

Black Powder Procedures



FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING STATE PARK FACILITIES

POLICY ON MILITARY INTERPRETATION

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation interprets the significant events of New York's military past at its historic sites through archeological remains, exhibits, furnished historic properties, informational signs, publications, and staff. For the further enjoyment of the public, State Parks encourages the active interpretation of historic military life and events through encampments and narrated demonstrations of maneuvers and weapons. All such programs are governed by State Parks' "Black Powder Procedures," "Opposed-Sides Tactical Weapons Demonstrations Procedures," and regional activity permits.

Adopted January 11, 1994

PROCEDURES FOR ORGANIZATIONS USING BLACK POWDER OR EDGED WEAPONS AT STATE PARKS FACILITIES

Adopted 2001

A. POLICY

Firearms, artillery firing, and tactical weapons demonstrations, especially those that involve opposing forces, can create many problems of crowd control and coordination. Weapons accidents are frequently due to the movement and confusion inherent in these activities. These agency procedures are intended to address those problems.

Demonstrations at State Parks facilities that involve the use of black powder or edged weapons must conform to the agency's POLICY ON MILITARY INTERPRETATION (attached) and the procedures outlined in this document. Demonstrations that include opposing forces must also conform to the agency's PROCEDURES FOR THE USE OF OPPOSED-SIDES TACTICAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATIONS AT NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC SITES AND STATE PARKS. (attached)

B. PARTICIPANTS

All individuals participating in these demonstrations who personally engage in the use of firearms or artillery must be sixteen (16) years of age or older.

For all encampments and tactical demonstrations, the FACILITY MANAGER may designate one organization commander as DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR. THE FACILITY MANAGER and DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR shall plan the activities, establish safety controls, and delineate areas for spectators, demonstrations, camps, and weapons clearing.

C. BLACK POWDER

All black powder brought onto State Parks facilities must be in the form of prepared cartridges, priming tubes or powder horns for firearms, and/or artillery priming. No bulk powder will be permitted. Musket cartridges shall be of paper, rolled in the appropriate 18th- or 19th-century manner, secured in a period manner. Foil, staples, coin wrappers, or plastic tubes are not permissible. Artillery cartridges shall be of three layers of aluminum foil, made on a former corresponding to the bore of the gun. The loads described in the attached table are the maximum loads, and shall not be exceeded.

It shall be the responsibility of each organization to insure that all cartridges, priming tubes, and other explosives are maintained in a secure area or areas designated by the FACILITY MANAGER during the time the organization is on State Parks property. No cartridges or other explosives shall be accessible to the public.

The FACILITY MANAGER and DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR shall insure that no explosives are unsupervised.

D. FIREARMS

It shall be the responsibility of each organization commander to insure that the members of his organization are properly trained in the safe handling, loading, and firing steps for the weapons being used.

It shall be the responsibility of each organization commander to insure that firearms and artillery are inspected for safe condition prior to the demonstration. The FACILITY MANAGER can supply suggested checklists if so desired.

It shall be the responsibility of each unit member to insure that firearms are secured during the time they are on State Parks property.

No firearm shall be pointed toward another person, and no weapon shall be discharged toward or over people except as outlined in the section on TACTICAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATIONS (see Section G, below).

No person other than State Parks staff and members of organizations approved to participate in special events on State Parks property shall be permitted to discharge firearms during such events.

No member of the public shall be permitted to handle a firearm until a member of the organization has inspected the weapon to insure it is not loaded. This inspection shall include visual checks of priming pan or percussion cone, and use of the ramrod to verify an empty bore.

No demonstration of "rapid fire" or speed loading shall be attempted by any member of any organization participating in the special event. This is an unnecessary hazard that will not be tolerated.

Flintlock firearms shall be equipped with a hammerstall (frizzen cover) of leather, and tight, well-fitting, metal flashguards.

E. EDGED WEAPONS

All replica knives, axes, tomahawks, polearms, swords, and bayonets used for passive demonstration shall have dulled edges and blunted points.

Knives, axes, and other cutting tools used for active demonstration, such as chopping or cutting, shall have sturdy sheaths or scabbards in place whenever the tool is not in use.

Throwing of tomahawks, axes, or knives is not permitted.

The public shall not be permitted to handle any edged weapon.

