

# Fort Negley

## **BLACK POWDER PROCEDURES AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

FOR INTERPRETERS, REENACTORS, AND  
RELATED ORGANIZATIONS USING  
FORT NEGLEY VISITORS CENTER AND PARK



*Approved by the Board of Metro Parks and Recreation on May 13, 2014*

## BACKGROUND

Metro Parks and Fort Negley Park endorse the use of military demonstrations and displays of period correct weapons to provide enjoyable and educational experiences for visitors to the site. However, safety is our top priority. Metro Parks and Fort Negley Park rely on strong and consistent commitments to safety from all individuals and groups participating in an event or program. Your cooperation and attention to the safety procedures and policies contained in this document will limit the risk of injury to reenactors and visitors, reduce liabilities and help you present programs safely. Please direct all questions and concerns to the staff at Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park.

All military demonstrations and/or displays must be approved and authorized by the Museum Coordinator of Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park in advance. Prior to the implementation of any demonstration or display, Fort Negley staff will evaluate the proposal based on the following criteria:

- I. **Relevance**
  - a. Did it happen here?
  - b. Will the proposed demonstration or display relate to the interpretive themes of the park?
  
- II. **Authenticity**
  - a. Is research material available to perform the demonstration correctly?
  - b. Are the interpreters, equipment, and environment authentic?
  
- III. **Safety**
  - a. Is it possible to implement the proposed demonstration safely in the park?
  - b. Are the interpreters and the equipment safe?
  
- IV. **Stewardship**
  - a. Will the proposed demonstration noise level adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood?
  - b. Will the proposed demonstration or display adversely impact the natural or cultural features of the park or the fort structure?
  - c. Will the proposed demonstration degrade the memorial qualities of the site?
  
- V. **Depth**
  - a. Does the proposed demonstration address period safety procedures and the potential for mishaps?
  - b. Does the proposed demonstration articulate that in war weapons are intended to inflict harm and result in casualties?
  - c. Does the proposed demonstration emphasize the relationship between society, the individual, and the weapon?

## POLICY

### I. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- a. All military demonstrations and/or displays must be approved and authorized by the Museum Coordinator of Fort Negley Visitors Center and Park in advance. Any deviation from the approved program is prohibited without prior and express consent from the Museum Coordinator.

- b. All events at Fort Negley Park that involve the use of black powder or edged weapons must conform to the park's policies and procedures outlined in this document.
- c. Battle reenactments and demonstrations of battle tactics that involve exchanges of fire between opposing lines, the taking of casualties, hand-to-hand combat, or any other form of simulated warfare are prohibited at Fort Negley Park.
- d. Military demonstrations and displays that would adversely impact the natural or cultural features of the park or the fort structure are prohibited.
- e. Military demonstrations and displays must relate to the interpretive themes of the park.
- f. Military demonstrations and displays must be historically accurate to the site.

## II. PARTICIPANTS

- a. All individuals participating in demonstrations who personally engage in the use of black powder firearms or edged weapons must be 16 years of age or older. Participants under the age of 18 years must be under the supervision of an adult at all times. Minors must have a Metro Parks Waiver and all other appropriate forms and releases signed in advance by a parent or legal guardian. A high degree of firearm discipline is expected from every participant.
- b. It is the responsibility of each Unit Commander to ensure that the members of the organization are properly trained in the safe handling, loading, and firing of the weapons being used.
- c. The handling of firearms when under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly forbidden. Any person found to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be summarily removed from the park.
- d. All participants must keep this document accessible for reference during the event.
- e. All participants must receive this document, agree to adhere to the policies contained herein and sign a statement to that effect to be kept on file at Fort Negley Visitors Center.
- f. Failure to abide by these policies and procedures may result in removal by Metro Parks Police.

## III. SUPERVISION

Safe and successful events at Fort Negley Park require a great deal of coordination and communication between all participants. If at any time you do not understand the requirements detailed in this document, please consult one of the supervisors listed below.

- **Museum Coordinator:** The Museum Coordinator, a permanent Metro Parks employee, approves and supervises all activities taking place at Fort Negley Park and shall delineate areas for spectators, demonstrations, camps, and weapons clearing.

