

Judges Manual



Reenactment Guild Of America

Judges Training

Manual

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Introduction

Since RGA became an organization there has always been a concern for having a particular standard and creating a consistent training program to generate qualified judges. The goal was/has always been about improving the quality and consistency of the judging used in RGA sanctioned competitions.

In the past competitions were riddled with inconsistencies and bias. Rules changed from one event to the next literally on the whim of the organizers or the judges themselves, and it was so frustrating that many very talented teams chose to separate themselves from these types of events altogether.

It is extremely hard to enter a competitive event of any kind without having a clear-cut understanding of the rules/guidelines and what will be expected of everyone involved. But it can be even more baffling when there is little to no feedback explaining what problems existed in performances that kept a team from being competitive. Judges that are not reenactors in general, or do not understand the historical/entertainment aspects of such performances made the experience even less desirable and confusing.

Our purpose in creating this judges manual is to help potential judges understand the rules and guidelines so they can utilize the score sheets accurately as they were designed to be used, and maintain a pool of experienced reenactors, from within the organization, who meet the qualifications necessary to fulfill the duties of a competition judge.

Our goal is to sustain a reputation synonymous with consistency and sense of fair play for all groups/teams that compete in our sanctioned events across the USA.

RGA's Mission Statement; An organization of Living Historians, Educators, Entertainers and Reenactors dedicated to the preservation of and education regarding the History of America's 19th Century, primarily but not restricted to the American Old West.

RGA Judge Qualifications

Not everyone has the personality to be a judge. Personal integrity is a must, but respect among the reenactment community can be a precious reflection of one's character.

The entire premise for having these types of competitions is to offer an honest, non-prejudicial evaluation of individual performances, to help participants raise the conscience level of individual performers, or the entire team/group, to help make them better teachers and entertainers.

To be an RGA Judge;

#1. You must be an RGA member in good standing.

- * Have read, and adhered with all rules and guidelines established by RGA.
- * You have represented yourself in a positive manner for more than 1 year.
- * You have not allowed your membership to expire, and paid dues on time.

#2. You must have a fundamental expertise as a reenactment historian of the 19th century.

#3. You must have an elementary/reasonable background as an entertainer who has an essential understanding of basic theatrical techniques.

#4. You must display the integrity to be impartial, unbiased, and have the ability to offer constructive criticism consistently when called on to do so, while holding everybody to the exact same set of standards, without exception. Performers who really want to improve their skills and create better performances will respect this kind of honesty even if it seems brutal at times to hear it, and they will appreciate this from judges who honestly want them to excel.

It is not the duty of a judge to find something wrong with each and every performance, but only to point out the obvious discrepancies and the things that stand out. Your job as an RGA judge is not to choose a winner, but to allow the individual performances to speak for themselves, on their own merit, and allow participants to determine their own fate with each performance.

RGA Competitions

The Host of a RGA Competition will be working with Perspectives of RGA both from the State and National Officers. The State Safety Officer from the State Hosting the Competitions will work directly with the Host of the Competition on the set and any Safety concerns involving the events. The Entry Forms for the Competition will have details of schedule of events listing sign in, gun-check and safety meeting times.

The Host of the Competition and Secretary should have all copies of forms and score sheets ready for each Judge before the Competition. The score sheets should have the Performer's or team's name and a list of all the performers attached so the Judges can know who the performers are before they perform. This will help avoid mistakes in point deductions accruing on the wrong person. It also saves time between each show if Judges have all this information before each performance.

Every RGA Competition:

1. Will have three Trained RGA Judges.
2. One of these Judges will be designated as the Head Judge and will be responsible for keeping order at the judges table answering questions from the other judges on questions regarding the score sheets and/or any other TECHNICAL question they have and work with the event Secretary.
3. The State Safety Officer or if unavailable an approved stand-in will be in charge of all safety concerns before and during the Competition.
4. Every Competition will have a Secretary. The Secretary duties are to be in charge of all forms and release signed by performers for the event. To handle all score sheets for each performer and groups. The Secretary will hand the forms to the Judge and once finished pick them up and make sure no one has access to them. The Secretary will check the score for math errors and return the form to the Judge who made the mistake, if any to have the Judge make only those changes and then initial the change.

There is a huge amount of work that goes into organizing a RGA Old West Reenactment Competition. It is Important that all Judges understands everyone duties at a RGA Competition.

Competition Performance Procedures;

Competition Entry Form Packages;

Each package should be sent to team leaders in advance of the competitions, and should include;

- An entry form with all pertinent information about the event, the date, location, times/schedules, entry fee amount (if applicable), and application information about group/individual to be filled out by team leaders/individuals planning on competing, organization affiliation and/or insurance information.
- A participation list/liability form of all members who will attend or potentially be an active participant. Include their name, stage/character name, RGA membership #/insurance provider, and their signature showing they understand the liability requirements/restrictions.
- Any additional information that can/will be helpful to visiting participants. Hotel/motel, restaurant, admission fee discounts. Information about the area. Information about the location itself, history, parking, smoke free environment, etc...

