

Oxford LARP Society - Health and Safety policy for LARP events

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1. Oxford LARP Society policy statement

Oxford LARP Society commits to managing health and safety effectively, and to ensuring all legal requirements are met.

The Society prioritises the health, safety, and welfare of all participants, and visitors, at all events. All events will be run as safely as possible, and all organisers, volunteers, and participants are expected to share this commitment.

1.1 We will ensure the health and safety of all persons organising/participating in our events through:

- a) Achieving legal compliance, as a minimum, but striving for best practice whenever possible.
- b) Engaging with organisers, volunteers and participants to ensure they are familiar with the Society's Health and Safety policy.
- c) Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities regarding Health and Safety.
- d) Providing training and clear guidance for organisers and volunteers to ensure events meet the Society's responsibilities.

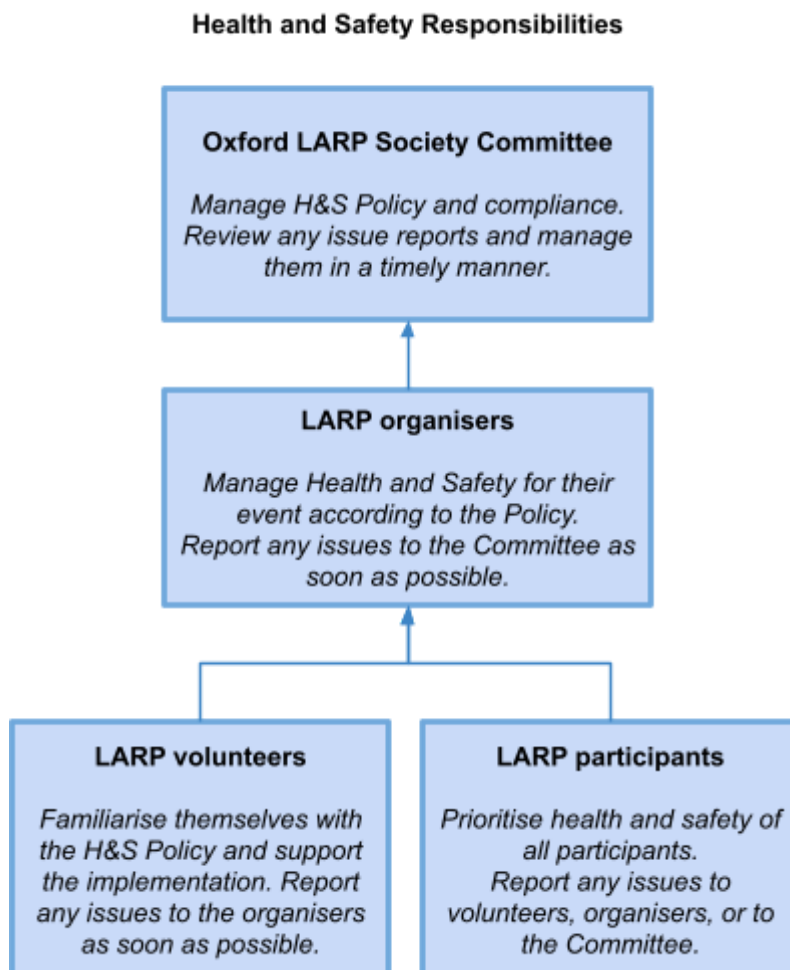
- e) Developing a robust Health and Safety management system to assess and control risks.
- f) Creating an environment that ensures all organisers, volunteers, and participants feel able to report any concerns over health and safety.
- g) Allocating sufficient funds and time to achieve the objectives of this policy.
- h) Taking appropriate, timely, and proportionate corrective and preventative actions to manage intolerable risks.
- i) Regularly reviewing and updating this policy.

2. Scope

This policy defines the minimum standard for OLS events. Events may provide their own specific safety information, which must be published with the event information and followed by all attendees.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The chart below outlines the hierarchy of responsibility for Health and Safety.



