

Opposed-Sides Tactical Weapons Demonstrations Procedures



FOR ORGANIZATIONS & STAFF
USING STATE PARK FACILITIES

POLICY ON MILITARY INTERPRETATION

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation interprets the significant events of New York's military past at its historic sites through archeological remains, exhibits, furnished historic properties, informational signs, publications, and staff. For the further enjoyment of the public, State Parks encourages the active interpretation of historic military life and events through encampments and narrated demonstrations of maneuvers and weapons. All such programs are governed by State Parks' "Black Powder Procedures," "Opposed-Sides Tactical Weapons Demonstrations Procedures," and regional activity permits.

Adopted January 11, 1994

PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF OPPOSED-SIDES TACTICAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATIONS AT NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC SITES AND STATE PARKS

Adopted 1994

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish standards and guidelines for presenting opposed-sides tactical weapons demonstrations for interpretive use at New York State Historic Sites and State Parks.

II. DEFINITIONS

Opposed-sides tactical weapons demonstrations (TWD) are programs in which volunteers and staff, organized into accurately equipped recreations of historical military units, engage in representations of appropriate tactical formations, maneuvers, and fire. For the purposes of promotion and public information, TWDs may be described as battle tactics, simulations, or demonstrations.

State Historic Sites and State Parks are those facilities officially designated as such under the jurisdiction of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation or its licensees.

Staff are members of the permanent or seasonal staff at State Historic Sites and State Parks.

Volunteers are members of re-created military organizations who participate in interpretive programs, including TWDs, at State Historic Sites and State Parks.

III. RATIONALE AND CONDITIONS

It is acknowledged that TWDs have relevance, under certain circumstances, to interpretive programming at New York Historic Sites and State Parks. In order to determine whether such programs are appropriate and advisable at individual facilities, certain conditions must be met:

1. The proposed TWD must be relevant to the military history and interpretive themes of the facility.
2. The TWD must be planned and presented as an interpretive activity with appropriate, accurate, and comprehensive information provided to visitors. This information may be presented verbally, or in printed form.
3. The facility must insure adequate personnel, space, and services to safely conduct the proposed TWD and to accommodate the anticipated visitor audience.
4. The TWD must be conducted in accordance with the **PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING BLACK POWDER OR EDGED WEAPONS AT STATE PARKS FACILITIES.**
5. TWD participants must be members of an organized reenactment or military unit with an identified officer/non-commissioned officer or group leader. All participants must be pre-registered as specified by the facility.
6. The **FACILITY MANAGER** must retain complete authority in matters of program planning, supervision, and implementation, including the ability to limit or terminate a TWD in the event of a rule violation or perceived hazard.

IV PLANNING

Planning for TWDs must be done in advance as part of the overall planning for an interpretive event. Planning should involve facility staff and representatives of the participating group(s). The plan should include:

1. A detailed event program (i.e. agenda of timetable of activities).
2. An outline for conducting the TWD.
3. Personnel assignments.
4. A list of required supplies, equipment, and facility needs.

V INTERPRETATION

It is important that the maneuvering and firing of simulated military forces is comprehensible to the public. Therefore, a number of interpretive considerations must be addressed:

1. The TWD must be outlined or scripted.
2. The TWD must be explained by a narrator and/or a visitor handout.
3. The simulation of casualties may be permitted to more accurately interpret the period of muzzle-loading weapons and the resultant strategy, tactics, and consequences. The simulation of casualties is to be accomplished by a "silent fall" whereby the participant falls silently to the ground and remains motionless and still until the demonstration is completed. If casualties are simulated, the narrator must explain and interpret them within the context of the demonstration.
4. The narration/text must explain the visible motions as well as address related matters such as the influence of weapons technology upon tactics, the extent and impact of casualties, the goals of military commanders in using such tactics, and related factors.

VI SUPERVISION AND CONTROL

Proper supervision is essential to the success of a TWD.

1. Ultimate supervision of a TWD, its safety and content, rests with the FACILITY MANAGER.
2. A minimum of two (2) individuals designated by the FACILITY MANAGER shall be present throughout the course of the TWD to monitor the conduct of the event.
3. A TACTICAL COMMANDER will be designated for each side of the demonstration from among experienced officers of the volunteer groups. When working with federations of groups, it is best if the federation designates these positions. When working with individual, invited units, the FACILITY MANAGER will designate the opposing tactical commanders.
4. A SAFETY OFFICER will be appointed for each side. These positions may be filled by facility staff familiar with the use of black powder weapons or by volunteer participants designated by the FACILITY MANAGER. The official SAFETY OFFICERS of a federation of volunteer groups are also acceptable for this function. All SAFETY OFFICERS must be familiar with the PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING BLACK POWDER AND EDGED WEAPONS AT STATE PARKS FACILITIES and conform to and enforce them.
5. Facility staff, tactical commanders, individual artillery piece commanders, SAFETY OFFICERS, and any other related personnel will meet on at least one occasion prior to the TWD to discuss the event, inspect the area to be used and review safety procedures, crowd control measures, and the outline for the TWD.

VII SAFETY

The safety of visitors and participants is the responsibility of facility staff. All safety planning will be based upon the PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING BLACK POWDER AND EDGED WEAPONS AT SATE PARKS FACILITIES.

OF VISITORS:

1. Viewing areas for visitors will be placed at a safe distance (five-yard minimum) from the nearest point of the TWD and oriented so that the action of the demonstration runs parallel to the front of the audience.
2. Crowd control lines or other physical barriers will separate the audience from the TWD participants.
3. Crowd control personnel, consisting of facility staff or facility staff augmented by volunteer assistants, will patrol the crowd control lines with one person placed at intervals of approximately twenty (20) yards. They will have the authority to remove spectators from unsafe locations.
4. TWD narrators, through the use of public address equipment, will remind spectators of the potential hazards of the demonstration, including anticipated noise levels, and inform them of the necessity of observing restricted areas, safety lines, and the instructions of crowd control personnel.
5. Following the conclusion of the TWD, crowd control personnel will exclude visitors from the demonstration area until the grounds have been policed to remove dropped cartridges, cartridge debris, and other potential safety hazards.

OF PARTICIPANTS:

1. All TWDs will be regulated by the PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING BLACK POWDER. This includes the distances at which firing is allowed.
2. All TWD participants will have their firearms, cartridge boxes, and other weapons inspected by SAFETY OFFICERS immediately prior to the commencement of each TWD to ensure that safety standards are properly observed. SAFETY OFFICERS will have the authority to remove participants found with non-conforming weapons or ammunition.
3. Firearms will be elevated above the heads of opposing TWD participants before they are discharged. In special cases involving demonstrations in fortifications where participants are located at unequal heights, the weapons of the side situated at the lower level may be depressed below the position of the opposing side.
4. With the exception of special ceremonies or other circumstances, no fixed bayonets or unsheathed edged weapons shall be permitted during TWDs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's "Opposed-Sides Tactical Weapons Demonstrations Procedures," and that I can request clarification of anything contained herein from the Facility Manager.

I agree, as a condition of participation, to abide by these procedures.

Signature _____
Date Signed

Facility Name _____

Facility Manager Signature _____ Date Filed _____