

Marcher Freemen

***Health and Safety
Policies
And
Standard
Operational
Procedures
(incorporating
"Child Protection Policy)***



Compiled for the 2007 Event Season

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## ***Introduction & Society Ethos***

The **Marcher Freeman** (the **MF**) were established with the aim of providing quality Living History and Re-enactment displays, that will be both informative and entertaining for the public, and compliment the history and architecture of the venue.

The group is actively involved in these portrayals at venues throughout the U.K., — ranging from combat techniques to textile manufacture and bodging, and usually operates from a tented encampment, reminiscent of that used on a military campaign.

Members are required to undergo a 6 month probationary period, before full membership may be obtained. This allows for training and integration. The society requires historical accuracy in all aspects. Many of the members have researched and adopted personas, that enhance their presentations.

**MF** carry appropriate insurance to cover its activities.

It is the aim of this policy to provide information for members and event organisers — linking modern Health and Safety considerations with medieval activities.

This document has been provided to all adult members for their information, and that of their children.

Where appropriate, a designated person shall be at the display and shall manage their area of responsibility. In their absence, delegation will be made to a suitable person.

Participants are to remain vigilant at all times, of their personal safety and that of other **MF** members, the public and all other persons on site.

It is the responsibility of every member who recognises or suspects a hazard, or finds a piece of defective / hazardous equipment to secure that risk, and prevent the use of such equipment or stop an activity immediately.

Members must be adequately informed as to any particular event, and the role played by **MF** (or other demonstrators).

No member or guest member may join a **MF** display unless adequately trained and informed in accordance with **MF** training and operational procedures, and has passed the relevant competency test, and only then with the express permission of **MF** Committee members at the event. *This rule primarily relates to equipped persons from other groups who wish to attend for a single day or event.* Payment of a Temporary Membership constitutes agreement to these and other H&S rules.

Persons designated for special responsibilities do so in an advisory role, and cannot be held personally responsible for unforeseen circumstances or injuries. Any person who chooses not to accept their guidance does so at their own risk, and may be asked to leave the group.

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## ***Clothing & Footwear***

Period clothing and footwear shall be made of historically correct natural materials. Members must make themselves aware of its limitations and dangers.

The most prominent aspects for consideration include:-

- Smooth leather shoes slipping on paving and grass slopes
- Hobnailed footwear skidding on stone / concrete surfaces
- Flammability of some natural / mixed fibre clothing — in particular, linen.

By the nature and design of the long clothing worn, children and women members must be extra vigilant, to avoid trips.

Long hair should be tied back / plaited / coifed when in the proximity of flame or fire (male & female). This is also a requirement when preparing foods.

Authentic footwear must be worn at all times. Bare feet are not allowed by members of any age.

All persons are personally responsible for their and their children's protection from adverse weather. *Young people require consistent attention to protect them from the effects of cold, wet, wind, heat and sunshine (UV), as they quietly enjoy the events!*

## ***Risk Assessments***

- A generic risk assessment form for each section of the display is to be completed for each and every venue, prior to the establishment of the display, with special notes relevant to that particular venue / event. This must be done each day of the event.
  - All risk assessment forms must be presented at the daily health & safety meeting.
  - This assessment must be reviewed if there is any material change upon the site during the day or on subsequent days. (e.g. Access, structures, maintenance work etc.).
  - Significant findings of this assessment will be relayed to the members present at the display.
  - Where changes to the venue occur during the day, programmes and operational practices will be modified accordingly.
  - Risk Assessments will be retained by the Health and Safety Committee for at least 7 years following the event.
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## ***Management of Tented areas (Medieval Encampment)***

- Tents should be suitably spaced so as to allow members to walk without obstruction (e.g. Avoiding having to step over guy ropes, & kit etc). It is recommended that there be a minimum of 1 metre wide walkway (peg to peg distance) between tents.
- All camp areas and arenas must be securely fenced off to exclude the public. This also includes roping off entrances to the camp. This rule does not apply to 'interactive' areas.
- All items of equipment must be kept neat & tidy, and in their designated places allowing safe movement around the camp site.
- All items, e.g. Weapons racks, personal items should be kept well out of reach of members of the public.
- Fires should be placed a minimum of 2 metres from hurdles & tents.
- No fire should ever be left unattended.