3.2 The Oxford LARP Society Committee has the ultimate responsibility for the formulation and implementation of the Society’s Health and Safety Policy. This includes:

- Ensuring the Society’s Health and Safety Policy fulfills legislative requirements.
- Ensuring that the necessary arrangements and resources are in place to manage Health and Safety effectively.
- Maintaining and reviewing the Health and Safety Policy.
- Effectively communicating the responsibilities of each relevant party and ensuring compliance.
- Monitoring and reviewing Health and Safety performance across Society events and making necessary amendments to the relevant policies, procedures and processes.

3.3 The organisers of each Oxford LARP Society event have responsibility for managing Health and Safety at the event they are running. This includes:

- Ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy is effectively implemented.

- Communicating Health and Safety information and expectations to volunteers and participants. Ensuring volunteers have adequate training.
- Ensuring that participants with additional health or safety needs are accommodated as far as reasonably practicable, and any additional risks are managed.
- Providing volunteers with clear contact details and instructions regarding who to contact and in what order, according to risk type.
- Maintaining oversight of the event and monitoring/mitigating any risks.
- Investigating and reporting any incidents or concerns to the Committee in a timely manner.
- Liaising with any external parties with regard to Health and Safety.
- Being an available, visible and approachable point of contact for volunteers and participants with Health and Safety concerns.

3.4 Volunteers/personnel at Oxford LARP Society events are responsible for supporting the organisers in running a safe event. This includes:

- Following the guidance provided to them by the LARP organisers. Asking for clarification/further information where necessary.
- Monitoring Health and Safety at the event and communicating any accidents or risks to the organisers in a timely fashion.
- Reminding participants of any Health and Safety guidance, as necessary.
- Being aware of the important contact details for Health and Safety related incidents.

3.5 Participants at Oxford LARP Society events have a responsibility to prioritise the Health and Safety of all participants, volunteers, and organisers - including themselves. This includes:

- Informing the organisers of any additional needs or requirements that might affect their health/safety before the event.
- Listening to and following all Health and Safety guidance provided by the organisers/volunteers. Asking for further information/clarification as necessary.
- Being mindful of other participants and their needs.
- Being mindful of their own behaviour and not putting themselves at risk.
- Reporting any issues to the volunteers/organisers as soon as possible.
- Ensuring that they are aware of the main points of contact at the event.

4. Health and Safety Management system overview

The Oxford LARP Society must follow the Health and Safety Management system outlined in this policy.

4.1 The Oxford LARP Committee must:

- a) Provide organisers with access to the Health and Safety Policy.

- b) Provide Health and Safety information, instruction, supervision and training to organisers. Organise internal or external training courses according to need, e.g. for specific equipment, weapons safety, first aid, disability support, etc.
- c) Provide refresher courses when new activities or best practices are introduced, or if the Policy is not being sufficiently followed.
- d) Maintain training records for organisers.
- e) Keep up to date with relevant changes in legislation/best practice and revise Policy as necessary.

4.2 Organisers must:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the Society's Health and Safety Policy, and ensure that it underpins all decision-making and planning for the event, including the scale, type, scope, audience type/size, location, duration, time of day, time of year, etc.
- b) Ensure the event will meet all Health and Safety requirements specified by the venue.
- c) Ensure that there is a relevant Health and Safety risk assessment for each event according to the guidelines and section 5 of this policy.
- d) Inform the committee of incidents/accidents and near-misses as required by section 6.
- e) Inform participants of first aid arrangements as required by section 7.
- f) Carry out a Fire Safety assessment as required by section 8.
- g) Provide training and guidance before any work commences. This must include:
 - Site hazards and control measures.
 - Exit, parking, first aid, toilet, emergency equipment locations.
 - Emergency arrangements. E.g. muster points, escape routes, raising the alarm, crowd management, evacuation of vulnerable attendees, summoning emergency services, etc.
 - Responsibilities for health and safety. Contact information for relevant parties.
 - Fire safety arrangements for the event.
 - Accident and incident reporting for the event.
 - A briefing on event/venue-specific safety issues, as required.
 - General event safety - provided via website or documentation to all attendees before the event.