Competition sign in;

The very first item that should happen on the morning or the start of a Competition is the Membership check and sign in.

Each RGA member must show current membership if requested to do so, and if it is an open RGA event and non-members are competing, they must show proof of **Current Reenactment Insurance**. The Organizer should have non-RGA Performers or Teams send in proof of Insurance with their entry forms in advance so insurance can be verified from the provider. Each performer as they show proof of membership should at this time sign a **Release of Liability** for the Event if they haven't provided one from the **Entry Form Packages**.

Note: Every RGA competition should have each Performer and Team fill out a form that gives each performer's name and character they will be portraying. This is important because the Judges can have the performer's line up in the order they appear on the form. This way each Judge can know who the performers are if they need to address them and make sure the right performer is called on for any infractions.

Gun Safety Checks (mandatory);

Once memberships and Insurance are verified the Safety Officer and members who are assisting the Safety Officer will check all guns/firearms to be used or carried by Reenactors. Some location may require a gun check before entering the location, if so gun checks will be accomplished there. The guns/firearms that pass the inspection should be marked in manner, such as an identification sticker, so any RGA Safety Officer can tell they have been checked by the RGA Safety Officer.

Splatter Tests (mandatory);

Once the gun check is completed a representative of each Team (preferably the group S.O.) will meet with the Event Safety Officers and conduct a splatter test. **The Team representative will test fire a round of each caliber of ammo that they will be using in the Competition. Each round must pass the splatter test for the distance the safety rules require. Any blank ammo that does not pass the splatter test cannot be used.** Teams may borrow blank ammo that has passed the splatter test from another team if the other team agrees to do so. This is also a chance for the Safety Officer to see the ammo storage box that each team will be using and find out who will be in charge of the ammo for each team.

Safety Meeting (mandatory);

At some point before each day of the Competition either right before or even the night before a Safety Meeting must be held. The Safety Officer, Head Judge and the other two Judges should be in attendance.

All members of Old West Reenactment Teams that will be using firearms must attend this meeting unless the Safety Office is given notice well ahead of time that someone has a valid/legitimate reason not to attend. **Every team member who intends on carrying or using a gun/firearm will attend.** The Team Roster that each Team has filled out should be checked to see that all Reenactors using firearms is present.

Anyone excused from attending because of an emergency or legitimate reason with the Event S.O. permission must still check in to the Event S.O. before they will be allowed to carry/perform.

Note: Members who do not attend Safety Meeting will be recorded as “no shows”, and if this continues to be a problem, it could affect their ability to carry a gun/firearm in future competitions/events.

The Lineup;

At the beginning of a show, the Judges should:

- Group introductions and all the members of the performing team come to the Judges table so the Judges can have them line up in the order they appear on the Performers Form.
- Get technical information about the show such as declaring any prop guns or knives to be used in the performance of the show verify they are safe to use.. (Any performer with special make-up doesn't have to present themselves if the team doesn't wish the performer to be seen before the show).
- The Judges should ask the title of the show, where the show takes place, and time period of the performance in case they have questions on any Guns or costuming that will be used in the performance.

Official Time Keeper;

Event coordinators will supply a stop watch. One of the Judges will be the official time keeper with a stop watch. The shows are limited to 8-15 minutes on the judging sheets without penalty points.

Time/Action;

When "TIME/ACTION" is called by one of the performers the clock starts as action begins. The Judges need to be attentive to all aspects of the show and any questionable actions, verbiage, possible safety violations, clothing, guns, leather, etc., should be noted in the appropriate category on the RGA score sheet to be addressed with the performers at the completion of the show when "TIME/ACTION" is again called.

Conclusion;

Show is announced over and performers take a bow.

Final Lineup;

- All the performers should again approach the Judges table “in character” to answer any questions about notes the Judges have made on their score sheets. If the performer has a legitimate and believable answer for the question, no points should be deducted by the Judge. However, the Judge has the final decision on whether the answer was good enough to waive the point deduction.
- Each Judge has the responsibility to address EVERY comment on his score sheet with the team/individual for their rebuttal. If they do not, the issues that “ARE NOT” addressed can’t be penalized!
- No performer should leave the judges table with unanswered questions as the issues will not be addressed at a later time for consideration. The Head Judge should ask “are there any more questions” so there can be no doubt all issues/questions were addressed.
- At such point as all issues have been addressed the Judges will release the performing team/individual and complete the tally of their score sheets.
- NO communication should take place between the Judges except for clarifications with the Head Judge on the score sheet or anything of that manner. No discussion of penalties or overall Judging perceptions will be allowed.
- After the sheets are complete they are to be handed to the designated **Event Secretary** for tabulation.
- **No Judge should go back to his score sheet because he hears a comment made by another Judge that he himself may have not seen or missed. You should Judge only on what you see !!**

The official RGA Event Secretary and Head Judge are responsible for the tally of scores as well as setting up the list and names of the winners beginning from the bottom up. The score tallies will be given to the respective Master of Ceremonies for announcement and award presentation. **The score sheets will be in the control AT ALL TIMES of the Event Secretary.** After the awards presentation, the score sheets will be given to the representative of RGA as well as copies to the Team or performer..