- A supply of water must be kept close by the location of the fire.
- First Aid kit & fire extinguishers should be kept in the same location at every event. So members can easily locate them in the event of an emergency.
- A risk assessment of each section of the encampment must be done at the start of each day.
- Before the commencement of each days event a health & safety meeting should be held.
- A point of contact must be established with the organisers at every event, e.g. the castle Warden.

**NOTE: Please see attached plan for depiction of a typical encampment layout.**

## ***Management of Weapons / Combat and other Sharp objects***

**No** member of the public is permitted to touch or handle sharp points or blades or weapons at any time. Sufficient care must also be taken when they handle blunt weapons, and safety advice given if appropriate. *These rules are introduced to prevent the potential for injury, and cross-contamination with organisms such as HIV, Hepatitis or MRSA etc.*

In accordance with standard safety procedures,

- No** sharp weapons are to be taken onto a combat field. They must be placed in a secure location off the field.
- All sharps must be tied into the scabbard.
- Full P.P.E. must be worn. I.e. Helmets, body armour & hand protection.
- All** weapons, helmets and armour (P.P.E.) must be checked for safety compliance and suitability for the display, and must be clean, rust free, without burrs / serious chips and fully functional. All blade edges should be a minimum of 2 mm thick. 'Pole arms' must have a point radius of not less than the diameter of a 2 pence coin.
- Any weapon not complying, must be taken out of action until it has been properly maintained.

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- Sharp or blunt weapons must not be 'stood' in the soil, or left lying on the ground.
- No** weapons (sharps or blunts) are to be taken 'off site'. (*Safety, security and criminal law implications!*)
- All persons engaged in combat / archery must have received training and instruction in combat skills and field combat awareness / safety. All training is to be 'logged'.
- No** member of the public may handle any blunt weapon or piece of equipment unless under the direct supervision of an appropriate **MF** member, who is standing directly adjacent to them, in the 'public area' outside of the safety cordon.
- Combat demonstration areas are to be fenced off from the public by an inner and outer cordon of ropes (where appropriate) strung between posts. It is recommended that the 2 cordons shall be separated by at least 3 metres wherever possible. During combat, these boundaries will be inconspicuously marshalled by costumed members. The public should not be allowed to move inwards beyond the outer or single cordon.

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Textile working & Encampment display

Adequate supervision of sharp objects (needles, wool cards etc.) must be maintained during textile displays. This is the responsibility of the owner of that particular piece of equipment.

No sharp blades or hot objects / cooking vessels etc. may be left within reach of the public at a 'cooking' display.

Training & Familiarisation

It is the responsibility of **MF** to ensure that all its members are adequately trained and informed to perform their duties in a safe and efficient manner, and shall advise its members of appropriate health & safety issues related to a particular display or event.

Training will be performed by appropriately experienced and trained members or outside specialists, as is appropriate. Members will not be permitted to do such a task / demonstration until they have satisfied a designated person of their competence. (*A training certificate issued by another re-enactment group cannot be accepted as proof of competency and safety for the purposes of Marcher Freeman demonstrations.*)

No member or guest member may join a **MF** display unless adequately trained and informed in accordance with **MF** training and operational procedures, and has passed the relevant competency test, and only then with the express permission of senior **MF** members at the event.

Combat & archery training will be based upon a training programme — including ‘moves’, equipment use & maintenance / limitations and battlefield safety / awareness. This training is to be recorded. Periodic refresher training is recommended.

Training will be given in the safe manual handling of materials / equipment. Where there is a risk of head injuries from tent poles when assembling / disassembling tents etc., helmets should be worn. Members are expected to use their own judgement and to work within their physical abilities. *Health & safety guidelines recommend the use of P.P.E. (Personal Protective Equipment) such as a ‘hard hat’, work gloves and goggles for certain operations — this is the responsibility of each member.*

Training, supervision and monitoring procedures will be frequently reviewed.

Equipment Serviceability & Maintenance

All equipment shall be safe and appropriate for its designed purpose.

Should any equipment become defective, it must be taken out of service until such time as it has been repaired.

Each member is responsible for maintaining their own equipment.

