

136. Gebirgsjäger Safety Policy

Section I: GENERAL RULES & PRINCIPLES

- A. Safe, legal and ethical conduct is always the top priority. Do what is right and accept that it may not be popular in the short term.
- B. Events require event insurance, which in turn requires a signed liability waiver holding harmless the property owner and the event-sponsoring legal entity. Therefore all participating members will sign the liability waiver as a condition of participation.
- C. While a waiver places the legal weight of liability for an accident on the shoulders of the individual participant, safety is a shared responsibility and relies on all participants to execute such in good faith. Re-enactors who fail to understand this place themselves and others at risk. Event administrators have and will keep out entire units from event participation due to safety concerns.
- D. Minor injuries and accidents (sprains and broken bones) are infrequent but happen every year. As soon as you take the field, you are at risk of injury. Have fun but use common sense, take into account how your actions will affect others and be prudent. Not only will you ruin your weekend, you'll cause a disruption for dozens of other guys who paid their money and took time off to be there.
- E. Major injuries in the hobby are rare, but can be fatal.
- F. "Every unit member is a Safety Officer." Regardless of seniority, you have a role to play. If you see something, say something...either stop what is happening or report it to the senior unit member present immediately.
- G. The senior unit member at any event is responsible for unit safety and morale. He will not place, nor or allow unit members to be placed in any position which compromises safety. He is to lead by example, ensure that his men are rested, fed, hydrated, and that the men avoid unnecessary hardship that could compromise safety and morale.
- H. With the exception of a training event which may include range time for live fire target practice, no live ammunition is to be brought to a re-enactment event.
- I. Use of drugs (other than prescription) is STRICTLY PROHIBITED.
- J. No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed at events which prohibit them. No unit member will drink alcohol prior to, or during any battle, nor will he participate if he appears to under the influence of alcohol. Alcoholic beverages may be consumed at events which allow them after duty hours as defined by the senior unit member in attendance. At any event, unit members are expected to control their personal alcohol consumption and maintain the highest standards of integrity and respect towards others.
- K. Refusal to obey Safety Regulations may result in dismissal from the event and/or unit.

Section II: BEFORE THE FIELD

- A. The senior unit member at any event will hold an Appell prior to movement into the field. During the Appell, squad leaders will conduct a safety inspection of their men and report up the chain of command. The senior unit member present will see that each safety issue is satisfactorily addressed prior to movement into the field. The safety inspection will cover the following:
- a. Weapons are unloaded/clear, clean, in safe working order and the operator is trained to handle it in a safe manner.
 - b. All ammunition is blank and in compliance with event regulations.
 - c. Any pyrotechnics are in compliance with event regulations
 - d. Clothing worn and/or carried is appropriate for weather conditions
 - e. At least 1 liter of water per unit member is being carried.
 - f. Each squad has the following:
 - i. At least one first aid kit
 - ii. At least one wool blanket
 - iii. At least two zeltbahns (to provide shelter or make a stretcher)
 - iv. At least one mirror and a whistle for signaling
 - v. At least one compass and a map
 - vi. At least one working wristwatch
 - vii. At least one cell phone
- B. Unit members may be subject to a safety inspection by the event sponsor's appointed safety officer and will comply with the event sponsor's safety rules.

SECTION III: IN THE FIELD

- A. Leaders are expected to manage the mission with respect to the health and safety of their men. You can only move as fast as your slowest member. Don't leave anybody behind alone. Assign the tougher terrain to those most fit; keep the less fit closer to roads and trails.
- B. WEAPONS:
- a. Weapons will not be loaded until the Event Administrator has given the command and the senior unit member has given the order—he must control and maintain awareness of his command's safety footing. Normally, the command to

load weapons will be given once in the field or battle site. Even at the field site, weapons should be placed on “Safe” and rounds unchambered when not actually participating in action against enemy forces.