OLD WEST PERFORMANCES

As a judge you should be familiar with several aspects of what it takes to produce an Old West reenactment performance.

- A basic knowledge of history.
- Be familiar with the clothing and appropriate accoutrements.
- The people of the time period, roughly 1860-1890.

You should also have some experience with;

- Theatre and/or performing arts
- Basic gun safety.

Although this is a competitive environment, we want to keep things friendly, fun and enjoyable and allow it to be a learned experience for the groups involved as well as the participating audiences. We want this to be a memorable experience for everyone involved including those of you with the responsibility of judging these Old West Performance groups.

Please bear in mind that these competitions will allow presentations (comedy/drama) of actual events or fictitious stories that are based on historical situations that “DID OR COULD HAVE HAPPENED” backed with the use of historical documentation.

Scoring

All situations and scenarios presented in "ANY" and "ALL" performances must be held to the exact same set of judging/scoring standards pertaining to historical accuracy, period correctness, and/or believability for the timeline portrayed, whether it is a drama or a comedy.
NO EXCEPTIONS!

- It is not your job to 'find' fault in everyone's performance or to pick a winner/loser, that is what the score sheet is designed to do.
- It is the responsibility of those in the know (judges) to point out weaknesses, mistakes or misconceptions that may occur during an individual performance.
- Points are deducted for the obvious theatrical mistakes, historical inaccuracies/misconceptions, and incorrect period costuming/accoutrements/props.
- It is your responsibility to ask questions at the line-up after each performance. This will allow the performers to answer for any questionable indiscretions. Let them explain themselves, and you will be able to tell if they know the material they have presented or the clothing/accoutrements/props they are using.

- Document all legitimate write-ups and try and keep your notes simple. We want your attention on the performance as much as possible. If you notice an infraction, make a quick note then dwell on the specifics and document it fully on the score sheet after the performance. (Judges should be able to explain each deduction both verbally and in writing on the score sheet for future reference. Use back of score sheet or extra sheet of paper if need be).

- It is your job to offer constructive criticism. Don't be negative or harsh. If possible please provide 'useful' information that can/will help performers with future presentations. Books of reference, etc... (if someone becomes argumentative or confrontational, move on).

- There is nothing wrong with not ripping a new Team apart in front of everyone on their first time competing. But you do need to explain the need for details in Reenactment Competition. Teams that have been around for a good while should know but you still see some who just don't get the fine details right. Like Saloon Barmen who have on a Cowboy hats or pants in their boots. Things of that kind are the details that every reenactor must learn.

- If you are going to hold one team to a high standard or any standard for that matter, then you have to hold all participants to the exact same standard. It's not fair to any team, especially teams that work to get every detail of costuming right (or any of the judged categories) and then see another team get a pass for the same or comparable infraction. Anyone listening to the discussion at the lineup can spot inconsistencies from one group to another. Don't think a minute as a judge you are not being scrutinized as well.

Shows;

There are 3 different performances acceptable in the Old West Performance competition.

1. Actual historic event. Dates, times, names and places must be accurate and each performer should be knowledgeable of the character they will portray as well as the story they are performing. Anything brought up in the performance is fair game when judging is involved.
2. Dramatic depictions of the old west based on historical situations and/or events that did or could have happened. Fictional stories about the hardships, dangers and conflicts that made the western frontier a violent and sometimes merciless environment. Possible scenarios might include topics like claim jumping, land grabbing, water rights, barbed wire, political turmoil, gambling, robbing, murder, good whiskey, bad women, fast horses, etc. Performers should be able to provide general information about the topic of the performance, their characters, and be familiar with the story line depicted.
3. Comedic depictions of the old west based on historical situations and/or events from a lighter point of view that did or could have happened. Remember, Vaudeville was born in the old west as was the half dime novels, but all situations should be presented in such a manner that extreme situations do not deny probability or reality itself. The world has always loved the clown but, we want to maintain historical accuracy/significance even though the show may be classified as a comedy.

Performances should steer away from the use of modern anachronisms like cell phones, cigarette lighters, or other modern props **that did not exist in the time period being portrayed**, unless safety is a key factor.

Clinton/Bush/Obama jokes or the mention of modern situations plucked from today's headlines with the use of any modern dialogue are also not acceptable!! However changing the specifics to match the times, Bush could become President Grant, and a car/auto, could be a buggy, to maintain the historical integrity of the performance.

In any case the possibilities for show topics is unlimited, and groups should not be discouraged from tackling storylines based on the traditional norm, but the abnormal as well. Ghost stories, Voodoo, scientific advancements/inventions, human psyche, all have connections to the old west as well, just make sure the situations are presented in that context.