- **Event Manager:** One organization commander, approved by the Museum Coordinator, will be designated as Event Manager and charged with organizing all living history and military demonstrations including planning activities and establishing safety controls. It is the responsibility of the Event Manager to ensure all safety controls are in place with volunteers sufficient for the event.
- **Safety Officer(s):** The Museum Coordinator and the Event Manager may appoint one or more Safety Officers for each living history and military demonstration to ensure that safety checks and weapons inspections are conducted upon arrival and prior to each firing event. The Safety Officer shall ensure that weapons leave the demonstration field unloaded and in safe condition.

#### IV. WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION PREPARATION AND HANDLING

- Every black powder firearm is a weapon regardless of the manner in which it is used. All weapons will be regarded as loaded and treated as such while on park grounds.
- All weapons must arrive on site unloaded and ready for inspection by a Metro Parks/Fort Negley staff member or designated Safety Officer(s).
- Weapons and potentially explosive materials shall not be left unattended. It is imperative that you prevent access to your weapon and supplies before, during, and after demonstrations to prevent theft, mishandling, or harm. As the owner, you are responsible for proper care, safety, and security of your equipment.
- Loaded weapons are prohibited from entering the Visitors Center including the porch and restrooms.
- All black powder brought into the park must be in the form of prepared cartridges or charges. Bulk powder is prohibited. Musket cartridges shall be of paper, rolled in the appropriate 19<sup>th</sup> century manner and secured in period fashion. Foil, staples, coin wrappers, or plastic tubes are prohibited. Only FF or FFF black powder may be used in muzzle loading firearms for demonstration purposes.
- It shall be the responsibility of each organization or group to ensure that all cartridges are maintained in a secure area or areas designated for such use by the Museum Coordinator.
- No cartridges or other explosives shall be accessible to the public.
- Black powder will be loaded in areas designated by the Museum Coordinator, Event Manager and Safety Officer(s) prior to a firing event.
- The Museum Coordinator, Event Manager, Safety Officer(s) and Unit Commanders shall ensure that explosives are supervised at all times. Unsupervised explosives may result in termination of the event.

- j. Inert cartridges may be used for display. Inert cartridges must be filled with a non-propellant, sand-like substance, in lieu of black powder, and must be clearly stamped, tagged, or labeled as “Inert”.

## **V. WEAPONS INSPECTIONS**

- a. Inspections prior to each military demonstration will be the responsibility of Unit Commanders and Safety Officers. The Museum Coordinator will ensure the same for staff members involved in demonstrations.
- b. The Event Manager and Safety Officer(s) will hold a safety check prior to each historic weapons demonstration. The Safety Officer(s) shall inspect weapons. No dirty, damaged, or unserviceable weapons shall enter the demonstration area or be used in demonstrations.
  - 1. Muskets must be of the two (2) or three (3) band type unless otherwise approved by the Museum Coordinator, Event Manager, and the designated Safety Officer(s).
  - 2. All weapons must be safe and in good working order.
  - 3. All safety devices inherent to the weapon, including half cock and manual safeties, must be used.
  - 4. All parts of the weapon must fit properly and tightly.
  - 5. No weapon may enter the demonstration field with cracks in any part of the stock.
- c. Artillery shall be inspected by the Event Manager, Safety Officer(s), and Unit Commanders prior to each demonstration or ceremony to insure its safe condition for firing.
- d. All malfunctioning weapons shall be immediately reported to the Safety Officer(s) and removed from the demonstration area.
- e. The Safety Officer(s) and the Event Manager will ensure that none of the participants are in possession of live ammunition during military demonstrations. The Safety Officer(s) will check for safe ammunition as detailed in section III of this document.

## **VI. MILITARY AND WEAPONS DEMONSTRATION SAFETY**

- a. Only Fort Negley staff and members of approved organizations shall be permitted to discharge firearms as part of approved demonstrations.
- b. Gunfire is prohibited in any area where black powder is being handled or exposed for the purpose of loading cartridges or within 12 yards of any stored powder or ammunition.
- c. There will be no movement through the spectator area with loaded or drawn weapons.