Defective equipment / structures must be reported to the appropriate person with responsibility for that part of the display.

In the case of serious equipment failures, photographs should be taken.

All dangerous occurrences relating to equipment must be reported to the other group members and recorded.

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Where a structure, procedure, location or item of equipment not belonging to **MF** or one of its members is perceived as a hazard, access by other persons to it is to be prevented, and the owner / event organisers are to be immediately advised of the hazard.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Black powder and pyrotechnics are not used in the displays.

It is unlikely that any substances deemed hazardous will be brought onto the display site. If they are ever required, all such substances must be kept in their original containers and clearly labelled. Currently there is only the requirement for 'domestic grade' substances such as fire lighters, fire wood, charcoal and glues. Dusts and vapours are unlikely to be a problem during 'craft' displays, due to the well ventilated nature of the display and low emission volumes. Care must be taken during forgings and tending fires, to minimise the risk of sparks or airborne ash reaching people or flammable structures etc.

On occasion, individuals may bring small portable gas stoves for early morning drinks when resident within medieval tents, which must be used outside of the tents.

Members are required to make themselves aware of any potential hazard relating to any substance they bring or use by referring to the documents accompanying that substance. They must also make personal provision for wearing any recommended personal protective equipment. No member of the public shall come into contact with that controlled substance.

All liquid / gas fuels and containers are to be kept in a safe location outside of the tents, and maintained at a safe temperature out of direct sunlight, away from public access.

When assembling tents or using pole arms, care must be taken to avoid any overhead power lines. A similar electrocution risk exists from underground power lines (*e.g. Hammering a metal tent peg through a flood light cable*).

Animals

Under current operational practices **MF** do not employ non-domestic animals, such as horses, birds or goats etc., in their displays. Should this occur in the future, a specific

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management policy will be introduced by **MF** or its handler, or if the animal is brought onto site by a non-**MF** person, that person will have to provide their own risk assessment and risk management policy for their planned involvement.

If members choose to bring any animal to an event they will be personally responsible for its conduct and should be aware that the animal is not covered by the **MF** public liability insurance. *Most pet insurances include a third party liability element. Check!*

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### ***Exclusion of Persons from Display Areas***

A quorum of at least 4 members present at a display may require *any* person — by reason of disorder, manner & behaviour, illness / injury or condition — to permanently leave any areas designated for a **MF** display, with no financial liability towards the quorum individual or **MF**. *(This includes alcohol or ‘recreational’ drug related incidents. The number of units of alcohol consumed is of no relevance — the effect of a small intake may be enhanced by dehydration or combination with certain medications etc.)*

A member may be asked to leave the **MF** should their conduct be unsafe or whose actions are likely to bring the society into disrepute.

This quorum will be responsible to the committee for their actions. They are further authorised to take additional steps, if necessary, to exclude the person from the event site, by means of summoning the Police or event organisers.

Attendance at a display constitutes agreement of these terms.

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### ***Emergency & Evacuation Procedures***

Consideration must be made for events such as extreme weather, fire, civil disorder or terrorism.

Contingency plans must be made / ascertained for the safe evacuation of **MF** members and other persons on site, from the **MF** display area or the event venue, by foot, and avoiding ‘bottleneck’ congestions at exits.

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There must be easy access for emergency vehicles (Doctor, Ambulance, Fire), whether by a permanent unobstructed route, or a route that can be improvised by rapid disassembly of safety fences etc.

Consideration must be given for Air Ambulance Police helicopter evacuation. The designated landing zone must be flat, without marsh, loose objects or boulders, and horizontal. It must be of the largest area possible (40 metre diameter minimum), and clear of overhead and adjacent tall structures / wires and wind turbulence. It should also have a landing / take off flight path rather than vertical access. All unnecessary persons must be kept away from the landing zone. The 'Marshall' should stand on the edge of the L.Z., with their back to the wind, and with their arms raised above their shoulders creating a Y shape.

All members present must be made aware of these evacuation routes and any alarms that may be sounded by **MF** or the event organisers. Upon hearing the **MF** 'alarm' — a whistle — members should ready themselves for evacuation.

Marshalling of the public shall remain the responsibility of the event organisers.

All members must be aware that in the event of an evacuation they are to go to, and remain at, a designated assembly point where they can be accounted for.