Scenarios that defy the laws of physics or are not probable/likely to happen in the era we are dealing with, or any era for that matter, are not encouraged, and will be judged accordingly.

If you are a person who doesn't prefer comedies or dramas for that matter, please remember that you are judging the particular performance on the merit of the performance. Its historical significance and entertainment value as a package, AS A WHOLE. One without the other is not a complete performance. Please document all discrepancies for entertainment value or historical accuracy in the appropriate sub category.

Note; Realistically groups cannot be expected to bring out museum quality period correct items to be abused and potentially damaged during a performance, so many props are going to have to be homemade or modified items. (even the sets we are asked to perform in front of)

Every effort should be made to assure the prop is a reasonable facsimile of the item it is intended to replicate. This does not mean that modern items should be acceptable representations of earlier models that did exist either. A telephone should look like a period correct telephone, a broom like a period correct broom, etc...

Judges can however be critical of items that are too distracting or are obviously not representative of the item being simulated. A gold coin even if it is a metal slug should at least be gold in color, badges should be made out of nickel or brass or at least look like they are, if a pocket watch looks like a pocket watch there should be no real concern about the inner mechanics, and wooden buckets or boxes should be made out of wood (as long as it appears to be a close facsimile).

Any and all props should look believable at a minimum distance of 10 feet.

Judging Categories; Historically Accurate, Clothing & Performance

This section of the score sheet is for hard point deduction only; there is no sliding scale in this section of the score sheet. Every one point deduction in the appropriate sub category, requires an explanation for each deduction/discrepancy.

One point is deducted for each legitimate discrepancy. If a point is deducted but has no explanation, the point will be added back into the group's final score. So, if there is an infraction, please make a note to the side or on the back of the score sheet/extra sheet with a quick explanation of the deduction and which sub-category that will be effected.

Always judge the same way and maintain that consistency for each and every individual/group. Some performers may not like it, but they will know you were fair and cannot claim bias due to obvious inconsistency.

Historically Accurate

All performances whether comedy or drama, fact or fiction, **MUST** be based on actual events or fictitious scenarios/situations that **"DID OR COULD HAVE HAPPENED"** backed with the use of historical documentation.

Sub Categories;

- A. **Events/Timeline-** Are the facts used in the performance correct? All actual dates, places, names, etc... must be accurate. Fictitious situations must be compatible to the period.
- B. **Characters-** Are characters true to the story line and believable for the period?
- C. **Dialogue-** Modern dialogue, slang and or references are no-nos. You can still tell a good political joke just use President Grant instead of President Bush! Autos are buggies, buses are stagecoaches and trains by coincidence are still trains!
- D. **Props-** Buckets, brooms, chairs, bottles, tools, saddles, locks, keys or anything else brought on the set is eligible for scrutiny, but... realistically groups cannot be expected to bring out museum quality period correct items to be abused and potentially damaged during a performance, so many props are going to have to be homemade or modified items. Any and all props should look believable at a minimum distance of 10 feet.

Clothing and Gear

All trappings & accoutrements must be period correct constructed to duplicate actual items in existence or must be a suitable RGA approved reproduction. (Example: vests without full collars are approved; elastic suspenders are approved but must be worn under a vest. Vaqueros w/generic grips are suitable reproductions; Ruger Super Blackhawk" are not, etc...)

This is an area where performers are expected to know their outfits and gear. This is an area where Judges should have a good knowledge of period dress. Understand the difference in how a cowboy would dress and how a town person would dress. Know how a small town Soiled Dove would dress and one in a large city Bordello would.

- A. Garments- Shirts, britches, vests, dresses, blouses, coats, jackets, etc... No modern tags should be showing! (No polyesters, or synthetics, etc...)

- B. Head/footwear- Boots, brogans, loggers shoes, moccasins, sandals, ladies shoes, etc

- C. Accessories- Spurs, chaps, watches, badges, parasols, jewelry, makeup, fans, purses, glasses, etc...

- D. Weapons & Rigs- Example; Vaqueros are suitable reproductions; Ruger Super Blackhawk" are not! Also the Bird Head grips do have obvious restrictions. The Cimarron Arms Lightning or Thunder do resemble the original Colt Lightning and even though they're not double action will be deemed acceptable. The various Uberti and Ruger Bird" head grip styles will not. Research the difference in styles.

Performance

Judges this is such an important area of Reenacting. But it seems to be the most over looked by many Judges. Judges tend to make very few comments about the Storyline and these short moments of interactions between judges and teams changes the competing teams if they honestly want to improve their performances.

Having talked with Judges after a performance or the next day about performances and I hear more from judges then, than when they gave the teams feedback while judging the teams. Why is this? The only way a team will know that you may have thought the middle of the show was flat and went nowhere is for you as a judge is to give them your feedback at the lineup.

So Judges you don't have to tell them how to rewrite their show. But do tell them honestly what you thought was good about their performance as well as what you saw was wrong.

