



Kentucky Society **Sons of the American Revolution**

CARRYING OF ARMS

Musket/Flintlock Rifle Guidelines/Safety Rules

A. General

1. The Color Guard Safety Policy and Procedures of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution shall apply in addition to the following guidelines and safety rules. Where a difference occurs between the National Policy and the State Policy, the state policy shall take precedence for events within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.
2. All compatriots are responsible to familiarize themselves with the Color Guard Safety Policy and Procedures of the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

B. Weapon Safety

1. It is the responsibility of each SAR member wishing to fire a flintlock firearm at a NSSAR event to inspect and ensure his flintlock firearm is in serviceable condition prior to arrival at the event.
2. During the safety inspection, if a participant's flintlock firearm is found to be unsafe the Safety Officer or Color Guard Commander is authorized to dismiss the participant from the firing line.
3. Ball or other projectile shall never be loaded. Blank cartridges only.
4. Flintlock firearms shall be maintained in a clean and serviceable condition.
5. Flintlock firearms shall be equipped with leather frizzen covers/guards.
6. All fired flintlock firearms shall be equipped with metal flash guards, if the musket/rifle is so designed to accept one.

7. Only black powder or approved black powder substitutes produced by a licensed manufacturer shall be used.
8. Only powder dispensed from paper cartridges shall be used at events sponsored by the Kentucky Society in order to maintain the appearance of historical accuracy. NO loading of firearms from powder horns. Horns containing powder are prohibited. Plastic, non-static vials approved for black powder may be used at non-state sponsored events at the discretion of the safety officer or color guard commander.
9. The grains of powder in a cartridge shall not exceed 1.4 times the caliber of the weapon.
10. Flintlock firearms shall remain unloaded until instructed to load. The command to load flintlock firearms shall only be given when on the firing line.
11. Paper cartridges shall be discarded and not used as wadding.
12. Ramrods and other objects shall not be inserted into charged bores. Wadding/patches are never to be used for Color Guard purposes.
13. Walking/marching with charged flintlock firearms is prohibited except in situations as expressed in Section D-3.
14. Flintlock firearms shall always be pointed in a safe direction.
15. Flintlock firearms shall never be fired toward anyone.
16. Flintlock firearms shall never be fired over anyone within 150 feet.
17. A finger shall never be on a trigger unless firing the weapon.
18. In the event of a misfire, empty pan, turn firearm upside down and dump powder from barrel then reload. NEVER FIRE A DOUBLE POWDER CHARGE.
19. Members of the general public shall not be allowed to handle a weapon that has been fired until the barrel had been swabbed out and the weapon has undergone a safety inspection.
20. Members of the general public may handle a weapon that has not been fired or has been cleared after a firing provided that the compatriot maintains positive control of the weapon by keeping in positive contact with the weapon or its shoulder strap.
21. Compatriots participating in a gun salute shall keep the powder cartridges in a leather covered pouch or box with a flap that completely covers the opening. The pouch or box should be worn

external to the compatriot's clothing (i.e. no cartridges should be kept in pockets or under coats.

22. Natural fiber fabrics or leather should be worn if a color guard member is firing or is next to a member that is firing. No clothing shall contain any materials that are flammable or can easily melt.
23. Eye protection, to protect against flashes or sparks, may be worn at the discretion of the compatriot and may include either period or modern glasses.
24. Hearing protection may be worn at the discretion of the compatriot.
25. At no time shall a compatriot be impaired by alcohol or medication while firing.
26. A safety officer, who may be the commander, must be present at every event where firing occurs.

C. Firing of flintlock muskets & flintlock rifles for honor salutes

On certain occasions a musket/rifle salute is deemed appropriate and shall be conducted according to the following guidelines.

1. The Color Guard Commander or designated safety officer will perform a safety inspection of firearms prior to the beginning of the ceremony. It should be conducted as follows; the rammer should be pinged to show that the weapon is clear and the firelock should be put at half cock and the trigger pulled vigorously several times to make sure that it will not go off accidentally.
2. As determined by the Event Commander & Color Guard Commander, musket/rifle firings shall be aimed in a direction which protects against all possible injury to persons and property.
3. All guardsmen who are assigned to fire flintlock firearms shall be certified as to their competency by the KYSSAR Color Guard Commander, Division Commander or designated safety officer, based upon the following criteria:
 - Demonstrated knowledge of and compliance with the above stated standards.
 - Demonstrated efficiency in safely loading and firing musket.
 - Any time the color guard is firing, every member of the color guard has the obligation to call a halt if any potential for unsafe conditions exists. If injury occurs, the command "Cease Fire" is followed by the word "MEDIC" which is not to be used in any

other context in a firing scenario whether ceremonial or battlefield re-enactment.