4.3 Participants and volunteers must:

- a) Follow all instructions and guidelines provided.
- b) Be aware of emerging hazards and report them.

- c) Behave sensibly with regard to health and safety.

5. Risk assessments

5.2 The Organiser must:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the risks involved in their event.
- b) Ensure that any attendees who may have specific considerations, e.g. pregnant people, people with disabilities, people under 18, etc., are accommodated as far as practicable.
- c) Ensure that the risks of their event are adequately covered by one of the existing risk assessment forms, providing a new version signed off by the Health and Safety officer if not.

6. Accidents and incidents

6.1 The Committee must:

- a) Ensure organisers are fully aware of the accident and incident procedures.
- b) Identify any lessons-learnt from incidents and update the Health and Safety policy and relevant documents accordingly.
- c) Manage any legal obligations related to accidents and incident reporting.
- d) Accommodate any requests by personnel or participants to discuss an incident, in good time.

6.2 Organisers must:

- a) Monitor risks from the Risk Assessment as the event progresses, and, wherever possible, identify and mitigate any emerging risks.
- b) Investigate any incident or accident that is more serious/frequent. This should include what happened, why, what needs to be done now, and any lessons-learnt to reduce the likelihood of repeat events occurring.
- c) Report all incidents to the Society Committee. This should include any lessons-learnt. This information is invaluable, as it enables the Society to improve Health and Safety measures for future events.
- d) Where personnel or participants may have been affected by an incident or accident, organisers should gather feedback and signpost any additional support, as needed.

6.3 Participants and personnel must:

a) Report accidents/incidents that they have witnessed to the organisers.

7. First Aid

7.1 The Committee must:

- a) Provide training opportunities for personnel to become certified First-Aiders. Certificates last for 3 years, and an annual refresher is recommended.
- b) Ensure that all first-aid trained staff have their training recorded and are contacted when refresher sessions are organised.
- c) Ensure organisers are aware of their First Aid responsibilities.

7.2 Organisers must:

- a) Organisers must ensure that there are sufficient quantities of first aid kits on site (min. 1), as determined by event-size, and ensure that they are fully stocked.
- b) Organisers must ensure that participants and personnel are aware of how they can seek first aid.

7.3 Participants / volunteers must:

- a) Report any concerns they have regarding First Aid provision to the organisers.
- b) Alert personnel or first aid provider, as applicable, to any medical incidents involving any attendee.
- c) Ensure they are aware of where to find First Aid before the event starts.

8. Fire Safety

8.1 The Committee must:

- a) Ensure organisers are aware of their responsibilities regarding fire safety.

8.2 Organisers must:

- a) Ensure that all events:
 - Minimise risk of fire.
 - Have a system in place to alert attendees should a fire occur.
 - Have sufficient safe exits to clear the venue, including any attendees who need a separate emergency evacuation plan.
 - Have a designated fire marshal, who will be aware of all venue-specific and general fire information, and who will check and clear areas of the venue in the event of fire.
- b) Familiarise themselves with the fire safety details of any venue they are using.
- c) Where necessary, prepare an emergency evacuation plan for people with disabilities or specific vulnerabilities.

- d) Ensure all attendees are aware of what to do in the event of a fire, and basic fire precautions:
- Venue layout and location of emergency exits.
 - Fire alarms or means of alerting others.
 - Assembly/Muster points, where necessary.
 - Action to take upon discovering a fire, action to take upon hearing a fire alert.
 - Location of any fire-fighting equipment.
 - Importance of leaving means of escape and emergency exits clear.
 - Instructions/policies regarding use of cooking facilities, candles, open fires, smoking, or camping, specifying rules for personnel and for participants where different.

8.3 Volunteers and participants must:

- a) Familiarise themselves with the fire safety guidance provided by the organisers.
- b) Follow any instructions or prohibitions outlined by the organisers.
- c) Report immediately to the organisers / personnel if they become aware of any risk of fire.

