



The Third Regiment, Inc.

Firearm Safety Regulations

2 April 2025

This version of the Third Regiment Firearm Safety Regulations were developed by the Third Regiment Safety Committee. They were reviewed and approved by the Regiment's Member organizations on the above date. These regulations will be reviewed annually.

1. Safety is every participant's (hereafter "soldiers") responsibility. While unit officers and NCOs are held responsible for the actions of their unit members, it remains that every soldier is expected to behave as a responsible adult.
2. Third Regiment Companies are responsible to annually train their units in these Regulations and maintain a record of which Soldiers have been so trained. (The ability to prove soldiers have received annual training on these regulations, as well as the enforcement of these regulations in practice, is seen to mitigate risk vis-a-vis the Regiment's Liability Insurance.) Records of the annual training will be kept by company and forwarded to event leadership via the Safety Officer.
3. No soldier under the age of 16 years will be allowed to carry or discharge a firearm.
4. Each time the company falls in, each soldier must have a ramrod in his rifle-musket and a bayonet properly sheathed.
5. All rifle-muskets in the ranks shall have a functioning half cock and shall be capable of bearing the full weight of the musket when supported only by the trigger.
6. A weapons inspection shall be held prior to each firing demonstration and/or battle reenactment. Unsafe and/or excessively unclean weapons shall not be allowed in the ranks due to the safety hazard they represent. Inspectors will ensure no tompons are carried onto the field.
7. Soldiers must show familiarity/basic dexterity with period manual of arms. (The training of individual soldiers is a Company responsibility.)
8. Authorized Infantry rifles are only the Springfield (1861 or 1863 models) or Enfield (1853 model) 3-banded percussion rifle-musket. Any original (period) musket must look new and be in proper working order.
9. Long-arms other than a .58 caliber Enfield or Springfield will be considered on a case-by-case basis as required by the scenario portrayed. Model 1842 .69 caliber Springfield smoothbores may be carried only when appropriate for the scenario. No two-band rifles, no modern black-powder rifles, no Confederate rifles, etc. shall be carried at any time.

10. No Hawken, Zouave, Kentucky, Plains or Flintlock firearms are allowed. Sharpshooter units may utilize their specialty weapons as appropriate to the scenario. For weapons not listed here, specific permission must be sought from the Third Regiment Military Commander on an event-by-event basis.
11. Sidearm are to be carried by officers only. Units that document the issue of pistols to enlisted personnel may carry such. Side arms are not to be loaded at any time.
12. No live ammunition is permitted to be carried or present in camp, No exceptions.
13. Rifle cartridges must be of lightweight paper, in period style. No penny wrappers, staples, wonder wads, etc. as these become projectiles if loaded.
14. Authorized Rifle loading charges will not exceed 60 grains FF Black powder per cartridge. If authorized, maximum, 69 caliber cartridge loads may not exceed 80 grains.
15. Blank cartridges shall not be carried loose in cartridge boxes; all cartridge boxes will have the proper cartridge box tins. For safety reasons, soldiers are discouraged from carrying cartridges in their pockets.
16. Firearms will not be discharged at a range inside 25 yards. Inside 40 yards, all firing will be elevated so as not to endanger any combatant or animal. (Use "Rule of Thumb" to establish range. "When in doubt, elevate!")
17. When firing, rear rank soldiers will keep the first and second bands of their muskets aligned with the front rank soldiers' shoulders and most importantly must not step back when firing as this will move their musket muzzles too close to the front rank troops.
18. Firearms should be loaded as per the period Drill Manual in use – e.g., "Load in 9 Times." An easy coda for foot placement while loading and firing is "Load in a V, Fire in a T."
19. During loading of the rifle-musket, the hammer should be left down in the "Fired" position with a musket cap in place while charging with powder. This precludes the possibility of air coming in through the nipple, mixing with a spark left in the barrel and causing a premature discharge as powder is being poured down the barrel.
20. When rifles are loaded, until given the command to "Aim," fingers will be kept outside the trigger guard and off the trigger. (Reminding that per the period manual, rifles are to be fully cocked on the command "Ready.")
21. On the command "Aim," soldiers will place their finger on the trigger awaiting the command to "Fire."
22. If it is necessary to recover from the "Aim" position, soldiers will lower the hammer from the full cock position by placing the crook of the thumb over the hammer spur and gently bringing the hammer to half-cock. Be especially observant of the position of the muzzle.

23. Rifles will be treated as "Loaded" unless proven otherwise. Soldiers will always be mindful of the orientation of their muzzle and will not place their hands over the muzzle at any time.
24. Soldiers will discharge their rifle before taking a "hit."
25. While facing opposing troops, ramrods will not be drawn as they become projectiles if left in the barrel. Only the file closer/safety NCO may draw a ramrod to check a firearm on the field.
26. Fouled muskets will be taken 20 paces to the rear of the line of file closers with the unit sergeant/safety NCO to clear.
27. Bayonets will not be fixed except for drill demonstrations or stacking of arms.
28. At the conclusion of "live" firing in the field prior to return to camp at the end of the day, all rifles will be primed and discharged on command to ensure that no unburned powder remains in firing chambers.
29. Weapons should be cleaned immediately on the return to camp after firing, as both a safety issue and as a soldierly virtue.
30. Other Weapons Safety Related Matters
 - a. No modern firearms of any kind are allowed.
 - b. Hearing protection – especially in a subdued color – is encourage during firing.
 - c. Fireworks of any type are prohibited
 - d. No gunfire in camps unless on orders of authorized officers.
31. Hand-to-Hand and Simulated Close Combat
 - a. Hand-to-hand/simulated close combat will only occur as part of an authorized, pre-coordinated event scenario. There will be no "spontaneous: occurrences.
 - b. During Hand-to-hand/simulated close combat, Muskets should be held at "present arms" position for the defensive and "port arms" for the offensive. Musket butts should not be raised above waist level.
 - c. During Hand-to-hand/simulated close combat, lunging with musket muzzles is prohibited. Additionally, pistols will not be drawn. Swords shall remain sheathed.
32. Taking of Colors will not be done unless agreed upon prior to battle. Units desiring such a portrayal must agree and overall Union and Confederate Commanders must be made aware and agree to such actions.

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