D. Post Event/Misfire Safety Check

1. After every firing event the weapon shall be confirmed to be unloaded by pinging the ramrod.
2. If the weapon still has a charge, then the charge will be removed by inverting the weapon with the muzzle towards the ground. Upon completing this another ramrod check shall be done to assure there is no latent powder remaining in the barrel.
3. If the weapon still has a charge, then that weapon shall be taken away to a point of safety. Charged flintlock firearms shall be carried at half-cock. A safety officer shall watch the clearing to ensure that all safety precautions are observed. The pan shall be re-primed and the weapon fired.

E. Bladed Weapons

1. Bayonets may be fixed for parade, color guard duty, stacking arms, drill, or other scenarios, at the direction of the Event Commander.
2. Bayonets will be fixed only at the order of the Color Guard Commander.
3. **Edged weapons** shall remain sheathed or secured at all times, except when used as a tool of command.

Note: The bayonet should only be used when the public is at a safe distance and the individuals using the musket/rifle with bayonet mounted are able to safely perform all manual of arms procedures.

CARRYING OF ARMS DURING THE POSTING OF COLORS

The Posting Ceremony is as follow: As the Color Guard (CG) assembles for the Colors Posting Ceremony, they will inspect their respective flags for proper presentation, ensure they are in the proper order of flags and will secure their flag for carrying by holding the upper portion of the flag pole by the left hand and the lower portion of the flag pole by the right hand (left over right). *When Arms are used with Color Guards they are to be positioned in front of the USA 50 Star Flag and after the last flag in the procession as they symbolize the guarding of Colors.*

The ceremony will commence with the Master of Ceremonies or his designee issuing the command ***“Are the Colors and Standards Present”***.

The Color Guard Commander will report to the Master of Ceremonies or his designee when the color guard is ready for the Posting Ceremony by saying ***“The Colors & Standards are present Sir”***.

The Master of Ceremonies will have all in attendance stand.

The Master of Ceremonies or his designee will then command the Color Guard Commander to ***“Present the Colors”***.

The Color Guard Commander will then issue the following commands in the appropriate manner.

“Color Guard, Attention”. With this command, the color guard should come to attention with flags and/or firearms on the floor to their right.

“Shoulder, Firelocks” With this command, the flags and firearms are lifted into position so that they can be carried.

“Left / Right, Face” With this command, the color guard turns to face in the appropriate direction.

“To the front, March” With this command, the color guard moves forward starting on their left foot.

“Color Guard, Halt” With this command, all marching should cease within two beats or steps.

“Left / Right, Face” With this command, all members face the appropriate direction as ordered by the Commander.

“Present, Firelocks” With this command, all flags except the National are dipped and firearms are brought to the “Present Arms” position for pledges and the National Anthem.

“Shoulder Firelocks” With this command, all the flags are brought back to the carry position while the firearms are brought back to the shoulder position.

“Prepare to Post” With this command the flags are brought and held directly over their respective flag stand, but not placed in the stand. Those bearing arms go to the “Present Arms” position.

“Post, Colors” With this command, the color bearers place the flags in the flag stands and dress the flags appropriately. Color bearers are free to move forward and back one step as necessary. Those bearing firearms continue to maintain the “Present Arms Position.” After the posting of the colors the bearer of the American flag steps in front of the flag, dresses and then salutes it. He then returns to his original position behind the flag.

“Left / Right, Face” With this command, all members face the appropriate direction to move out of the area in a single column or in double column.

“To the front, March” With this command, the color guard moves forward starting on their left foot.

“Color Guard, Halt” With this command, all marching should cease within two beats or steps.

“Color Guard Dismissed” With this command, all members move to a previously designated location, or post.

If “Mourn Arms” is executed as part of the ceremony, the command is given to **“Present Firelocks”**. At this position the command **“Reverse Firelocks”** is then given. The firelocks are rotated downward from the “Present” position until they are inverted. Right hand above on wrist, left hand below on the stock. Thumbs up on both hands. The command **“Shoulder Firelocks”** is then given with the firelock being brought back to the shoulder in the inverted position. The next command given is **“Mourn On Your Arms”**. The firelock muzzle is then placed on the large toe of the left foot. The left hand is placed on the butt first and then covered by the right hand. The head is bowed with cover still on.

To recover from “Mourn Arms” the command is given to **“Shoulder Firelocks”** where the right hand goes to the wrist and the left to the stock- thumbs up. The firelock is raised off the toe and slowly and uniformly raised and brought in tight against the shoulder in the inverted position. This is followed by **“Present Firelocks”**. The firelock is brought off the shoulder while still inverted and positioned directly in front of the body. It is then slowly and uniformly raised back to the “Present” position with the muzzle pointing upwards. Care should be taken to

ensure that all firelocks are rotated TO AND FROM “Mourn Arms” at the same time and at the same rate. The final command is **“Shoulder Firelocks”** where the firelock is brought back to the shoulder with the muzzle pointed upwards.