Speaking from the viewpoint of a performer I respect the judge who will be honest and give me feedback on my performance far more than the "Good Show Boys" type judges. It shows me the judge really watched the performance when they can converse about the characters and plot of the performance. Whether it's a three man drama that we all know can be very hard to perform, or a cast of fourteen that gave an outstanding performance and all hit their blocking and told a great story.

A. Story line-

- a. Show must have a beginning, middle and ending!

- b. Introduce characters to the audience and develop characters as the story goes on.

- c. Plot must build to an adequate climax.

- d. You must have a story that comes to a proper conclusion; leave no questions unanswered!

- e. They all live happily ever after isn't" mandatory but it sure is nice for the good guy to save the day!

B. **Blocking/Timing**- Blocking is any stage movement! Timing is basically the way the show flows!

- a. Did they make use of the stage properly? Bunched up, distances, etc...
- b. Were actors running into each other?
- c. Was the bulk of the performance directed towards the audience for their viewing pleasure?
- d. Were key players turning their backs to the audience while presenting dialogue for no apparent reason?
- e. Was there any dead time; absolutely no one on set for uncomfortably long times for no reason. (keep in mind the larger the stage the more likely this will happen, and is not likely the fault of the team)
- f. Confusion among performers or any other problems that upset the flow of the show?
- g. Misfires could create a blocking/timing problem! Although this was a realistic problem with 19th century weapons, how did the performer (s) react? Did they seem lost or overreact to the misfire?
- h. When problems presented themselves did the performer cover them or make it seem like it was part of the story? Or did they make it worse by overreacting or just not doing anything at all, freeze up? If it obviously changed the show for the worse, it should be recorded here as a mistake, otherwise if the incident was recovered well why would you deduct for it?

- C. **Acting**- All verbal and non-verbal expression! Were characters believable? Did they fumble or flub lines? Were they saying the words or did they seem more like they were reading dialogue from the script? Could you feel their pain, sorrow, anger, happiness, etc...? Did it seem natural?

It's important for a Judge to be honest with a team even though they may also be friends. If a character is just not believable or right for the part it affects a show.

Not everyone is suited to play the part of the bad guy. Not everyone can do comedy. It's hard as a Judge to point out the weaknesses in a performance, but that is the job you have taken as a Judge.

Speaking from a view as a reenactor and someone who has also judged, performers want to hear what a Judge really thinks about their performance.

- D. **Vocal Projection**- Each performer with dialogue **MUST** be heard! If it is important for the script it is important for the story! Did actors talk to each other or to the audience? Could you as a judge hear them and most important could the audience?

In regards to questionable language, the acceptable words that can be used are "Hell, Damn and Jackass" in moderation. "SOB" can only be used on a limited basis when it adds to the development of the character or situation. Always be mindful of your audience, the location you are performing for, and use common sense.

Examples: Of questionable language, or actions.

Under **Dialogue**, the deputy said "Das a fact Jack",-1 point deduction.

Under **Events/timeline**- The deputy "high fives the gunfighter", -1 point deduction.

Under **Blocking/Timing**- Some of the performers got in the way of the action which caused confusion on the set, -1 point deduction.

This gives the group the information they need to correct any problems and allows them a better understanding as to what is expected when competing in the future.

Showmanship

This category has 3 sub-categories (overall impression, entertainment value and professionalism) and they are for the most part based on your expert overall opinion. This is the only category that is on a sliding scale of 0-10. Scores should reflect both your opinion and how the audience reacts towards the performance itself. It is unnecessary to explain or itemize these categories. 0-3 poor, 4-6 good, 7-8 very good, 9-10 excellent.

Keep in mind that if you give the first group a 10 and another group comes along that deserves a higher score you have limited your scoring ability. If you start off with a 7 or 8, you can always go higher or lower to provide the most adequate score possible to insure the best performance for the day. A 75 for a total score is a 'good' score, a 95-100 are exceptionally flawless.

1. Overall impression

- a. Judges, did the team's performance achieve what they set out to do with the performance?
- b. Was it an interesting performance?
- c. Did the show draw you in and hold your attention and if it did to what level?
- d. How good were the characters the show created? Where they believable?

2. Entertainment value

- a. How did the audience react to the performance?
- b. If they did a Comedy was it funny?
- c. If a Drama did have excitement or did it draw on emotion?
- d. How well did they entertain the audience and you as a Judge overall?

3. Preparedness

- a. How well rehearsed was the performers?
- b. Did the performance flow well as it told the story?
- c. If the team tried special effects or stunt work did it work well with or add to the performance?

Typical Write Up: (Example #1)

Sheriff is wearing spurs for no apparent reason.

1. Make quick note, Spurs on sheriff.

2. At the Final Lineup, ask the performer playing that character to tell you about his spurs and why he would be wearing them. (It works the same with Levi's or anything else too. Just ask obvious questions and let them respond to prove the item is available/period correct first, if it could possibly be used by that character second, or if they are simply clueless.)

