

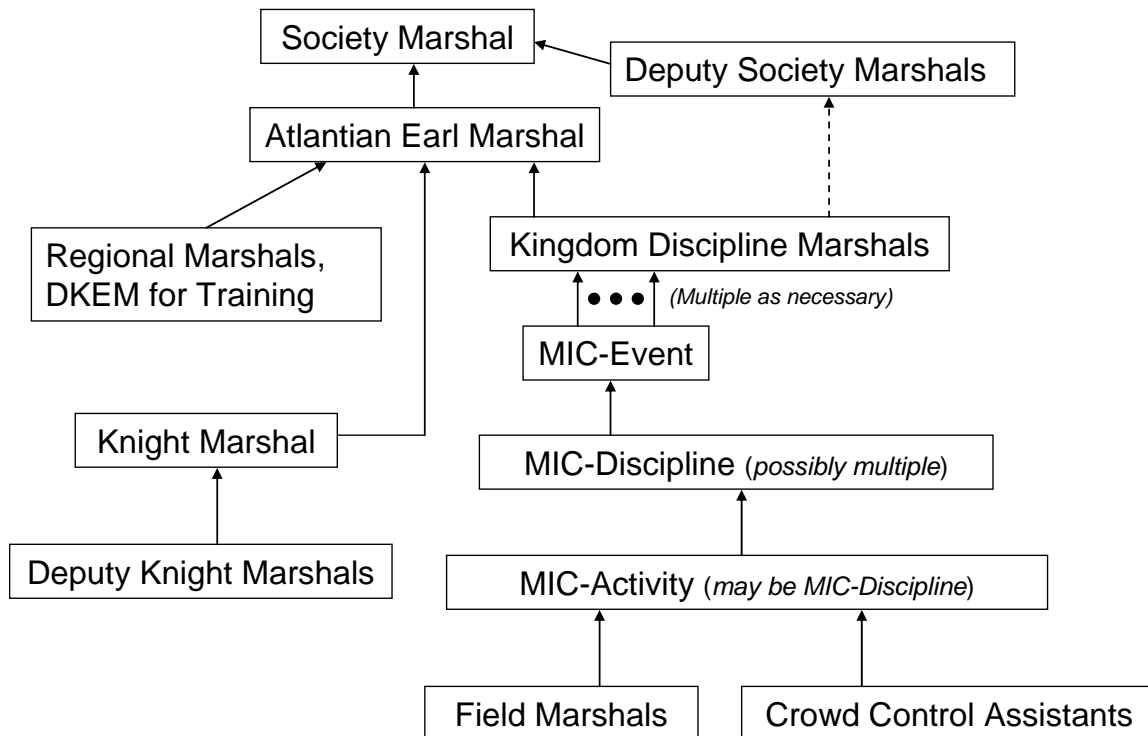
Field Marshaling in the Kingdom of Atlantia, SCA, Inc.

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Objective and Scope

This document is intended as a guiding influence in the instruction of skills and assumptions necessary for the activity of Field Marshaling. The scope of this document is narrow, and it is assumed that the student receiving this instruction has extensive and practical knowledge of specific rules, combat conventions, gear and weapons requirements, and administration requirements. It is hoped that this will add to the longevity of the document.

Structure of the Marshallate in Atlantia



Sign-in

Make sure you sign in with the MoL before taking the field. Make sure your assistants sign-in.

Combat Inspection

After signing in with the MoL, combat inspection is the first action a Marshal takes for daily fighting. While the marshallate administration has attributes that encourage and facilitate safety, combat inspection is the first opportunity that a marshal takes to physically confront individual safety issues.

Armor or other worn protection

The necessity of protective gear cannot be overstated. Our gear is not there to simply protect us from broken bones and nasty bruising, but also to ensure our vital organs or joints will not be affected by impact or puncture.

Instructor Note: [Discuss with students the requirements of the protective gear for your discipline and areas known to present issues of non-compliance]

Weapons

Marshals have a significant opportunity to remove other lapses in safety while inspecting weapons. As weapons requirements are set to work in conjunction with requirements concerning protective gear, marshals cannot ensure safe participation in combat activity should either of these not meet requirements.