9. Combat specific guidance

9.0 Only weapons and props meeting the below guidelines may be used in any simulated combat (i.e. any combat involving contact between the weapon/prop and other participants). If a weapon is deemed unsafe after inspection by the event organiser or those deputised by them, then it must not be used in simulated combat, whether or not it falls within these guidelines. Props which resemble weapons but which are not to be used in simulated combat should be avoided at any events where simulated combat will occur.

9.1 Simulated combat weapon/prop construction guidelines

- a) Melee weapons
- Striking surfaces such as the edge of a blade, mace head or a haft of a pole arm must be padded with sufficient foam to prevent the core from being felt on a blow. As a guide, a thickness of at least 12mm LD45 foam is generally sufficient for one-handed swords.
 - For large flat striking surfaces such as a hammerhead, a low-density foam layer is recommended to reduce both the weight and impact of a weapon.
 - Surfaces not intended to be a striking surface, such as the flat of a blade or pommel, must also be padded sufficiently so that an accidental blow will not cause injury. Any wrappings on hafts or pommels must be a soft material such as thin leather. As a guide, a thickness of at least 6mm LD45 foam is sufficient on the flat of a one-handed blade.

- Foam padding must be securely affixed to the core along the entire length of a weapon, and, if built in layers, the layers must be securely fixed to each other.
- A hilt or handle must be securely affixed to the core of a weapon and any wrapping on a hilt must also be affixed to ensure the weapon does not turn in use or become uncontrolled.
- A hilt or handle that will never be a striking surface may be of solid construction such as wood e.g. the handle of a one or two handled sword is not a striking surface, but the haft of a polearm may be a striking surface so must be padded as per non-striking surfaces.
- Any protrusions, such as a guard, quillons, spikes, studs or jewellery, must be coreless and made purely of foam or other suitably soft materials. Protrusions on striking surfaces, such as spikes on a mace head or the back of a warhammer, must be collapsible.
- Thrusting weapons must have a collapsible tip of securely attached, low density foam on the outside, and a layer of higher density foam underneath so that the impact of a thrusting blow is moderated and dispersed, and the core cannot protrude.
- A core must be sufficiently rigid such that the weapon is not too “whippy” but with sufficient give to reduce the force of a blow, especially for heavier weapons. A core must be a material that is resistant to shattering but that will spring back to shape after flexing. As a guide, cores made from glass reinforced plastic or carbon fiber are suitable, but wood, metal or bamboo are not suitable.
- Flail-type weapons must have coreless striking surfaces. The link must be made of a soft, flexible material and the overall length of the flexible section must be short enough not to wrap around a limb or neck. As a guide, links made of foam, leather or soft string are sufficient and common designs feature two half links attached to the handle and striking head with one full link connecting them.
- Hooking weapons must have internal reinforcement to ensure a hooking area is not ripped off or the core exposed. A hook must still be padded as per a striking surface.