3. An answer of, "I like them... they are pretty", would not justify the use, the write up would be legitimate at this point so, -1 point deduction in the clothing but, "I just got back from taking a prisoner to Jackson county; I'm breaking a horse for the blacksmith; I used to be a cowboy in my earlier years", would be adequate explanations for an item that would under most circumstances be out of place. If the character, (answering as the character), explains the usage in a reasonable manner there would/should be no reason for a point deduction.

4. Deduct 1 point for each infraction. In the case of the spurs, under wardrobe on the score sheet you would deduct a point from the sub-category of accessories/gear with an explanation. If the point is deducted, then under clothing, the sub-category of accessories/gear would reflect a total of "4" unless there are other discrepancies.

Note; It would also be nice if you as a judge could provide some suggested reading or reference material for groups to study pertaining to these legitimate discrepancies whenever possible.

The score sheet deduction would look like this;

CLOTHING/GEAR

Garments 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Head/Footwear 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Accessories/gear **O** 1 1 1 1 _____ Sheriff wearing spurs

Weapons 1 1 1 1 1 _____

(Final score would be 19 at this point for this category)

Judges Additional Notes: Not common for a Towns person even a sheriff to be wearing spurs while in town.

Typical Write up; (Example #2)

The Team does a performance set in 1869 about the Texas Rangers tracking a wanted Outlaw to the “State” of New Mexico. One of the Performers is carrying a Colt Army Pistol.

When the Team came before the Judges after the performance the Judges would point out;

1. There were no Texas Rangers in 1869 because Reconstruction did not allow it.
2. New Mexico was not a State in 1869.
3. The use of the 1873 Colt Army was wrong for a show set 1869.

...and allow the performers to justify the situation. When no justification/legitimacy is offered;

This would require a 1 Point deduction for the fact that the Texas Rangers were not around in 1869 and a 1 point deduction for the fact that New Mexico was not a State at that time, both under Historical Accuracy.

HISTORICALLY ACCURATE –

Events/Time lines 1 1 1 No Texas Rangers or New Mexico in 1869

Characters 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Dialogue 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Props 1 1 1 1 1 _____

(Final score would be 18 at this point for this category)

Judges Additional Notes;

There were no Texas Rangers in 1869 because Reconstruction did not allow it. A good book to get better information on the Texas Rangers would be ‘We Rode for the Lone Star’.

New Mexico was not a State in 1869, but became a state on Jan. 6, 1912.

Example #2 continued;

Under Clothing and Gear in the sub-category of weapons, a 1 point deduction would be made for the Colt Army.

Important Note; It is not necessary or ethical to pile on deductions for the exact same infraction. IOW you would comment about the pistol in the weapons category only, and it would not be necessary to add extra points for the historical accuracy category under events and timeline, and again under props. It would be however appropriate to deduct a point for each character using the wrong gun, so if three people were using an 1873 Colt (or appropriate reproduction) each character would get a point.

CLOTHING/GEAR

Garments 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Head/Footwear 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Accessories/gear 1 1 1 1 1 _____

Weapons ○ 1 1 1 1 _____ Colt Army not made in 1869

(Final score would be 19 at this point for this category)

Judges Additional Notes: Obviously an 1873 Colt could not exist in 1869, for more information on the Colt Peacemaker line check out, the Colt Peacemaker Encyclopedia, by Keith Cochran.

Remember this is a learning experience. It is not expected that judges should know everything, so if there is ever any doubt on a judges part, the judge should 1st give the performer the opportunity to explain an inaccuracy, or item of interest in question, and if their explanation seems plausible, always give the performer the benefit of doubt if you are not sure yourself.

Once a point is given, and an event is over the scores are final, and it isn't going to play well if a team loses by a point or two based on wrong assumptions made by a judge.

It is a good idea for teams/judges to carry reference books, dictionaries, etc... for checking and verifying facts. Again, it is also encouraged that judges offer suggestions on where groups can go to learn pertinent information.

Make-up and Blood; Since this is a theatrical environment, the use of theatrical make-up will inevitably be considered for some performances. Blood capsules for something like a punch to the mouth and small blood packs/special effects make-up that helps create the illusion of a wound should be acceptable when used sparingly within the limitations of the story being told. Exploding blood bags, large quantities of blood and effects that are expressly designed to graphically display gore for the sake of the shock factor should be discouraged. We do not want the general audience who attend our events to become witness to a blood bath performance. All members should take this into consideration while performing competitions and street performances viewed by the general public.

Music and Sound Effects: It is permissible to use music but as our mission statement and by-laws require the music be authentic, pertain to the correct time period and used appropriately as well as judged accordingly in a competitive environment. Any and all appropriate music and/or sound effects for a performance can be either live or recorded but keep in mind volume levels so vocals are not drowned out.

Time: Time limits will be 8-15 minutes and are enforced for scheduling purposes. -1 point will be deducted for each and every minute (0 seconds to 1 minute) over/under 8-15. If a show is less than 3 minutes or more than 20 minutes, a zero will result in this section. At 20 minutes, "time "will be called and the show stopped. Shows must be in the time limits for the benefit of the festivities.

