelines set out in section 6 (e.g. buckler, baton, cloak, etc.)
 - ii. Two Weapon (TW) - Fighting with one weapon in each hand.
 - iii. Out of Kingdom Epee (OOK) - Fighting with a weapon in the light rapier category.
- C. Authorizations are generally done at events. Authorizations at practices are allowed with the permission of the Kingdom Rapier Marshal
- D. A combatant must choose one of the primary authorizations as their first authorization. Authorization in one primary form does not grant authorization in the other.
- E. Once a combatant has authorized in a secondary form, they may use that form in conjunction with any primary authorization they have.
- F. Out of kingdom epee authorizations exist to allow Ealdormerian fencers to participate in a greater variety of tournaments when they are visiting other kingdoms. Epees will only be used in Ealdormere to practice for an event out of kingdom, they will never be used in a tournament in Ealdormere. Once a combatant has authorized in out of kingdom epee, he/she may use epee in conjunction with any other authorization they have (e.g. epee and Parry Device).
- G. An authorization will be run by at least two marshals. The authorizing marshals must be authorized in the form being attempted. For all primary authorizations at least one and preferably both marshals will be unfamiliar with the candidate. For advanced authorizations, at least one of the marshals will be unfamiliar with the candidate.
 - i. An unfamiliar marshal is one the authorization candidate does not practice with, in the form being attempted, more than once every two months.
 - ii. As well, the unfamiliar marshal does not live in the same region or municipality as the authorization candidate.
- H. The following procedure shall be used for a primary authorization:
 - i. The candidate will fence against an experienced and authorized fencer, who may be one of the marshals running the authorization.
 - ii. The two will fence and acknowledge, but not take (e.g. don't lose arms or legs), all valid blows.
 - iii. The candidate shall call these out loudly so that the marshals can verify the candidate's ability to detect and accurately judge the blows.
 - iv. Non-valid blows which might have appeared good should also be acknowledged verbally.
 - v. The candidate shall show good control at all times whether being pressed or on the attack.
 - vi. The candidate shall demonstrate ability in both defence and offence.
 - vii. The candidate shall demonstrate the ability to respond properly to a hold.
 - viii. The marshals and authorized fencer shall discuss the candidate's progress at several points during the authorization. If they agree that the candidate has shown sufficient skill and control

to be able to participate safely in fencing tournaments, then the candidate shall be considered authorized. It is the duty of the candidate to submit the necessary paperwork to the appropriate people to receive an authorization card. At this point the candidate shall be allowed to participate in all rapier combat activities in Ealdormere, using only the weapon forms in which they are authorized.

- I. A Heavy Rapier authorization will follow the procedure in H., and shall demonstrate proficiency with the Heavy Rapier:
 - i. With both fencers standing.
 - ii. With the candidate fighting with the offhand.
 - iii. With the candidate fighting from the ground while the authorized fencer is standing.
 - iv. With the candidate standing while the authorized fencer is fighting from the ground.

- J. A Cut and Thrust authorization will follow the procedure in H., with the following stipulations:
 - i. The candidate will demonstrate valid cuts to both sides of the head, at least one arm, both legs, and the torso.
 - ii. The candidate will demonstrate valid thrusts to various parts of the body.
 - iii. The candidate will demonstrate valid cuts to at least two target areas using the off-hand.
 - iv. All cuts must be of acceptable calibration, even one percussive cut that is excessive will cause the candidate to fail.

- K. An authorization in Parry Device or Two Weapon shall follow the authorization procedure in H., with the following stipulations:
 - i. Authorization in a secondary form grants the use of all devices allowable for the secondary form, regardless of the particular device used to authorize (e.g. authorizing in Two Weapon with a dagger allows the fencer to also fight with case of rapiers, and authorizing in Parry Device with a buckler allows the fencer to also fight with a cloak or baton.)
 - ii. It is necessary to show proficiency with only a single type of device during the authorization. It is incumbent on the fencer to become familiar with other devices covered by the authorization category before using them in outside of practice.
 - iii. The parry object a fencer brings to their authorization should be a rigid object, such as a buckler or baton, except under unusual circumstances, at the discretion of the authorizing marshal.
 - iv. No reporting of secondary authorizations is necessary, they shall be reported when the fencer renews their authorization card.