Instructor Note: [Discuss with students the requirements of the protective gear for your discipline and areas known to present issues of non-compliance]

Modern Items

As of Dec 1, 2003, marshals need to be evaluating fighters (and other participants who enter the field, except waterbearers) for acceptability of appearance.

Instructor Note: [Discuss with students the guidance for enforcement. Current guidance can be found at <http://marshal.atlantia.sca.org/Rules/BlatantlyModern.html>]

Authorizations

Make sure that the fighter who is testing the new potential combatant is aware of their job. They aren't just there to fight. They are there to test the abilities of the authorizee. This means that they should test to make sure the authorizee can deliver an effective attack as well as be able to defend themselves. They should also put the authorizee into situations (e.g., charging a thrusting tip, get up close to try to intimidate, etc) that enable the marshals to determine if the person will react safely to potentially dangerous situations.

Field Presence

There is no more valuable tool in the disposition of the marshal's duties than field presence. Safety of the field can be easily facilitated by a confident, knowledgeable, noticeable marshal that is perceived by the participants to be in control. To that end, it is important, especially when confronted by whining from a known or influential person, to remain calm and remember your position and accountability.

Confidence in Action

The need for current, complete, and confident knowledge of the rules and conventions cannot be overstated. Individuals skilled at undermining control and influence in these situations will look first to take advantage of a marshal's confidence. A prepared marshal can confront these individuals with poise and grace. Your knowledge of the rules and conventions of combat, and the Earl Marshal's policies, is the most powerful tool you may wield as a marshal.

Appropriate Attire

It is important that a marshal look like a marshal. It is required by policy, that all marshals acting in any capacity on the field, with the exception of certain line aides, wear a marshal's tabard bearing "Sable, two swords crossed palewise". Presence and authority is greatly enhanced by wearing the appropriate identifying apparel, as well as accessibility to the fighters.

Control

Field control is essential in order to reach the goals marshals have set for safety on the field. It is imperative that a marshal retain complete control of the area around it as it concerns safety issues. The marshal has several tools available to see to this end, but the most important is proactive planning for the scenario.

Execution

The tournament scenario is the easiest in which to retain control. Scenarios dealing with more than two fighters, specialized scenario enhancing items such as structures or props, or specific actions not normally present in the SCA combat disciplines are more complex. *Instructor Note: [Emphasize need to protect crowd from combatant backswings, etc.]*

Tourney Marshaling

As previously mentioned, marshaling tournaments in Atlantia is fairly easy to retain control, but you should be prepared for exceptions here also. A number of attributes can present issues of non-compliance, safety issues brought about by execution, and argumentative combatants. It is important to remember to always present a calm demeanor, especially in the face of adversity.

Instructor Note: [Discuss issues surrounding acknowledgement, multiple simultaneous bouts, feuding combatants]

Scenarios

These non-standard scenarios must be accompanied with effective planning, including previous knowledge of all attributes by all marshals involved. MICs who allow scenarios to begin without effective planning and complete and accurate understanding of the expectations of fighters and marshals risk the appearance of chaos. A chaotic field is congruent with safety issues, confrontational distractions, and a significant loss of perceived credibility and control.

Planning

Each scenario played out should have a written plan and be completely socialized with the marshal staff and the combatants. A MIC-Event that plans the scenarios well will have given considerable thought to what the combatants are asked to do, the objective of the scenario and its relation to safety, and perhaps tested the scenario with a smaller number of fighters at a practice. Failure to plan proactively will invite problems concerning consistency of the Marshallate, uninformed combatants, and safety issues concerning props.

Staffing

Special consideration should be given to staffing when planning scenarios. Current requirements state that there should be one marshal for every fifteen fighters on the field. Scenarios may require more than that and consideration should be given to the special needs of the scenario being planned.

Also, make sure your staff is properly warranted for the roles they are performing.

Delegation

It is a good idea for the MIC-Event to delegate responsibilities to other marshals, perhaps even less experienced than the MIC-Event. One reason is to free the MIC-Event up for other duties or more focused observation. The other is to spread the opportunity for experience over a greater scope.