- d. Swords, bayonets, knives, sabers and daggers must remain sheathed when not employed in demonstrations.
- e. Minimum distances between demonstration weapons and visitors are 5 yards for small arms and 12 yards for artillery.
- f. Random or indiscriminate firing of weapons is prohibited at all times. To ensure visitor and participant safety, do not fire weapons unless during a scheduled demonstration.
- g. Artillery shall not be reloaded more frequently than once every 10 minutes.
- h. No shooting is to take place when horses are within 300 feet of the demonstration area.
- i. There shall be no firing from a prone position without prior authorization of the Museum Coordinator, Event Manager, and Safety Officer(s).
- j. The signal for a real injury in the course of a military demonstration is “**Medic, Medic!**”
- k. No firearm (real or fake) shall be pointed toward or over anyone at any time.
- l. No lead or wax castings may be used.
- m. No demonstrations of “rapid fire” or “speed loading” are permitted.
- n. Handguns may be carried when appropriate and historically accurate.
- o. Hand-to-hand combat is prohibited at all times.
- p. Throwing axes, knives and other edged weapons are prohibited at all times.
- q. Only commercially reproduced, muzzle-loading artillery pieces shall be used for demonstrations at Fort Negley Park. Exceptions may be made with prior approval.
- r. No artillery piece shall be moved in a loaded condition.
- s. Weapons shall be safely and properly cleared prior to leaving the demonstration area. No loaded weapon shall be in the park unless participating in an interpretive event in which it is called for and approved by the Museum Coordinator or designee. Safety Officer(s) shall require caps to be fired to ensure the weapons are safe and powder free.
- t. It is the duty of the Safety Officer(s) and the Event Manager to ascertain that all weapons are secured after military demonstrations.

## **VII. VISITOR SAFETY AND EMERGENCIES**

- a. The Safety Officer(s) shall be charged with visitor safety. However, spectator safety is the responsibility of each participating member.

- b. Visitors will remain at a safe distance whenever weapons are fired. Minimum distances between demonstration weapons and visitors are 5 yards for small arms and 12 yards for artillery. Event staff and volunteers not involved in the program should assist the Safety Officer(s) in monitoring the activity to ensure that the range is clear, that visitors understand and observe safety limits, and that in case of misfires or accident, visitors are kept under control until the situation is resolved. The event staff is responsible for the placement of spectator barriers. The barriers are to be patrolled by the Safety Officer(s) and event staff/volunteers during all military demonstrations.
- c. If, at any time, a visitor enters the designated safety area or the demonstration area during a military demonstration, any participant, staff member, or volunteer observing the action shall call a cease-fire. The cease-fire shall be maintained until the visitor has cleared the area.
- d. Program announcements or printed materials shall include safety messages reminding visitors that boundaries and designated areas have been defined for their safety.
- e. Visitors may only handle unloaded weapons in controlled scenarios. The weapon shall never leave the owner's control. Minors under adult supervision will only handle weapons with consent of a parent or guardian.
- f. Before each firing demonstration, visitors will be advised of the loud noise produced by the firearms and/or artillery.
- g. Fort Negley staff and volunteers shall be aware of procedures to follow in case of an emergency and participating organizations shall be briefed on emergency procedures before each event.

**TABLE OF MAXIMUM LOADS**

<b>WEAPON TYPE</b>	<b>CALIBER</b>	<b>MAXIMUM BLANK LOAD</b>
Springfield Rifles	.58	60 grains
Enfield Rifles	.577	60 grains
Rifles	.69	60 grains
Handguns	Any	25 grains
Napoleon	12 pdr.	20 oz. Fg
M1841 Howitzer	12 pdr.	10 oz. Fg
Mountain Howitzer	12 pdr.	6 oz. Fg
Gun – 1841	6 pdr.	10 oz. Fg
Parrott Rifle	3 in.	10 oz. Fg
Ordinance Rifle	3 in.	10 oz. Fg

NEVER use a charge greater than 60 grains of FFg or FFFg black powder when making musket blanks or 25 grains for handgun blanks.

Sources consulted for the preparation of these guidelines include The National Park Service, Tennessee State Parks Black Powder Safety for the State Park Certified Safety Officer, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Black Powder Procedures for Organizations Using State Parks Facilities, Bannack State Park, Montana Living History Reenactors Firearm Safety Rules, Old City Park: The Historical Village of Dallas, Texas Black Powder Procedures for Interpreters, Reenactors and Organizations Using Museum Facilities, Burning of Valleys Military Association, New York Safety Standards and Guidelines for Black Powder Use.