

Combat & Weapons Policy

A high number of our shows include fight scenes.

These have to be strictly choreographed, and planned. Due to the nature of the content and safety, any breaking of this policy is counted as gross misconduct & will result in dismissal from the production.

Choreography

- All fight scenes will be strictly choreographed by company-designated fight trainers.
- Actors must not improvise fighting or action, or any physical contact with others in any scene, or backstage at any time.
- Actors may not alter the choreography without clear discussion with, and agreement from, the company fight trainers, in which case the adapted choreography will become the new “set in stone” choreography.
- An actor taking on a character role which involves fighting or use of weapons, agrees by acceptance of the role, that they will learn, remember, and adhere to the choreography and safety notes by designated deadlines.
- Actors with a role involving fighting or use of weapons will attend all choreography (and if needed technical sessions – e.g. gun handling) on time without lateness or avoidance.

Weapons

With our work being historical action, weapons are often a large part of our shows,

All members are required to defer to the guidance of the designated fight trainers and production armourer.

All members bringing their own weapons for use in a production must submit them for checking before use. Donated weapons are to be fully checked before use.

All weapons are to remain under the jurisdiction of the designated production armourer, and are not to be taken home, offsite, put in a different area, or stored in an unlocked area.

Any threatening towards the public, or **handling of prop weapons other than those handed personally to the cast member by the production armourer**, will result in immediate dismissal from The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company. The offender will also be fully responsible for any legal or criminal proceedings arising from such threats.

All actors are expected to attend relevant training for the role. Not doing so will result in dismissal from the production.

If a weapon is deemed to be unsafe, this is to be respected and the weapon to no longer be used.

All shows or film shoots involving use of weapons, will be reported in advance to the local police force for the area. If a police officer wishes to attend and inspect weapons, or speak to actors or crew about how the weapons are being used, they are at liberty to do so.

As normal, a first aider will be on site at all shows, rehearsals, or film shoots where weapons are in use, as absolute minimum safety requirement.

Nobody is to consume alcohol within 24 hours before using weapons in a production

Any damage involving a weapon, is immediately to be reported to the fight trainer, armourer and stage manager.

Weapons are to be collected from the armourer or designated person before the relevant scene, and returned immediately to that person, at the end of the scene.

Taking weapons outside, engaging backstage horseplay with weapons etc, is strictly forbidden.

Firearms.

No firearms that could be used as actual firearms, either real or decommissioned, are to be permitted. We work with replica cap-guns that look real, but which are unable to be used as real weapons.

The only exception to this would be if we were working with a registered re-enactment team, in which case only the trained re-enactors would be permitted to use their own firearms, having produced evidence that they are members of a re-enactment organisation, and with production of the relevant firearms and black powder licences, and in line with their safety guidelines.

Bladed weapons

Bladed weapons are to be fully blunted as within re-enactment guidelines, and to be regularly checked for damage, nicks, that could tear or damage skin and maintained in order to prevent the same. They are not to be pushed blade first into soil or dirt.

If emergency services called

A lot of SDP shows involve prop weapons. While these are usually blunted swords or knives which could not cut anyone, or prop guns which have no facility to fire a projectile, these could potentially be used to threaten or cause fear, or someone playing with them could be mistaken for a threat.

In the case of an incident involving violence, terrorism, or emergency services incident, the production team member calling the emergency services is required by SDP to appraise the call handler that there are prop weapons on site, what type, and their location.

It is therefore additionally critical that those weapons are treated by all cast and crew members, through all rehearsals and performances, follow guidance from the armourer and stage manager around weapons, including replacing them in the storage area when not in use on stage, and refrain from any horseplay or unplanned “messing about/ playing” with them.

In the case of an evacuation or invacuation, actors and crew should not be carrying a weapon prop. Terrorism usually requires armed law enforcement, and depending on the nature of the situation, the possibility is that they may have an order to shoot to kill a terrorist, so carrying a weapon at that point is an especially bad idea.