- L. Authorization in Out of Kingdom Epee shall follow the authorization procedure in H., with the following stipulations:
 - i. The authorization will take place at an event outside of Ealdormere.
 - ii. The candidate will arrange for an Ealdormerian marshal to run the authorization.
 - iii. The candidate and the Ealdormerian marshal will obtain the assistance of a marshal from a kingdom which uses epees regularly.
 - iv. The Ealdormerian marshal does not have to be authorized in out of kingdom epee to participate in this authorization, however, the marshal from another kingdom must be authorized in light rapier according to his/her home kingdom's standards.
 - v. Jointly, the Ealdormerian marshal and the candidate will arrange for an appropriate epee-authorized opponent. This may be the epee authorized marshal.
 - vi. The epee marshal will inspect the candidate's weapons.

- vii. The Ealdormerian marshal will run the authorization, with advice and consultation from the epee marshal.
- viii. The candidate must meet both marshals' criteria for calibration before authorizing.
- ix. Only when both marshals are fully satisfied that the candidate is safe will the authorization be given.

Marshalling Concerns in Rapier Combat

7. MINORS: In Ealdormere, minors (14 to 17) may authorize with these additional requirements:

- A. No person below the age of fourteen (14) may be authorized in rapier combat.
- B. No person below the age of 18 may be warranted as a Marshal or Constable.
- C. Before a minor can begin training in Heavy Rapier or Cut and Thrust Rapier, the parents or guardians of the minor must witness SCA rapier combat, discuss with a witnessing Marshal how it relates to the participation of their child, and execute a "Minor's Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement"¹⁵. The witnessing Marshal must countersign the waiver.
- D. The Kingdom Rapier Marshal, or a designated Deputy approved by the Kingdom Rapier Marshal, must be the one to authorize the minor for single rapier in SCA rapier combat. Before this authorization occurs the Kingdom Rapier Marshal must speak with the minor's parent or legal guardian (by telephone is acceptable) and review the risks of participating in rapier combat. Secondary authorizations may be done by any qualified marshal.
- E. At any event (including practices and training sessions) which the minor is involved in SCA rapier combat, the minor must either have a parent or guardian present, or must be in possession of a properly executed "Medical Authorization Form for Minors"¹⁶. Said Medical Authorization Form must designate an adult present at the event as able to authorize medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

8. PERIODIC TESTING OF PROTECTIVE GEAR: Protective gear must be formally tested (including fabric and mask tests, as appropriate) at least once every two years. Compliance is the responsibility of the individual fighter. Any protective gear may be formally tested if there is concern that the gear may have lost protective ability due to age, wear and tear, or other factors.

10. EXPIRY DATES: All authorization cards will be valid for a period not to exceed two years. An authorization card without a date stamped on it is invalid. Cards can be renewed any time before their expiry date, or within 3 months of the expiry. If the card has expired by more than 3 months, the holder will have to re-authorize. Re-authorizations do not require an unfamiliar marshal, and can be substantially shorter than the original authorization at the marshal's discretion.

- i. Before a new authorization card is issued, or an existing authorization card given a new expiry date, the Rapier Minister of the Lists will ensure that there is a valid waiver on file. If the rapier combatant is a minor, there must be a valid minor waiver on file; when the minor becomes an adult they must submit an adult waiver.

¹⁵ <http://www.ealdormere.ca/files/chldwaiv.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.ealdormere.ca/files/treatminor.pdf>

Appendix I - Forms

Rapier Authorization Form and Waiver

SCA Name:		Legal Name:		
Address:				
Telephone:		Email:		
SCA Group:		Birth Date (for minors)		
Date:		Event:		
Marshal 1 (print)		Marshal 2 (print)		
Marshal 1 (sign)		Marshal 2 (sign)		
<input type="checkbox"/> HR	<input type="checkbox"/> CT	<input type="checkbox"/> PD	<input type="checkbox"/> TW	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor

KEEP THIS TOP PART It is your proof of authorization until your authorization card arrives. This form expires 4 months from the date above. **CUT ALONG THE LINE BELOW.**