- b. No weapon is to be pointed at or discharged directly at a person within 20 yards. Blank ammunition can hurt, maim and kill if not handled properly. Muzzle discipline is paramount. You may point the muzzle up and fire or say “bang” within 20 yards. Do not fire your weapon when standing behind someone in such a way that the muzzle discharge will harm their ears. Ear plugs are optional but a wise choice. To prevent concussion injury, weapons will not be discharged above or behind the heads of personnel in positions to the firer’s front.
- c. All battles involving urban terrain (buildings, bunkers or other man-made structures) will be conducted in a manner which minimizes potential injury to any participant. This includes prohibiting the blind firing of weapons around corners or through windows, the throwing of grenades or other pyrotechnics in close proximity to other personnel or within confined spaces, jumping from upper level windows, or any other act deemed unsafe based on circumstances.
- d. No bayonets will be affixed to weapons.
- e. If umpires are used in the field, all unit members will abide by the umpire rulings and treat them respectfully. Umpires are not easy to find and keep. We never have as many as we would like, and especially for large events, they keep the play fair.
- f. If anyone, including a member of another unit or a bystander, is injured during a battle, stop the action until the injured person is tended to or removed from the battle area. The senior unit member may need to report the injury up through the chain of command and request a cease fire. Conversely, if a cease fire is called due to an injury elsewhere, any unit member who hears “cease fire” should disengage from combat and pass the word immediately. You may hear this from the opposing side—follow it as you would if you heard it from our own.

C. VEHICLES:

- a. Vintage vehicles are notorious for consuming fingers, hands, toes and feet. Doors, wheels and tracks, even when the vehicle is stationary (in fact ESPECIALLY

when stationary) are danger points. Do not lean, rest a hand or foot on wheels, tracks, bumpers, etc. The driver may have limited visibility and be unable to see you when they decide to move the vehicle. When communicating with a vehicle operator, do so from the front. The driver may not be the vehicle commander (this applies to armor, especially a tank), so be sure you are speaking to the individual responsible for directing movement, which is the vehicle commander.

- b. All motor vehicles participating in an event must be driven by a licensed driver in a sensible and safe manner. Some event organizers require vehicle insurance and a working fire extinguisher. It is the vehicle owner's responsibility to ensure all event requirements are in compliance.
- c. No devices are to be thrown or projected at the windshield or near the driver of a vehicle. When engaging a vehicle, be respectful of the owner's investment.
- d. When you hear "Pass Auf!" that is the German command to yield to oncoming traffic, or in English, "Make a Hole"— this means clear the road so vehicles may pass.
- e. Any vehicle being driven off-road in grass or foliage deep enough to conceal personnel must be preceded by a ground guide. All armored vehicles require a ground guide while operating in reverse gear.
- f. Never hide in grass within 20 yards of a tracked vehicle. Use cover that cannot be run over, such as boulders, trees, etc. If you are laying in a field, your ability to see and hear what is happening around you is compromised. Even a vehicle ground guide may not be able to see you.
- g. "Casualties" should not fall within 20 feet of vehicles. These casualties should remain aware of their surroundings and prepare to move immediately if the situation dictates.
- h. Weapons will be placed on "Safe" when embarking or disembarking from any mode of transportation.
- i. Members will not embark or disembark vehicles while the vehicle in motion. Members need to be particularly safety-conscious around armored vehicles which have limited visibility, marginal maneuverability and increased stopping

distances. One crew member of each vehicle (except motorcycles and light-skinned vehicles) will be designated to monitor passengers, particularly while loading or unloading.

- j. Members may ride on the outside of vehicles with permission of the vehicle owner/operator but in a manner that will not compromise the visibility of the driver or the safety of himself or other passengers.