Communications

Communications via landline telephone and mobile telephone must be determined and tested prior to the display.

Mobile phones should be silenced during displays, but kept readily accessible for emergency use.

At certain venues radio communication may be used by designated First Aiders. 1 Radio will also be placed at a designated location in the camp.

In the absence of mobile phone communication at the display location, provision must be made for persons to take verbal and written information to a reliable landline.

First Aid & Medical Issues

First Aid

- A First Aid Kit will be kept ready for an emergency at a central location outside of the tents, but within the camp. This will be fully stocked & contain 'in date' and inspected items. The box shall be waterproof and clearly marked (white cross on a green background) as being a First Aid Kit with the standard symbol. The words "First Aid" may be used in addition.
- First Aid treatments and advice will be provided by Health & Safety Executive First Aid at Work trained members, holding current qualifications — currently:-
Andy Sherriff, Steve Price, Imogen Sherriff, Barbara Thomas.
- First Aiders who use items from the kit are responsible for replenishing the kit.
- The First Aider who provided treatment is responsible for ensuring that statutory accident information is recorded. This must be relayed to the Secretary for secure storage.
- First Aiders are advised to have another **MF** member present during treatments, to act as a witness. Where ever possible, this should be another First Aider.
- The first aid 'treatment' should be clearly explained to and understood by the patient or accompanying adult.
- First Aiders are not permitted to issue / prescribe medications to patients.
- Wherever possible, as supporting evidence for accident reports, photographs should be taken indicating the circumstances and location where the patient was injured. Patient confidentiality must be maintained.
- In the case of any fatality (natural or unnatural causes), the deceased should be obscured from onlookers, and the site covered to protect evidence. Both the Police and Ambulance should be summoned to the scene. In the case where persons at the scene may have useful evidence, they should be asked to remain at the scene, or 'secured' by event organiser's officials. It is not the role of a First Aider to apprehend a witness!
- It is the primary rule that a First Aider should not jeopardise their personal safety and the safety of other, non-injured persons.

Medications

- Members should ensure that they take any scheduled medications at the appropriate time, and potentially in advance of combat if appropriate.
- It is advisable that members taking important medications should bring and secure duplicates so that they may be available in case of loss of the originals, or a Doctor's prescription that would enable replacements to be sourced.
- All medications, whether prescribed or otherwise, must be kept at the appropriate temperature in a secure but accessible location, clearly labelled and the owner named, out of the reach of all children and members of the public.
- It is in the individual's interests that they make other members and / or the Membership Secretary aware of any important medical conditions & medications to be taken — especially such illnesses that may prove rapidly debilitating or life threatening. *This paragraph is advisory.*
- The wearing of Medic Alerts or SOS Talismans is to be encouraged for medical conditions that may require special (urgent) consideration. These are usually worn around the person's neck or wrist.

Accident Record Keeping

The person responsible for maintaining personnel accident and dangerous occurrence records is the First Aider who attended the incident / accident.

Fire Fighting

These paragraphs primarily relate to fire fighting on the encampment area.

Fire extinguishers shall be of the appropriate types and volumes for the identified risks — currently AFFF and Dry Powder. These will be kept in a central location outside of the tents. AFFF must not be used on live electrical fires.

If available, animal skins may be used as effective fire blankets, to beat out flames or to extinguish a person.

Filled water buckets must also be available on the encampment display area, adjacent to open cooking fires.

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The location of additional fire fighting equipment on the event site must be verified before commencement of the display.

In the event of a fire being found, the initial alarm is to shout "Fire!" This can then be backed up by using a whistle, kept in the basket. *A whistle is unlikely to be confused with signals used at venues for their fire alarms.*

It is recommended that all adults be familiarised with basic fire fighting methods.

All persons not active in fire fighting must be evacuated from the immediate area, and potentially the event site.

No person should jeopardise their safety and the safety of others. A fire may only be fought if it is safe and practicable to do so. If it is safe to do so, adjacent tents and equipment may be taken down to reduce fire spread & save property.

The Fire Service must be summoned via 999 phone call if the fire is large or likely to spread. This call must be verified.