To receive your authorization card: Mail this bottom part with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Rapier Minister of the Lists. Their address can be found in The Tidings or on the Ealdormere web site

SCA Name:		Legal Name:		
Address:				
Telephone:		Email:		
SCA Group:		Birth Date (for minors)		
Date:		Event:		
Marshal 1 (print)		Marshal 2 (print)		
Marshal 1 (sign)		Marshal 2 (sign)		
<input type="checkbox"/> HR	<input type="checkbox"/> CT	<input type="checkbox"/> PD	<input type="checkbox"/> TW	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor

I, the undersigned, do hereby state that I wish to participate in activities sponsored by the international organization known as the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., a California not-for-profit corporation (hereafter "SCA").

The SCA has rules which govern and may restrict the activities in which I can participate. These rules include, but are not limited to: Corpora, the By-laws, the various kingdom laws and the Rules for combat related activities.

The SCA makes no representations or claims as to the condition or safety of the land, structures or surroundings, whether or not owned, leased, operated or maintained by the SCA.

I understand that all activities are VOLUNTARY and that I do not have to participate unless I choose to do so. I understand that these activities are potentially dangerous or harmful to my person or property, and that by participating voluntarily accept and assume the risk of injury to myself or damage to my property.

I understand that the SCA does NOT provide any insurance coverage for my person or my property. I acknowledge that I am responsible for my safety and my own health care needs, and for the protection of my property. In exchange for allowing me to participate in these SCA activities and events, I agree to release from liability, agree to indemnify, and hold harmless the SCA, and any SCA agent, officer or SCA employee acting within the scope of their duties, for any injury to my person or damage to my property.

This Release shall be binding upon myself, successors in interest, and/or any person(s) suing on my behalf.

I have read the statements in this document. I agree with its terms and have voluntarily signed it. I understand that this document is complete unto itself and that any oral promises or representations made to me concerning this document and/or its terms are not binding upon the SCA, its officers, agents and/or employees.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A LEGAL DOCUMENT. I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THIS RELEASE AND I UNDERSTAND ALL ITS TERMS. I EXECUTE IT VOLUNTARILY AND WITH FULL KNOWLEDGE OF ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE.

Legal Name (print) _____

Legal Name (sign) _____

Date _____

Rapier Card Renewal Form

SCA Name:			Legal Name:		
Address:					
Telephone:			Email:		
SCA Group:			Birth Date (for minors)		
Date:			Event:		
Marshal (print)			Marshal (sign)		
<input type="checkbox"/> HR	<input type="checkbox"/> CT	<input type="checkbox"/> PD	<input type="checkbox"/> TW	<input type="checkbox"/> OOK	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor

KEEP THIS TOP PART It is your proof of authorization until your authorization card is returned.
 This form expires 4 months from the date above. **CUT ALONG THE LINE BELOW.**

To update your authorization card: Mail your authorization card with this bottom part and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Rapier Minister of the Lists. Their address can be found in The Tidings or on the Ealdormere web site

SCA Name:			Legal Name:		
Address:					
Telephone:			Email:		
SCA Group:			Birth Date (for minors)		
Date:			Event:		
Marshal (print)			Marshal (sign)		
<input type="checkbox"/> HR	<input type="checkbox"/> CT	<input type="checkbox"/> PD	<input type="checkbox"/> TW	<input type="checkbox"/> OOK	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor

Ealdormere Rapier Marshal in Training Form

Be it known to all that

(legal name)

Of

(full address)

Known in the Society for Creative Anachronism as

Is hereby appointed as a Marshal in Training for a period of two years,
or until fully warranted, removed, or resigned.

This appointment takes effect on

(date)

And supersedes any existing or previous warrant for this office.

Kingdom Rapier Marshal

SCA Membership Number _____

Expiry Date _____

(Required for warranting)

Event Training

	Event	Supervising Marshal	Date
1			
2			
3			
4			

Recommending for Advancement

Marshal's SCA Name	Signature	Date

Baronial Marshal (if applicable)		

Kingdom Rapier Marshal

Remember to report on the same schedule as Rapier Marshals of the Field