

# LARP Safety Rules



## Introduction

- Because LARP involves running around in the woods swinging swords at people, there is a greater potential for physical harm than in other forms of roleplay.
- For this reason, there are a number of important Out of Character rules which are reiterated during the Safety Brief at the start of each LARP and must always be followed.
- Not only do they help prevent accidents happening & ensure the comfort of all involved, they also help give a good impression to the public and help make things more enjoyable for everyone.
- Just because something isn't mentioned during the pre-game safety briefing or on this page doesn't mean that it's safe to do - if you're asked to stop doing something during a LARP by the GMs or Ref because they don't feel that it's safe, stop doing it.
- If you think you should be allowed to do it, don't argue about it then and there, raise the issue after the LARP and talk to the GMs about it either in person or over email.
- The GMs take the safety and wellbeing of all participants extremely seriously, and any breach of safety guidelines will be addressed appropriately.
- Importantly, if you feel overwhelmed or unsafe at any point you may call STOP THE GAME to deescalate tension and help to rectify the situation.
- There are a number of aspects to LARP Safety:
  - [Combat Safety](#) tells you how to fight safely - what not to do to avoid injuring yourself or others.
  - [Safety Calls](#) tells you about the safety calls that exist during LARP.
  - [Time Calls](#) tells you about the various calls used to tell everyone what to do at various points during a LARP.
  - [Weapon Safety](#) tells you how to spot an unsafe weapon and how to avoid damaging weapons.

## Important: LARP and Contact

- With reference to Section 5 of the OLS Conduct and Themes policy, there is an expectation that in LARP, participants will be hit with LARP safe latex weapons at a force which is comfortable for them.
- If at any time this stops being the case, any participant is welcome to indicate this (using the STOP THE GAME safety call, if necessary) and cease engaging in combat.
- Outside of this, there is absolutely no other expectation around physical contact, and as per that policy, participants should always seek the enthusiastic consent of others before initiating such contact.

## LARP and Covid

- The rules on LARPing safely during the pandemic can be found on the [COVID](#) Policy page.

## Combat Safety

- **Only strike with the hitting edge of strike-safe LARP props** - LARP weapons are padded foam around a solid core, there will be an obvious hitting edge (e.g. the blade of a sword, the plate of a hammer) and you should strike with that (not, for example, the hard pommel). Plastic gun props, throwing weapons, sticks are all out.
- **Pull your blows** - Always pull all your blows, with whatever you're wielding. The longer your weapon, the greater the restraint required not to accidentally hit too hard. If someone says you're hitting too hard, then you're hitting too hard. You may need to adjust the force of your blows depending on factors such as weapon weight and balance, and outside temperature (colder weapons are harder). Remember that some people are more sensitive than others.
- **Only strike once per second** - if in doubt, fight slower. When you fight faster, you move faster, and inherently hit faster. In particular, this is one strike per second per person not per weapon, you don't get to hit twice as fast if you're wielding two weapons.
- **Never hit the head** - The head is not a legal location in Animus, and it is considered unsafe to hit people on the head.
- **Always avoid sensitive areas** - Participants should always avoid delivering blows to the groin, breasts or backside.
- **Never stab except with explicitly indicated collapsible-tip weapons** - Never stab with any weapon, cored or uncored. As of writing, the LARP kit has two collapsible-tip spears. These weapons are the only weapons it is acceptable to stab with, and even with these, due care should be taken.
- **Never grab an opponent's weapon** - Never, under any circumstances, seize another player's weapon during combat. This is unsafe, and may also result in very expensive damage to weapons.
- **No pushing, punching or wrestling** - Never push, slap, kick, punch, trip, wrestle or grapple another player. Other forms of contact are acceptable so long as the enthusiastic consent of all parties is obtained.
- **Don't duck** - Although many people will instinctively duck or crouch when they see a blow coming towards them, this is unsafe in LARP combat as it means that a blow aimed at the chest or shoulders may instead end up hitting the head.
- **Shields** - Shields are not to be used as offensive weapons. Don't hit people with the shield or

try to clear your path with it, as they aren't sufficiently padded and cannot be safely used to hit someone.

- **Strike-Unsafe Props** - plastic gun props are not safe to be used in a fight to strike or block with. Move these clearly out of the way or drop them on the ground before engaging in melee combat. Don't strike someone who is clearly putting a prop to the side for safety. Don't use this to gain an advantage in the game.
- **Safety when on the ground** - When downed from dropping to 0 hits, you should feel free to reposition your body to avoid things like nettles, and to move to one side of the path or out of the way where you won't be stepped on. Standing up, placing two fingers in the air, and pointing clearly at the ground is also an acceptable way of indicating where your body is without phsyrepping it. If possible, don't close your eyes - you may struggle to see incoming danger to yourself.
- **Seeking first aid** - We have first aid supplies with us. Even if you feel like you have a minor injury - if you have a cut, or have got something in your eye, it's better to be safe and clean out the wound, grab a plaster, etc.
- **Be aware of adrenaline** - LARP fighting inherently boosts adrenaline and emotions can run high. Be aware of this, and if you need to take a moment to calm down it's much better to do so than fight in an unsafe state of mind.