F. ARTILLERY

Only commercially reproduced, muzzle-loading artillery pieces shall be used for demonstrations at State Parks sites. These reproductions shall be constructed of cast iron or bronze, with a seamless steel sleeve in accordance with Brigade of the American Revolution standards for all iron guns.

Ideally, an artillery piece should be fired only once during any demonstration. If it will be fired more than once, black powder in any form should not be introduced into the barrel for at least ten (10) minutes after the previous charge has been fired. This is based upon instrumented testing of barrel temperatures taken during firings. Artillery used in tactical weapons demonstrations shall be governed by the regulations outlined under TACTICAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATIONS (see Section G).

Priming tubes, cartridges and linstocks, or friction primers are the preferred means of ignition for artillery. If a priming horn must be used, it shall contain only enough powder for the immediate demonstration and a possible misfire.

Artillery shall be inspected by the organization prior to each demonstration or ceremony to insure its safe condition for firing.

G. TACTICAL WEAPONS DEMONSTRATIONS

If so designated by the FACILITY MANAGER, the DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR shall be responsible for insuring that all organization commanders are adequately briefed on the procedures, locations, and conduct of the event.

No artillery piece shall be moved in a loaded condition.

If an artillery piece is a 6 Pdr or smaller, it may be fired as often as once every five (5) minutes. This interval is allowable IF the interval is measured by watch or stopwatch.

If the piece is to be fired more than once, the gun shall be double-wormed and double-sponged. Cartridges must be rammed only with enough force to seat them, and the powder charge may not exceed 4 ounces of cannon or Fg grade black powder. This is to insure safety, since most artillery accidents occur during the second or subsequent shots.

Troop firings shall be in a direction parallel to and/or away from spectators.

No ramrods may be drawn or used during these events.

Pistols may be carried when appropriate, but shall not be loaded or fired during the demonstration.

Hand-to-hand combat is prohibited at all times.

Bayonets will not be fixed except upon order or approval of the FACILITY MANAGER or DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR. Bayonets must be unfixed and sheathed prior to units advancing toward each other.

Unit commanders shall verify that all weapons are cleared prior to the unit leaving the field following the demonstration. Any misfires shall be cleared in a safe area designated by the FACILITY MANAGER.

Following each demonstration, or at the end of the event, as determined by the FACILITY MANAGER and DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR, each unit shall be responsible for inspecting the area and removing all debris, cartridges, paper, or foil fragments.

The FACILITY MANAGER and/or DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR may remove any organization or individual participant from the event if safety guidelines are violated or if general conduct warrants.

