



Pecos National Historical Park

BLACK POWDER GUIDELINES:

An Overview-Infantry

Volunteers, thank you for your hard work and dedication. Living historians like you are the educators and stewards of the battlefield. You serve an important role: To help the park visitors tie your particular unit and the individual stories of the men who served to the battlefield itself.

This handout is designed to answer some of your most common questions about what to expect from the National Park Service Historic Weapons Guidelines. Everyone's safety is our most important goal. You can help by following these regulations. Our goal is not to "fail" someone who had a dirty weapon or cracked stock, but to work with you to make sure everyone has a safe and rewarding time. Please feel free to ask questions and provide feedback to the ranger staff.

This is a brief overview of the most important regulations regarding the use of black powder weapons at Pecos National Historical Park. It is not a substitute for the complete National Park Service regulations. These regulations should be read and understood in their entirety by all living historians participating in events at Pecos National Historical Park.

The following conditions are mandatory for living historians who will be firing weapons at Pecos National Historical Park. Failure to comply with any of these guidelines will disqualify an individual from firing a weapon at Pecos National Historical Park.

- All living historians must be able to perform the load in nine times drill as per National Park Service guidelines. This means the drill can be performed flawlessly twice in a row.
- All living historians must know the misfire drill as per National Park Service and Pecos National Historical Park guidelines. (attached)
- Living historians must be at least 18 years old to fire weapons and at least 16 years old to carry weapons.
- All ammunition brought into the park will be stored by the park. Ammunition must be in the form of cartridges. No loose powder.
- All weapons must be reproductions only. Original weapons may not be fired.

A weapon will be disqualified if any of the following conditions are present:

- Dirty weapon.
- Cracked stock.
- Bulged or cracked barrel.
- Corroded cone.
- The half- cock position is unsafe. If a trigger set on half- cock cannot support the weight of the weapon, it is unsafe.
- The trigger pull on full- cock is excessively light.

- Cartridge box: Must have tins. Will be disqualified if the seams are badly sewn
- Cap Boxes: Must be able to be fastened closed and have fleece to keep caps in place. **Caps must be of the four pronged type only.** Vent picks must be present in cap boxes.
- Cartridges: Must be made according to National Park Service guidelines (see handout). Blanks only. No projectiles. Powder load is limited to 60 grains of ffg black powder (**Sporting Grade Black Powder**). There should be no wadding of any type in the cartridges such as paper or cotton.
- Living historians must retain control of their weapons (including firearms and edged weapons) at all times
- Weapons are not to be left unattended.
- Visitors are not permitted to handle firearms or edged weapons.
- Knives must remain sheathed at all times. Bayonets may be fixed during drills (drill must be in place, no running, walking, or charging with bayonets fixed), provided there is a safety line separating the visitors from the living history volunteers. But, bayonets may NOT be fixed during the loading drill and/or, actual loading procedure. Arms may be stacked.
- No weapons in the Visitor Center.

Hearing protection is MANDATORY for all living historians who are participating in firing demonstrations (artillery and small arms). The park will supply all group members with foam earplugs. If individuals wish to look more authentic, they should consider purchasing clear silicon earplugs before their event. You will not be able to participate in any firing demos without earplugs!

For living historians who are not firing:

- Weapons must be unloaded.
- No ammunition or loose powder is allowed.
- No percussion caps are allowed.
- Living historian must be at least 16 years old in order to have a weapon in their possession.

General guidelines for groups who will be camping at the large field:

- Please stay in the general area of your camp after hours.
- Please leave your camping area in the same or better condition than you found it. Pick up your trash, no digging of fire pits, extinguish all campfires, etc.
- **ALL accidents and injuries must be reported to the volunteer coordinator immediately!**
- Volunteers are often the eyes and ears of the park. In this time of heightened security, please report any illegal or suspicious activities to the rangers.

If you have a medical or other emergency call 911.

Percussion Small Arms Misfire Drill

Level One:

1. Demonstrator or Interpreter explains to the public what is happening.
2. Hold weapon in firing position for 10 seconds to make sure there is no hang fire.
3. Return to the priming position and half cock the weapon.
4. Re- prime the weapon, picking the touchhole in the cone if necessary.
5. Repeat firing demonstration from “Ready” command.
6. If, after the third attempt, the weapon does not fire, follow Level 2 misfire plan. Remove the weapon to the designated safe area and follow the procedure for a Level 2 misfire.

Level Two:

1. Keep the piece pointed in a safe direction and remove the weapon to a safe area.
2. Half- cock the piece and remove the cap.
3. Place the CO2 discharger with adaptor over the cone evenly for a good seal. Press the discharger lever quickly and release.
4. Clean the weapon.