- No** naked flames in tents.
- No** smoking in tents.
- No** cooking in tents.
- Smoking must be done discreetly and safely, away from combustibles & tents etc.

## ***Interaction with Young Persons***

### ***— The "Child Protection Policy".***

Members are strongly advised to only 'interact' in the open, in public view and not in enclosed or obscured locations such as tents. Wherever possible the interaction should take place adjacent to another **MF** member.

Particular care must be taken when assisting the young person to put on or take off demonstration clothing or equipment. Ideally this should be tasked to the parent or carer accompanying that young person. Sometimes it is unavoidable to touch the young person —

as in securing a belt etc. In such cases the member should always clearly and loudly state what they are doing and why, for all to hear.

Members must be aware that youth does not guarantee innocence, honesty or propriety. In any situation where a young person makes any suggestive or inappropriate comment, or touches them in an inappropriate way, the member should 'back off' and call upon other **MF** to attend, assist and witness.

Members must be sensitive and careful in their use of 'words' and should only use phrases that are clear and unambiguous. Anything that could be construed as an innuendo is to be avoided and banter between members should also respect the same common sense guidelines.

It is intended that persons interacting directly with young persons will have had an acceptable C.R.B. report.

It is strongly advised that First Aiders provide care for young persons under the supervision of a responsible **MF** adult or other responsible person. Any assistance or care provided should be clearly explained and understood by the young person and attending adults.

Members are responsible for the behaviour of children in their care.

## ***Food & Drink***

All members must ensure that they have an adequate energy & water intake during displays. This is particularly important during combat, as fatigue or dehydration represent a very real safety risk.

No alcohol is to be consumed during or immediately prior to displays, and 'moderation' should be considered for some hours before!

***Camp Cooking Areas.*** *This section is to be read in conjunction with the Management of Tented Areas section.*

- All*** sharp blades, fires and hot water etc. to be kept out of the reach of the public.
- Long hair (male & female) is to be tied back or retained in a coif / plaited. *This rule is designed for both hygiene and to avoid hair catching fire.*

- Clothing should ideally be belted. Members must be vigilant of fire risks to natural fibre clothing — especially linen. *A regular cause of fatalities in the middle ages!*
- No** food is to be offered to or made available to the public for consumption.
- No** cooking inside tents.
- Buckets of clean water are to be kept within the cooking area, and are to be kept full. *These are safety buckets, for fire fighting and for immediate care of burns.*
- Hot liquids & food are to be kept in safe locations to avoid wastage and injury.
- Food hygiene is essential. Wash hands before & after food preparation. Cover food to protect from flies & wasps. Do not use the same knives or cutting boards for preparing cooked food after preparing uncooked food, without thorough cleaning first (*especially important with meats*). Cover all drinks (*protect from flies / wasps — risk of throat stings*). Thoroughly clean all utensils after use. Dispose of all wastes in a hygienic manner (*burn or bag it*).
- Animal carcasses must be kept away from food preparation area (*flies!*).

### ***Additional Issues***

Parents and carers of **MF** children are responsible for their childrens' well-being. Such adults must be aware of the location of their children at all times. It is naturally unwise for individual children to venture far from such adults without being accompanied by several other children or a **MF** adult.

Guests — whether young person or adult — are expected to abide by the contents of this document, and are the responsibility of the 'sponsoring' member.

Car parking areas fall outside of the jurisdiction of **MF**, and therefore all health & safety issues shall be the responsibility of the event organisers. Security issues should be considered for venues with parking that is unsupervised or distant from the camp.

This document will be reviewed as further information becomes available. All members are requested to submit observations on health and safety issues group as a whole.



***This page is to be returned completed & kept on the MF files***

I .....  
have read and understood the requirements laid down in this document, and shall retain this document for future reference.

I appreciate that it is also my responsibility to take note of and implement any periodic revisions of the Health and Safety Policy or Operational Procedures, as advised to me.

I will advise my family / children of these requirements (*Delete if not appropriate*).

If there is anything I am not sure of, I will contact either one of the designated persons or a senior **MF member**.

*Your agreement is necessary for **Marcher Freeman** to comply with health and safety regulations as set by the insurers.*

Signed ..... Dated .....

Thankyou. Your constructive input into all matters affecting the safe running of displays will be appreciated.