H. VISITOR SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES

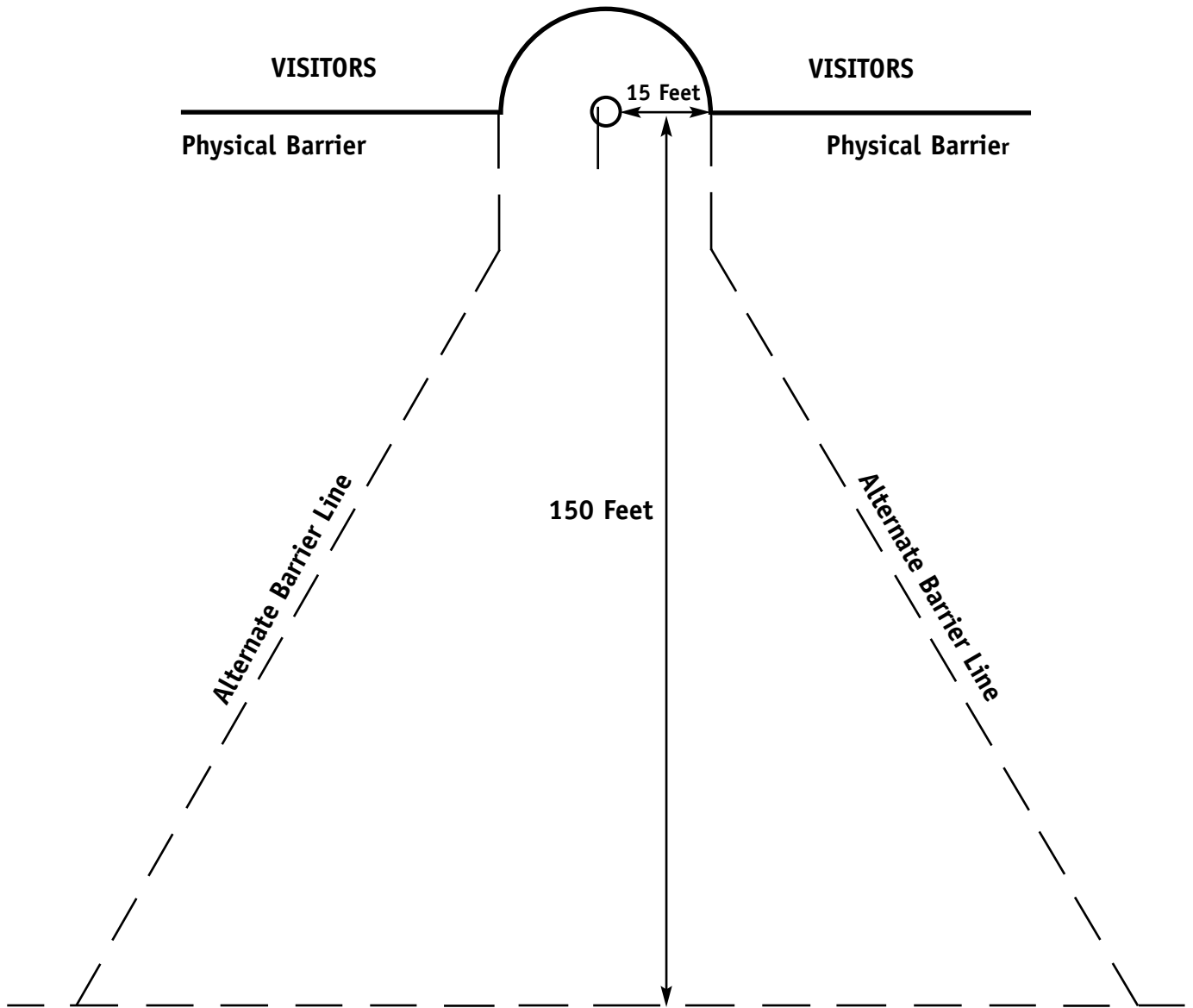
VISITORS MUST BE KEPT AT THE SAFE DISTANCES SHOWN IN THE RANGE CHARTS (attached) WHENEVER WEAPONS ARE FIRED. Minimum distances for visitors behind demonstration weapons shall be five (5) yards for firearms and twelve (12) yards for artillery. Temporary barriers should be used as necessary.

A staff member, or member of a participating organization who is not involved in the program, should be present to monitor the demonstration to insure the range is clear, visitors understand and observe safety limits, and that, in case of misfires or accident, visitors are kept under control until the situation is resolved. If an observer is not available, it is the responsibility of the FACILITY MANAGER **and** the DEMONSTRATION COORDINATOR to insure that all safety measures are observed before any weapon is discharged.

Every effort should be made to have emergency personnel standing by on site during the event. Facility staff should be aware of procedures to follow in case of an emergency and participating organizations should be briefed on emergency procedures before the event.

Note: Sources consulted for the preparation of these guidelines include The National Park Service, The Brigade of the American Revolution, Parks Canada, The Continental Line, and the British Brigade.