Procedure For Making .58 Caliber Blank Cartridges

Material Needed:

- Cutting board- Hard wood. (12X12 inches is large enough)
- Wood Ruler
- Knife, small but sharp pointed, or a scissor.
- Blue paper (similar in weight to wrapping paper)
- .54 caliber round ball or similar substitute (marble?)
- Elmer’s glue
- Two F black powder (Sporting Grade)
- Former: Cylindrical, of hard wood of the same diameter as the ball and six inches long, with one end slightly concave.
- Cardboard of wood pattern cut to the shape of a trapezoid with the following dimensions:

Height	- 3.75 inches
Long base	- 4.16 inches
Short base	- 2.5 inches

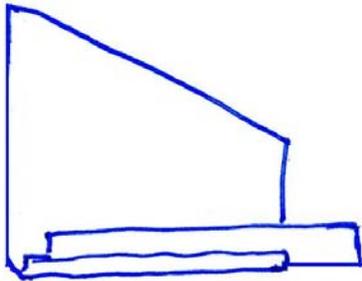
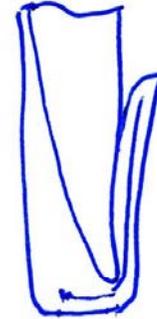
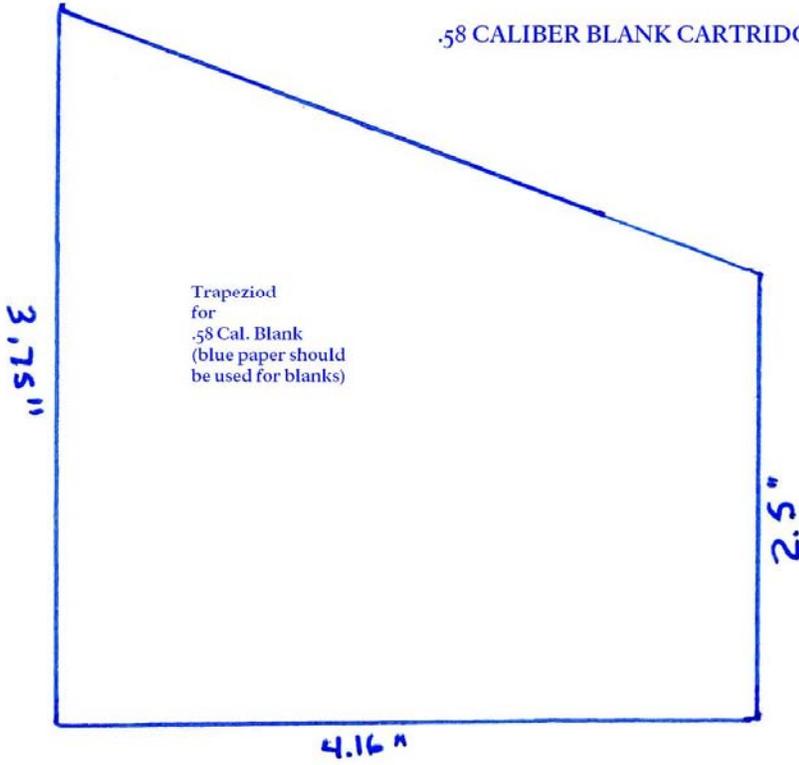
Procedure

1. Lay paper on cutting board and place pattern on top. Cut paper to shape of pattern. Make as many as desired in one setting.
2. Place one trapezoid on cutting board with long side to the left. Place former on bottom with concave end pointed toward left end of cartridge. (See illustration). Make sure enough room is left at the concave end to allow crimping of the paper. Roll cartridge paper tightly around former.
3. After the tube is rolled, fold half of the exposed end in toward the concave dish on the end of the former with the tip of the finger. Apply a drop of glue to the end of the cartridge. (Take care not to get glue on the end of the former). Then fold the remaining end of the tube on the glued end and press it together. Then press the .54 caliber ball or similar substitute in the end of the cartridge and roll it to effect a good glue seal.
4. Remove former and pour proper charge of powder into cartridge (60 grains of ffg). Tap the cartridge against the board to settle the powder. Then, flatten empty part of cylinder and bend it flush with top of the powder at right angles to the cartridge, the oblique side of the trapezoid on top, the cartridge standing vertical on the table. Fold the flattened part in the direction of its length with the folds from the exterior, meeting in the middle; bend this folded end back on itself and strike it on the board to set the folds.

The cartridge is now ready for packing and firing.

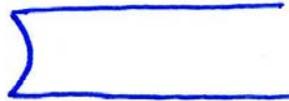
.58 CALIBER BLANK CARTRIDGES

NOT TO SCALE

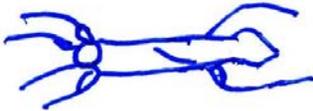


1. ROLL CYLINDER

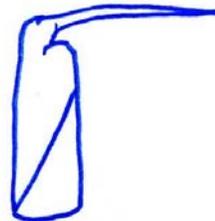
* USE CONCAVE END OF FORMER



2. CRIMP IN END WITH FINGER HALFWAY
PLACE DROP OF GLUE ON INNER CRIMP
AND CLOSE IN REMAINING PAPER



3. PUSH .54 CAL. BALL AGAINST
GLUED END OF CARTRIDGE
TO SEAL



4. FILL WITH POWDER
AND CLOSE USING
PROPER FOLD