Large Numbers of Fighters

Some scenarios or events will historically attract large numbers of fighters. The need for effective planning and collaboration with the MOL is essential in order to spend the day fighting instead of checking in. Events with large numbers of fighters should be addressed by a marshal staff in a unified manner, working with each other. The window of time for inspection should begin early in the day and last until one or two hours before the fighting is complete, if not all day.

Working with the MOL

The MOL office is happy to work with you in this endeavor. In fact, many of the MOL problems at an event can be handled discreetly and effectively by planning ahead. The example of Kingdom Crusades 2000 is an apparent example of successful planning and execution. Also, make sure to print your legal name legibly on paperwork. It can go a long way toward getting the fighter their card sooner.

Exceptions

Exceptions are rare, but must be noted and discussed with the fighter, and dispositioned in a manner that complies with the Earl Marshal's policies. Repeated exceptions should be documented in an explicit manner and provided to the MIC-Event for inclusion in the report. If wondering whether to report something, err on the side of more information is better than less. If a combatant needs to be talked to for any exception-related reason, there should be some note of it in the event report. What may seem like a small issue at a single event may in fact be a long-term problem that is continuing because no single case is enough to cause action.

Inspections

It is highly advised that you approach the act of inspection with a supercritical slant. The fighter has presented their selves to you specifically for that purpose. Marshals need to have memorized requirements and standards for protective gear, and have those conveniently available for reference with the fighter. It is strongly recommended that a marshal approach inspections from a Boolean (True/False, Pass/Fail) point of view, though marshals are welcome to offer the fighter tips for quick retrofit or repair.

Instructor Note: [Discuss assertion and standing ground on these important issues]

Field Exceptions

Field exceptions will occur in the heat of battle and can be frustrating for the marshals involved. Remember that calm and confident demeanor is the best tool you will use in these instances.

Safety Issues (Combatant)

Combatants will present any number of safety issues to a marshal. When making decisions on whether or not to act, your primary responsibility of safety should be foremost in your mind. Safety issues include required protective gear that has obviously been rendered ineffective, acknowledgement levels that present safety issues, activities that are within the bounds of policy and convention that are carried out in an unsafe manner, dropped weapons, etc.

Instructor Note: [These discussions have a tendency to get out of hand. Remind the class participants that the issues are legion and can result in any number of different resolutions. The marshal should remain calm, cool, level-headed and know the policy for Sanctions.]

Immediate Response

It is important to respond immediately to exceptions. While it may not be appropriate to call a hold and discuss an individual's exception, it is important that it be addressed

quickly, soundly, and discreetly. Exceptions involving more than one person, or the whole army of combatants (it happens), should probably require a hold. Remember that you're the marshal and your best judgment should be used.

Whining

As with most any situation, whining is allowed in these current middle ages as a personal choice. Therefore, whining is a choice made by the fighter to respond to what usually is perceived by the fighter as a personal affront, or a reaction from the unbelief some people experience when they realize the rule does apply to them.

Marshals have a choice, also, when confronted with whining. Marshals may listen to the whining (not recommended), or marshals may confront the whining with the same calm and sure statement made when discovering the exception. Most situations can be handled easily with calm conversation and simple explanations of the specific reasons the protective gear or armor does not meet requirements or standards.

Asserting Authority

When a marshal is called upon to assert authority in an exception, it should be done calmly without raising a voice. If the combatant should interrupt you to continue the futile whining, look them in the eye, smile, and let them whine. Children need that on occasion. When they have finished, restate your position on the exception and refer the problem to the MIC. A firm stance will set the tone for the rest of the day's fighting and establish the Marshallate as an authoritative position, as is designed.

Remember that the MIC-Event is not allowed to fight at the event. This is to ensure there is always an objective observer at the event in case of dispute.