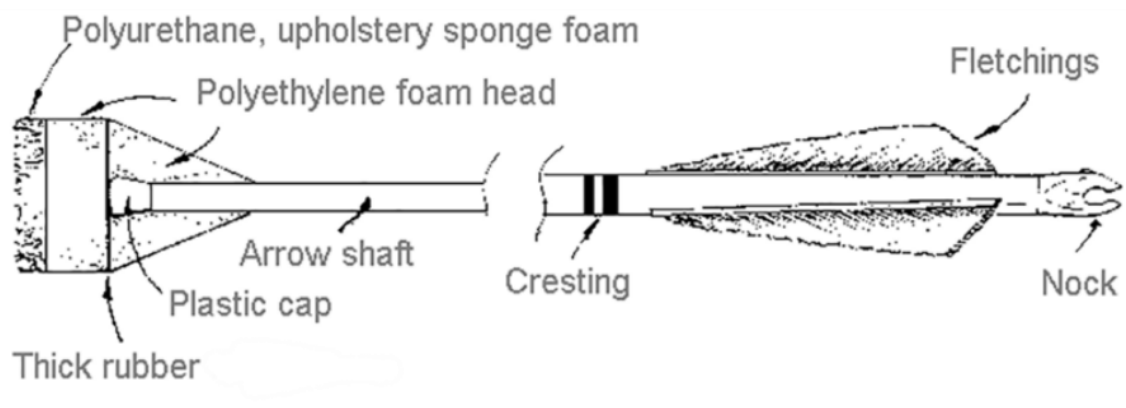
b) Missile weapons

- Thrown weapons should not have a rigid core or be too heavy.
- Bows must have a draw weight of 30lbs or less at 28 inch (71 cm) draw and crossbows must have a draw weight of 30lbs or less at full draw. Both must be of solid construction with no cracks or sharp protrusions, notches or triggers, must securely hold the string, and the string must be in good condition.
- The head of an arrow or bolt must have at least a 2 inch (51 mm) diameter head, the front of the head must be a low density foam backed by a flat faced medium density foam such that the head cannot penetrate an eye socket and compress the eye. The low-density foam must compress to absorb the impact such that the arrow or bolt does not unduly bounce backwards on impact and must be free of debris.

- The shaft of an arrow or bolt must be completely blunt with no metal head and have a solid stop between it and the striking end of the head so that it cannot protrude into the striking area under any circumstances. The shaft must be securely attached to the head and made of a material that is free of cracks under light flexing, and is resistant to shattering. As a guide, shafts made of some woods or fibre-glass are suitable and materials such as carbon fibre, wooden dowel, bamboo or metal are not suitable.
- The flights and nock on an arrow or bolt must be securely affixed.

Arrow construction diagram

(Source: [LRP Alliance Health & Safety Management System](#))



c) Shields and Armour

- Shields with solid cores must have a layer of foam padding on the front to protect against accidental strikes. There must not be any non-padded surface on the front.
- The rim of a shield must be padded in line with the striking surface of a weapon (although it is never to be used as such).
- The handle of a shield must be securely affixed such that the shield can be controlled at all times.
- Any metal bolts securing handles or straps must be cut down and filed smooth to remove any sharp edges.
- Where a centre boss is present, it must also be fully padded and preferably collapsible.
- All armour must have smooth edges (filed or rolled in the case of metal) and chain links must be fully closed so that they will not cause injury in the case of accidental contact with skin or damage to weapons.
- Fibreglass, resin or other types of brittle material must not be cracked or worn to the point they may crack during combat revealing sharp edges.
- Studs or rivets must be secure and tower studs or metal spikes are not permitted.
- You must be able to fall over safely in your armour.

d) LASERs and LEDs

Whilst LASER tag events are permitted under this policy there are some design rules to follow.

- LASER pointers and targeting devices are not permitted at OLS events as they require specialist knowledge to determine their levels of safety.

- For Laser Tag devices all IR LED emitters will be made by a reputable producer and compliant with IEC 62471 and EU DIRECTIVE 2006/25/EC, such as the TSAL6200. Laser tag devices should not exceed irradiance of 4W/sr shown at 20cm from the emitter as per these safety rules.

10. Safety information to provide before an event

Organisers must provide all attendees with the following information:

- For events involving simulated combat:
 - Guidance on simulated combat.
 - Details on prop safety and “weapons checking”.
- Fire safety – methods of raising the alarm.
- First aid provisions and how to access them.
- Procedures for if someone gets lost.
- General safety advice regarding the venue, this could include pointing out adverse conditions, lighting etc.
- Information on additional training/competences checks – Bow and how to obtain the relevant competency to use the items in simulated combat.
- Any other specific safety advice relating to activities at the event, e.g. camping, projectile weapons, etc.

11. Additional considerations

11.1 If organisers have any health and safety concerns, they must communicate this to the Committee. Individual events may have additional safety considerations, which should be discussed with the Committee as required. These might include:

- Safety for working at height
- General equipment/machinery risks
- Lifting/carrying/pushing safety
- Extreme weather safety
- Structural considerations
- Traffic management
- Catering and food safety

12. Appendices

12.1 Risk assessment template

12.2 Incident report form

12.3 Fire safety assessment template

12.4 First Aid assessment template