D. PERSONAL SAFETY

- a. Overall Fitness: As a practical comparison, tactical events and deer hunting require about the same level of fitness. You need to be able to hike, sit in cold temperatures, and maneuver over a variety of terrain (mountains, marsh, hills, meadows) and surfaces (rock scree, dirt roads, etc.)
- b. We cannot by law force personnel with medical conditions/medication allergies to disclose that information, but they are strongly encouraged to be prudent and inform at least their immediate superior and battle buddy. If you are injured and cannot communicate, medical treatment may be ineffective or further endangering (i.e. allergies to certain medications). However, everyone is required to place a slip of paper with an emergency contact in their left breast pocket. Your contact should be empowered to speak for you if you cannot.
- c. Do not drink water from local streams, rivers, ponds, or lakes and do not foul the water with human waste or garbage.
- d. Wash your hands whenever handling food, water, cookware, eating and drinking vessels and after using the latrine, even an outdoors port o pot.
- e. If a grass fire occurs, immediately stop the battle and extinguish the flames. In some geographic areas, fires will spread out of control very quickly.
- f. Most events take place in cool to cold temperatures, but unseasonably warm weather is not uncommon. Be prepared for either extreme. Stay hydrated, dress in layers and carry extra socks. Wool socks or wool/synthetic blends are strongly encouraged. Wool breathes, it better protects your feet from blistering, is better at moisture-wicking and dries faster when wet. Cotton is inferior for these events.

- g. Each squad must have one member trained in first aid. The squad must carry at least one first aid kit, one blanket and two zeltbahns (for a stretcher) at a minimum. Each soldier should carry a small mirror and whistle for signaling if they cannot move or speak due to injury. Smoke grenades are also effective for signaling.
- h. Hydration—drink at least 1 liter of water before fielding, 1 liter in the field and 1 liter upon returning to camp, regardless of outside temperatures. You can just as easily dehydrate in the cold as in the heat. New guys tend to under-estimate the rate of dehydration wearing uniforms with full equipment.
- i. Heat management—If you are seriously overheating, pour water over your head and neck (this can be done with a handkerchief if water is scarce. Soaking hands and feet in mountain streams can also help. Avoid standing, stagnant and obviously fouled water. Notify your immediate superior. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are serious situations. Someone who is used to summers wearing a t-shirt, shorts and flip flops may not adjust well to a hat, socks, boots, long sleeves, long pants and a kit.
 - Wear light clothing (e.g., HBT uniforms) when ambient temperatures are high. The wearing of an undershirt (without tunic) under the smock may be authorized by the senior unit member.
 - Always take a full canteen to the field.
 - Rest frequently as necessary. Loosen restrictive clothing and equipment.
 - Do not carry unnecessary items into combat that add no value to the mission, while adding weight to your kit that will only increase the risk of heat issues.
 - Eat lighter than you normally would.
 - Do not be embarrassed or apprehensive about reporting the onset of heat-related sickness. It can lead to serious injury or even death if not treated. If at any time you begin to feel the onset of a headache, feel nauseous, weak or disoriented due to excessive heat, do not continue to participate in strenuous activities to prove your strength or dedication. Immediately sit down in a shaded area, take a break, loosen restrictive clothing and

equipment and drink plenty of water. Once you have regained your composure, you may continue to participate in the activities. Remember, the effects of heat-related sickness are cumulative.

- Keep a watchful eye on your Kameraden for signs of heat related sicknesses and prepare to treat them if they become a heat-related casualty.
- j. Cold management—Just like in heat, extremities are important. Head, hands and feet are where heat escapes. Keep them covered.
- i. Expect to layer up and down in the field. The anorak, windjacket, smock or zeltbahn (configured as a smock) are excellent for keeping wind, snow and rain at bay, while the wool feldbluse underneath serves as the primary insulator against the cold. Beneath that should be some combination of tank shirt, long underwear, service shirt and sweater, depending on the temperatures. Wear just enough to stay warm when moving. What you don't wear, keep in your rucksack to wear in case you are sitting for extended periods.
 - ii. Bring extra socks, boots, uniforms and gloves in the event the first uniform becomes wet.
 - iii. Bring a scarf, toque and earmuffs to protect the face and ears.
 - iv. Waterproof your footwear.
 - v. Complete an accurate weather assessment prior to camping.
 - vi. Know the warning signals for the onset of hypothermia.
 - vii. Despite cold conditions, always take a full canteen to the field.