Ties: In case of a tie, we will first go to the score sheet. First we will check who has the highest score in clothing/gear. If there is still a tie we look at the highest score under the historically accurate category. If there is still a tie we will go to the highest score in the performance category. If there is still a tie, a sudden death performance can be called for.

Safety:

Rule #1; As a performer (yes judges too), "YOU" are ultimately responsible for the safety of the viewing audience, the safety of your fellow cast members and your own, PERIOD! The event managers and their crew are responsible for creating and maintaining safe conditions in the environment in which you will be performing but it is your right and your responsibility to insure the safest of conditions and to double check the "SET UP" and guarantee the safety of "ALL" involved!

- These events must have established boundaries for safety/insurance purposes. Ropes/caution tape, or some other form of barrier between the audience and performances is also a must. Also, the safety distances for blanks should be observed in any/all locations, whether it is a competition, event, street performance, or private show.
- In the event of an unsafe situation, an audience member walks into the show area, a performer is injured, etc.....shows should be stopped with the use of a designated code word such as "SAFETY". An S.O., a judge or any performer that recognizes a safety concern may yell out so these issues can be corrected. Performers freeze and when the threat is removed/corrected, the S.O. can yell "ACTION" and the show may continue.
- Any violation of safety will result in a -2 point deduction per judge. 3 safety infractions could result in a disqualification.
- The safety officer/judges have the responsibility of determining violations and have final say on questionable situations.

- The Safety Officer may and should use sideline Safety Officers to help observe the performance from different angles. This gives more views of any possible safety infractions.
- These sideline Judges will bring any concerns they may have seen during a performance to the Head Safety Officer. The Head Safety Officer will then bring them to the Judges and they can confer to determine if there was a safety infraction that requires point's deduction.
- Each Judge may have a different opinion about whether a Safety Infraction has happened and may choose not to give a safety Gig if they feel the infraction did not occur in their view.
- If the infraction is not clear to the Safety Officer and the Judges a warning for a close call may be given without point's being deducted so they can be aware of a potential problem in the future.

Best Categories

The final part of the scoring includes "Individual Categories" such as best actor/actress, best stunt, best youth, best comedy/drama and best dressed male/female. A separate score sheet for individual best categories includes all groups competing and slots for your nomination. At the end of each performance you will score the performers accordingly from 1-100 in these categories. The overall point's winners will be announced during the awards ceremony.

Best:

ACTRESS, ACTOR, STUNT (can go to one individual, two or more involved in a fight scene, or to the entire ensemble crew as a team award), YOUTH, COMEDY and DRAMA along with BEST DRESSED MALE and FEMALE should be awarded with a certificate or trophy/plaque/ribbon/medal.

Additional Performance Rules & Criteria:

- Before their performance, each Team will appear before the judges to address any safety concerns, (such as special weapons or props), and to answer any pertinent questions on date or location of show. To protect the integrity of the performance, any information that should be kept discreet to the audience as possible and characters wearing special make-up or costume need not appear.
- Each Team must have three 8-15 minute performances, (one in the case of a sudden death tie breaker), that depict an actual event in history or a drama/comedy that could have happened between 1860-1890.
- Each Team must have three active members of their individual group who is in good standing with RGA attend to constitute a team.
- Teams can borrow performers from other groups for supporting roles but borrowed performers cannot outnumber the individual group members performing. A team that borrows performers must use the same performers during the entire event for supporting roles if needed. [Borrowed players will not be eligible for individual award categories except when performing in their own group!]
- Each Team must be familiar with all RGA safety rules and guidelines and abide by them.
- Each Team must have an assigned armory or team SO to provide a splatter test the first morning of the competition and is in charge of the teams blanks. Blanks should be carried in one case, preferably metal.



Historical Portrayal



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Historical Portrayal Reenactment

Introduction

There has been and probably always will be a lot of debate on what a Historical Portrayal is. Historical Portrayal can be performed in so many different ways, and they can be one of the most challenging forms of reenactment.

The styles are different and in a lot of performances they are based on a single character in a one person show, but they can also have two or more performers, or even be presented as a group performance.

The storyline can be of a real person taken from the history books who actually lived in the 19th century. It can be a fictional compiled character created from the attitudes, personas, and documented evidence of people who did live the period. Or it can be a composite character made up of different or several different people who “could have” lived in the 19th century, such as a miner, nurse, soldier, settler, doctor, etc.... The performance itself could also be an event that happened in history, such as the trial of the Earp Brothers in Tombstone, or the killing of Wild Bill Hickok.

Historical Portrayal is at the very core of what reenactment is all about. The similarities of an Old West Performance and a Historical Portrayal are they are both compelling stories of significant events interpreted from history documentation, as a defining representation of an era. In essence both are actually Historical Portrayal as a whole one simply being a bigger production.