RANGE TABLE FOR SMALL ARMS FIRING



RANGE TABLE FOR ARTILLERY FIRING

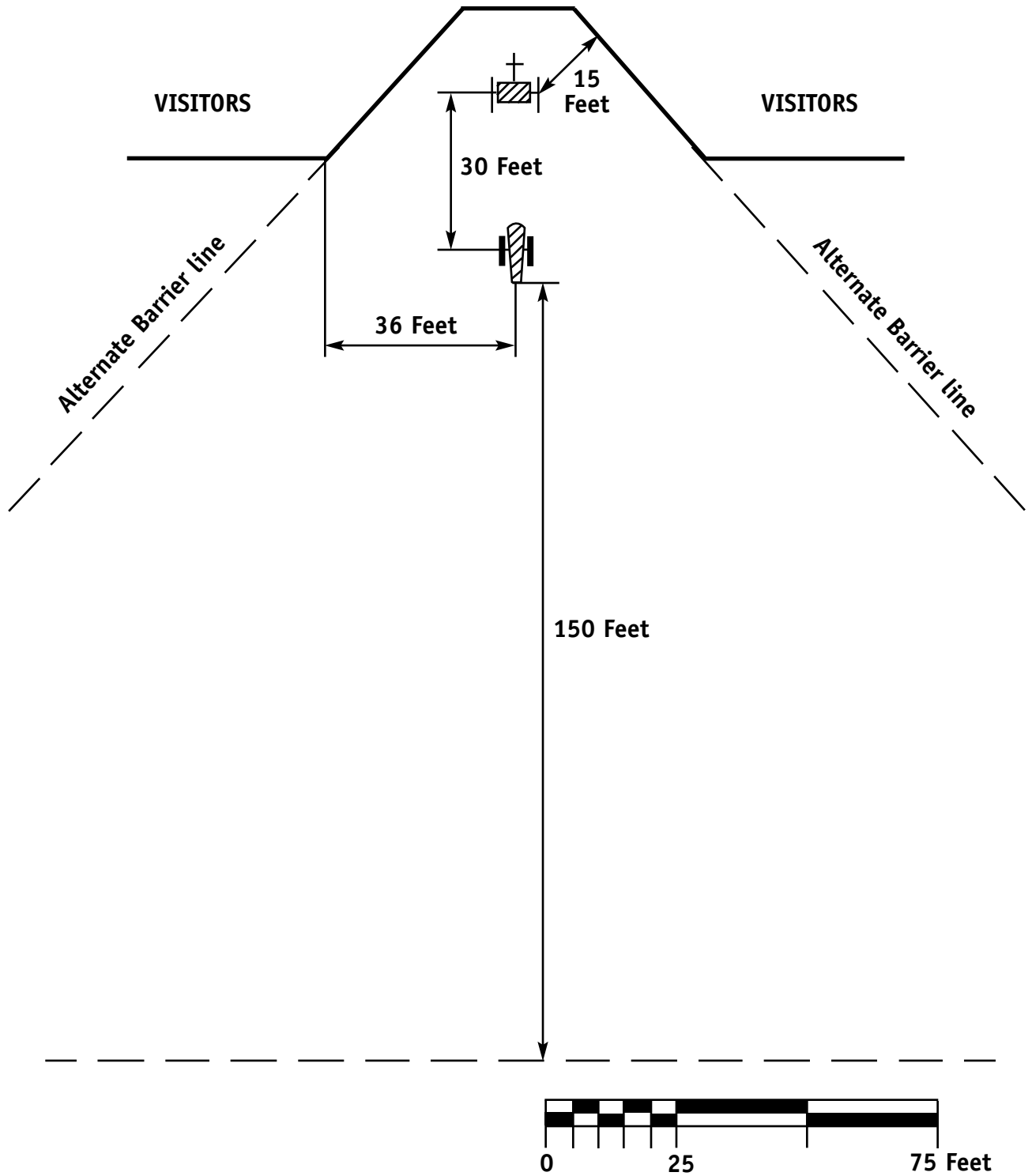


TABLE OF MAXIMUM LOADS

Weapon Type	Caliber	Maximum Blank Load
"Brown Bess" Musket	.75	100 Grains ffg
Charleville Musket	.69	100 Grains ffg
Rifles	varies	80 Grains ffg
Pistols	varies	45 Grains ffg
U.S. Rifle, 1841	.54 or .58	60 Grains ffg
Rifled Muskets	.58	60 Grains ffg
Percussion Revolvers	.36 or .44	28 Grains ffg

Artillery

Grasshopper	3 Pdr	8 ounces fg
Light 6 Pdr	6 Pdr	12 ounces fg
Iron Guns	3, 4, or 6 Pdr	10 ounces fg
Napoleon	12 Pdr	20 ounces fg
6 Pdr or Ordnance Rifle	6 Pdr or 3"	10 ounces fg

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's "Black Powder Procedures for Organizations at State Parks Facilities," and that I can request clarification of anything contained herein from the Facility Manager.

I agree, as a condition of participation, to abide by these procedures.

Signature Date Signed

Facility Name _____

Facility Manager Signature _____ Date Filed _____