Rank as an Issue

Occasionally, a whining and argumentative person may be one of rank. This instance is rare, as attributes required to reach such a rank are those of patience, understanding, and acceptance of those of lower rank; however, in the rare occurrence of a marshal of lower rank being bullied by a combatant of higher rank, don't treat the individual as anyone special. Rank is not an immediate issue in these arguments, regardless of the whiner's perception. Simply, you are the marshal and they are not. Don't let them intimidate you out of doing your job. If you find that the issue cannot be resolved with the two of you, escalate the matter to the MIC-Event, or use the Earl Marshal escalation process.

The Example

There is nothing more conflicting to a combatant than a marshal that does not exhibit the behavior that the marshal demands from participants. Hypocrisy will destroy every iota of credibility the Marshallate as a whole builds. When you don't provide the example, you hurt those marshals who are providing the example, and you show everyone that you're not really a marshal and "just play one on TV". There is truth to the statement of "lead and others will follow". Your example must be consistent, respectful, and above reproach. Here are some specifics about example:

Acknowledgment of the Marshallate - while participating, make your interactions with the marshal pleasant and refer to anyone wearing a marshal's tabard as Lord/Lady Marshal. Make sure those around you see and hear you (a hidden example is only good to yourself). React immediately to holds and encourage your co-combatants to do the same.

Rules and Standards - don't subvert the policies and conventions at all, and especially when others can see you. Everyone that notices may believe the particular rule or convention you ignore to be meaningless to you and your marshal partners.

In short, act as you would have your most model combatant act. If you cannot exhibit the behavior on the field, how can you expect combatants to exhibit it when you marshal.

Safety Issues (Not Exceptions)

There are safety issues that consistently present themselves to you that have little to do with policies, conventions, or combatants and their gear.

Non-combatants

Occasionally, non-combatants can present safety issues for the combatants as well as themselves. Constantly consider the role of the spectator when planning scenarios, especially those involving combat archery. Just warning the spectators isn't enough. We have a very real and present requirement to be concerned for their safety and act accordingly. If non-combatants continue to present safety issues (i.e., uncontrollable/uncontrolled children), enlist the aid of the autocrat immediately.

Heat Stroke & Dehydration

Be aware of the signs of dehydration and heat-stroke. You may best avoid this by scheduling regular breaks for rest, shade, and water; however, temperatures in our kingdom can present very real dangers to our combatants and, occasionally, fighting must be foregone in the interest of safety.

Pugilist Syndrome

We don't discuss this much, but pugilist syndrome is an issue for us as well. A combatant that has been smacked around enough for the day may lose the control necessary to fight safely, and could present a danger to their self, or other combatants. Watch for the loss of control, blank stares, and discuss it with the fighter. You may discover during your discussion that the fighter's condition is unacceptable for combat and should be discussed with the fighter.

Inebriated Combatants

Policies state that no combatants imbibing alcohol, or other mind-altering substances, should take the field. This policy is more difficult to enforce, but should you notice that a fighter has done so, discuss it with the fighter, remove them from the field, and report it to the MIC-Event. This issue should be handled as discreetly as possible and as a safety issue.

Marshal's Kit

Marshal's kits are great and you are encouraged to throw one together for every event you marshal at. Your kit should include:

- Combat Conventions
- Tabard
- Staff
- Eye Protection
- Optional Equipment for special scenarios

Conclusion

You're the Marshal

Remember that you're the marshal. Never forget that you're the marshal. Each time a fighter on the field questions your final decision, the fighter questions whether or not you or the fighter is the marshal. Remind the fighter with all due speed and clarity that you are the marshal and further refusal will be considered failure to acknowledge the Marshallate and the issue should be escalated to the MIC. The MIC may settle the issue, or escalate it to the Earl Marshal or a regional deputy.

Marshal Mistakes

Marshals make mistakes because almost every marshal in this kingdom can be traced through human origins. When you make a mistake, it is rare if that mistake is the first or last mistake you will make as a marshal; therefore, you should be prepared to make mistakes, admit your fault, make immediate adjustments, etc. This isn't an easy job and not every combatant remembers your position is one of service. Remember that it isn't always easy for the combatant to be marshalled either and you'll do just fine.

You most important tools

Confidence in your knowledge of the rules and conventions of combat
Calm Demeanor
Field Presence
Effective Planning