## Safety Calls

- **STOP THE GAME** - used when someone is in an unsafe situation during combat. Stop what you're doing, don't move (unless you're standing on a person who's down, or on their glasses, etc.) and wait to find out who is affected and whether or not they're okay. You will be timing back in as if from a time-freeze, and people moving over or crowding round may make the situation worse, so don't move from your current position unless there's a very good reason to do so. MAN DOWN may also be recognised for this purpose (as an older version of the safety call) but the correct call is as above.
- **TESCO** - Used at any time when you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Place two fingers in the air. At this point all parties involved should stop roleplaying and allow the participant to leave the encounter without further comment or confrontation. This can be represented non-verbally as well by crossing both arms over your chest.
- **Walkers** - Non-roleplayers are approaching the game. Shotover is a public common, so stop fighting and stand aside so that they can get through and you don't accidentally hit their kids or trip over their dog. Place any gun props on the ground and absolutely do not point them at anyone. Be polite and inoffensive, don't threaten them with weapons or say things which may be misunderstood.
- **Spectators** - Non-roleplayers are observing the game. As far as is possible, try and keep the content of the encounter to a PG level until they leave.
- **Cyclists** - As with walkers, but faster.
- **Horses** - Quickly and calmly place all weapons being carried down to one side of the path, and stand on that side of the path quietly until the horse passes. A spooked horse can be very dangerous.

## Time Calls

- **Time In - Start of the game** - Start acting in character.
- **Time Out - End of the game for the day** - Drop out of character

- **Time Faff** - The players remain in character and do whatever players do when they're not being attacked, while one of any number of things (monsters move kit/monsters get up and run off/GMs hack the plot/the next encounter's set up) happens that they're not meant to interact with.
- **Time Freeze** - Everybody stops where they are, but stays IC. Game time is frozen as something that needs GM description has just happened, so the GM is going to describe it. The players may be asked to close their eyes and hum so that they don't see what's being set up. This may also be used as a general purpose call to stop the game mid-encounter for any reason.
- **Dropping OC** - Not exactly a time call, but. At any point you can drop OC by placing two fingers in the air. This can be useful to ask somebody a question or make a request (e.g. "what was your character's name again?"; "would you be comfortable with me holding your hand to lead you to the prison?"; "you're hitting too hard"; "please can we not discuss suicide?").

## Weapon Safety

- **Unused weapons** - If a weapon is not being used then it should be carefully put down so that it is lying full length on the ground, put in the kit bag or leant against a tree or similar. When putting weapons in the kit bag, always do so pommel first, and when leaning a weapon against something always ensure that the pommel rather than the point is resting on the ground. Resting weapons point-down can damage the end of the weapon, leading to the core coming through and the weapon becoming unsafe to fight with. Also, try to leave weapons off the path or at the edge of the clearing so that people don't tread on them or trip over them.
- **Carrying weapons** - If in possession of a weapon, always carry it in your hand or bag or sheathe it in your scabbard. Never lean your weight on a weapon or rest it so that the point is touching the ground, as this can damage the end of the weapon, leading to the core coming through and the weapon becoming unsafe to fight with. Obviously, quarterstaves are an exception to this rule.
- **Don't throw weapons** - The only weapons which can be thrown are coreless. Never throw any other weapon, either during combat or as a means of passing it to someone else outside of combat, as this could cause injury or damage the weapon.
- **Exposed cores** - If the core of a weapon is exposed at any point along its length, that weapon is not considered combat-safe and should be discarded immediately on noticing the break.
- **Torn latex** - This is not such a major issue, as it is less directly relevant to safety, but it's a good sign that you should be checking your weapon for safety, and probably getting it re-latexed if the damage is significant.
- **Striking surfaces** - Most weapons are only designed to be struck with on one part of their length (for example, LARP swords are rarely designed for pommel strikes); on striking surfaces, the padding will be thicker. Don't hit people with other parts of the weapon, as this will hurt the person struck and may damage the weapon.
- **Strike-Unsafe Props** - plastic gun props are not safe to be used in a fight to strike or block with. Move these clearly out of the way or drop them on the ground before engaging in melee combat. Don't strike someone who is clearly putting a prop to the side for safety. Don't use this to gain an advantage in the game.
- **Gun Props** - these must be clearly props and not possible to mistake for real weapons. They should contain bright colours or be otherwise obviously fake. BB guns, blanks, "stage weapons", pop guns - these are all out. Water pistols, unloaded NERF guns, LARP safe padded weapons are all okay.

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