The Prepare to Post Colors command can also be used to prepare to post without dipping the flags and conducting the pledges. To do so, *(position the butt end of the flag pole over the receiving hole of the standard while retaining the flag as vertical as possible)*. Arms will remain in the present position.

The Color Guard Commander will give the order **“Post, Colors”**. Upon receiving this command, the CG Team will post the colors into their respective standard. **Those carrying firearms will maintain the “Present Arms Position”**

The Color Guard Commander will next take two steps back and Salute the Flag in the customary style of the 18th Century if dressed in period uniform (see this section of the Handbook for proper salute procedure) or the traditional salute if in civilian dress.

Upon completion of the Posting and the Invocation, the Color Guard should be dismissed by the Color Guard Commander by the command **“About Face”** then **“Return To Ranks”**. Marching may be performed but is not necessary at this step. This should be determined beforehand by the color guard commander (based on the formality of the event) and communicated to the troops.

The Formal Retirement of Colors at the Conclusion of Ceremonies: When it is desirable to have a formal removal of Colors at the conclusion of a Meeting or Ceremony, the following procedure should be used.

The CG Team will march to position adjacent to their respective flag. **Those CG Team members carrying arms position to the right & left of the line while at “Shoulder Firelocks.”**

The Color Guard Commander will command the CG Team to face the flags with **“right or left face”** as appropriate.

The Color Guard Commander will give the command **“Present your Firelocks”** followed immediately by **“Remove Colors”** (lifting the flag pole from the standard and positioning the flag ready to carry – *left hand over right hand*).

The Color Guard Commander will give the command for the CG Team to **“Shoulder Firelocks”** to position them for exiting. This is followed by the appropriate command to **“Right/Left face”**.

The Commander will give the command **“To the front, March”**.

COMMANDS GIVEN WHEN MARCHING WITH COLORS & ARMS

When marching with colors & arms in parades or other public events the rules for Carrying arms are to be utilized:

- The use of arms in a Color Guard is to symbolize the guarding of the USA Flag(s).
- When marching, arms are to be carried against the **left** shoulder when marching in a Color Guard. This is the traditional 18th Century position.

Commands

- When the Color Guard (CG) Team has been assembled and the Marching is to begin, the Color Guard Commander will call the CG Team to “**Attention**”.
- The Color Guard Commander will give the command to “**Shoulder Firelocks**”. This signals the CG Team to raise their flags, and guns when included in the Color Guard, into carrying position.
- The Color Guard Commander will give the command to “**To the front, March**”. This requires the CG Team to move forward with their left foot first.
- The Color Guard Commander will give the command to “**Half Step March**” when there is a need to slow the forward movement due to the slowing of units ahead of the CG Team.
- The Color Guard Commander will give the command to again “**To the front, March**” when the unit in front of the CG Team again begins to move forward.
- The Color Guard Commander will give the command “**Color Guard, Halt**” at the end of the event followed by “**Color Guard, Dismissed**”.

RIFLE/MUSKET SALUTE TEAM MANUAL OF ARMS, FIRING PROCEDURE

- **The Designated Team Leader/Commander, at the appropriate time will give the order for members to: “Fall In”.** [All firearms are to be unloaded at this time. Team Members are to form a single rank, shoulder to shoulder. Firearms are to be at “Left Shoulder Arms.”]
- **Command will be given: “Prime and Load”.** [At this time the firearms will be briskly shifted to the loading position, blank cartridge removed from the cartridge box or bullet bag or powder bag. Bite paper cartridge at the powder line and Prime Pan First. Rotate Rifle/Musket to the barrel up position and pour remaining black powder down barrel.] **[Empty paper cartridges are NOT to be used for wadding! Ramrods will NOT be used!]** [Firearms will be then be shifted to “Recover”.]
- **Command will be given: “Make Ready”.** [At this time the hammer will be moved from the half-cock, or safe position, to the full cocked position, then remove the hammer stall (leather frizzen cover).] Keep finger out of the trigger guard until the fire command
- **Command will be given: “Present”.** [At this time the firearms will be shifted to the firing position and elevated to approximately 30 degrees.]
- **Command will be given: “Fire”.** [Firearm will be discharged, and briskly rotated to loading position. Immediately repeat “Prime and Load” procedure and return to the Recover when completed.]
- **Repeat Command Series until designated number of volleys have been fired:** [After completion of last Volley, the command is given to “Shoulder Firelocks”]
- **Command will be given: “Secure Firelocks”** at which time the pan is opened and the firelock is rotated down to empty powder from the barrel.
- **Command will be given: “Search your firelocks”** to ping the ramrods in the barrel. This is followed by “Shoulder Firelocks”.