

Ealdormere Rapier Combat Handbook

Version 6.4

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Introduction

The following rules are meant to supplement and extend the Society Rapier Marshal's Handbook, as published here <https://www.sca.org/officers/marshal/combat/rapier/> , and the the Ealdormere Earl Marshal's Handbook published here <http://www.ealdormere.ca/library.html> . 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.

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.

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.

Weapons and Parrying Devices

2 Blades

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*⁷
- 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

3 Parrying Devices

- C. Offensive bucklers are not permitted in Ealdormere⁸
- D. 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 Weapons⁹

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

⁶

⁷ Enacted in 2003

⁸ Offensive bucklers are designated non-standard devices, to be approved on a case by case basis by individual kingdoms.

⁹ 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 Terms¹⁰

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*

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 required¹¹ ; it shall consist of rigid material, as noted above, covering the entire throat, *including both the carotid arteries and the jugular veins*¹² , 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.

¹⁰Section 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.

¹¹As epees are not the standard weapon in Ealdormere, throat protection is mandatory, not optional.

¹²Enacted in 2010/2011

Authorizations

- A. The following primary rapier authorization categories shall exist in Ealdormere. The combatant may choose either for their first authorization, but authorization in one does not grant authorization in the other:
 - 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. Once a combatant has authorized in a secondary form, they may use that form in conjunction with any primary authorization they have.
 - 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.

- C. An authorization will be run by at least two marshals and may take place at events or practices. 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.

- D. The following procedure shall be used for a primary authorization:
 - i. The candidate will be asked between 2 and 4 of the questions found in Appendix 1, with an answer similar to the ones in Appendix 1. These questions will take place off the field. Questions can be asked at the end of the procedure, at the marshal's discretion.
 - ii. The candidate will fence against an experienced and authorized fencer, who may be one of the marshals running the authorization. The experienced fencer will provide many opportunities for the candidate to demonstrate their skills, they will not try to trick the candidate.
 - iii. The two will fight as if in a typical bout, acknowledging blows received and responding by losing the use of appendages, as appropriate to the goals of the authorization. The marshals may direct the candidate to fence in a certain manner to facilitate demonstration of the required skills.
 - iv. The candidate will demonstrate both thrusts and cuts with appropriate control.
 - v. Non-valid blows which might have appeared good should be acknowledged verbally.
 - vi. The candidate shall show good control, whether being energetically pressed, or on the attack.
 - vii. The candidate shall demonstrate good calibration with both their primary and their off hand.
 - viii. The candidate shall demonstrate good calibration against an opponent who is fighting from the ground only in heavy rapier authorization.
 - ix. The candidate shall demonstrate the ability to respond properly to a hold.
 - x. 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.
 - xi. The candidate shall 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. 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 safety 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. Questions are not part of the authorization procedure, as the understanding of the rules should be demonstrated.
 - iv. 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.
 - v. No reporting of secondary authorizations is necessary, they shall be reported when the fencer renews their authorization card.

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"¹³. 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"¹⁴. Said Medical Authorization Form must designate an adult present at the event as able to authorize medical treatment in the case of an emergency.

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.

¹³<http://www.ealdormere.ca/files/chldwaiv.pdf>

¹⁴<http://www.ealdormere.ca/files/treatminor.pdf>

Appendix 1 – Questions for Primary Authorization

Between 2 and 4 of these questions will be asked during a primary authorization. The purpose of the questions is to ensure understanding of the rules for rapier combat, on topics that are not easily demonstrated during combat. Questions can be re-phrased to help the candidate understand. Answer can be given verbally, by demonstration, or in any way acceptable to the marshal.

Question	Alternative Phrasing and Extra Prompts	Examples of Acceptable Answers
How does the armour you're wearing meet the requirements of the rules?	<p>What protective equipment are you wearing? Describe the types of rapier armour and where they are necessary. Is your arm covered by the same type of protection all the way down?</p>	<p>A fencing mask with back of the head protection. A jacket/shirt/top that a broken sword can't easily penetrate. A cup/jock (for male genitalia). Long sleeved shirt and pants, with socks and gloves so no skin is showing. Using the specific words "penetration resistant" and "abrasion resistant" are not necessary.</p>
<p>What types of attacks can you use against your opponent? <i>Invite the candidate to demonstrate with their sword on a fully armoured person.</i></p>	<p>How can you kill or wound your opponent? What are 4 different ways of damaging your opponent? Demonstrate 4 ways of using your sword to take your opponent's arm.</p>	<p>Thrust, with appropriate calibration, draw cut, push cut, tip cut. There is no need to discuss length of cuts, so long as the information or demonstration provided would be acceptable in combat.</p>
<p>Where can you attack your opponent to end the fight? What happens when your attack lands somewhere else? <i>Invite the candidate to demonstrate by pointing at the marshal or themselves.</i></p>	<p>What parts of the body result in death when struck? In wounds? What parts of the arms and legs are deadly?</p>	<p>A blow to the head, neck, torso, brachial and femoral arteries ends the fight, or kills the opponent. A blow to the under arms, or inner thigh will end the fight <i>along with demonstration of where this applies.</i> A blow to the rest of the arms or legs make that body part unusable. When a leg is damaged, they must sit or kneel, but they can still move around.</p>

<p>How does a marshal inspect your weapon to ensure it's safe to use?</p>	<p>What makes a sword unsafe to use?</p>	<p>The tip must be securely attached, with no cracks or metal showing through. The blade must be straight or gently curved, no kinks or cracks. The blade should not have sharp or jagged parts that could catch cloth.</p>
<p>Have you read the rules?</p>	<p>Have you read the Ealdormere and Society Rapier Handbooks?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Demonstrate death from behind</p>	<p>How do you kill someone from behind? What can't you do when someone kills you from behind?</p>	<p>Walk up and place the blade over their shoulder and say "You're dead M'Lord or M'Lady" Don't run at them. Don't strike them in the back. Person being killed can't turn and fight, as soon as the blade is on their shoulder, they're dead.</p>
<p>Demonstrate blade grasping</p>	<p>How do you do blade grasping?</p>	<p>Grab the blade but don't pull or push the person holding the blade. Grab the blade and move it, then quickly release it. If it twists or draws in the hand, the hand is gone and can't be used anymore.</p>

Appendix 2 – 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

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Baronial Marshal (if applicable)

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Kingdom Rapier Marshal

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