Not all Old West Performance judges have experience in performing Historical Portrayal's, but should have an understanding and appreciate the preparation, research, and talent required to perform a good Historical Portrayal.

The working definition of a Historical Portrayal in RGA; An RGA Living History performance is a first person portrayal of an actual or composite character from the time-period of 1800 to 1900. The presentation may be done by a single person or may involve two or more people. The purpose of Historical Portrayal is to educate through entertainment. Accuracy is paramount, whether the script is of comedic or dramatic nature.

Judging a Historical Portrayal:

- Please keep in mind that RGA presenters are educators; their goal should be to create a believable, yet interesting and entertaining first person situation.
- They should be able to hold the audience's attention in order to share some historic facts and information about an actual or composite character's experiences, life, environment or craft.
- Try to envision their presentation as if it were being given to a history class in a local school.
- The presentation time allotted is not enough to truly give a complete and in-depth accounting of every facet of the person or subject matter they are presenting.
- Remember that a successful presentation should stand alone, having a beginning, middle and end.
- It should also hopefully renew and spark the audience's interest enough that they might want to research more about the person or subject being portrayed.
- It should at least be as informative as a good book report would be on the subject.
- Try to be positive and encouraging to the presenters with your critiques during the Q/A period. The presenters want to grow and improve, not be discouraged from ever doing it again.

Historical Portrayal Presentation

- At the scheduled time, the top section of the Historical Portrayal score sheet should be completed with the presenter's name, the character they will portray as well as the time period and setting.
- The Historical Portrayal presenter/performer will introduce them self or will request the MC to do so.
- The presenter will call "time/action" at the beginning and "time" to end of the presentation, signaling the assigned Time Keeper to start/stop the clock.
- Each Historical Portrayal performance is to be a minimum of 8 to 15 minutes maximum, followed by a brief question and answer period.
- When the presentation is over, the Head Judge will instruct presenter to approach the judging table when ready for the Question/Answer (Q/A) period and will announce the length of presentation time for judges to enter onto their score sheets.
- Judges will be given a minute or two to finish notations on their judging sheets and to inspect the performer's clothing and accessories. (This additional time for clothing inspection after the performance will allow judges to concentrate more attention to other aspects of the performance during the presentation without having to worry about costuming during the performance).
- The Head Judge will then instruct the judges, one at a time, to ask questions of the presenter to clarify points if necessary.
- Each judge will have a maximum of 3 minutes for their questions. It is not required for a judge to use their time allotment, so if you have no questions, simply indicate that and the Head Judge will move on.

Question/Answer Period

IMPORTANT

- Please ask questions loud enough for the audience behind you to hear...this is a learning experience for them as well.
- The questions should be pertinent to the performance given. If the character's presentation goes only to the year 1869, don't ask questions about the character's life in 1890; i.e. don't ask, "what year did you, Doc Holiday, die?" ...unless, of course, the performer is presenting their script as the character's ghost!
- Q/A period is NOT intended to be a forum for trick questions to stump the presenter, nor a forum for a judge to show his/her knowledge of a given "side" topic. For example, while the judge may happen to know Doc Holiday's brother's aunt's pig's name was Olivia, it would not be appropriate to ask the performer UNLESS the script actually had reference to that pig!
- Q/A period is intended to be a positive experience for all involved; keep in mind that while authenticity and seriousness to the education are paramount, this is still a hobby for most RGA members and demeaning and over critical comments are not conducive to the event. Constructive criticism is welcomed...critical "ripping" is not! The purpose of Q/A period is to clarify any confusion or questions which the script brought up and to ensure that the presenter has researched the character/event at length and on their own, as opposed to simply learning a script that someone else prepared for them.

- Any demerits marked on the Historical Accuracy/Period Correctness, Performance/Presentation, Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props categories of the scoring sheet shall be noted at this time and the presenter made aware of them; judges are not walking encyclopedias and are not expected to have ALL the answers. If a judge feels something is incorrect in these categories, they are to question the presenter about those and the presenter given opportunity to explain. If a satisfactory explanation or documented proof is provided at the time, the demerit shall be removed. The demerit stays, however, if the presenter has been in error or simply fails to present a good explanation. A judge should only question clothing that is visible; there is no need to ask the presenter to disrobe to inspect something that was never exposed during the performance, where would you stop?
- The Entertainment Value/Showmanship and Educational Value categories are based on a judge's opinion and the audience's reaction therefore will rarely be something that the presenter can explain fully. For example, if the performance/script appeared boring to a judge/audience, the final score stands without questioning.
- Time deductions are automatic and will be deducted by each judge accordingly. 1 point for each minute over 15 minutes or under 8 minutes, no exceptions.
- Obvious safety violations witnessed by the judge or violations pointed out by the Head Safety Officer or the line judges must be documented by all judges. In a situation where a violation is questionable to the point that a judge cannot with all good consciousness give a point deduction, the judge has final say. For example if the H.S.O. saw it one way and the judge witnessed it completely differently, the judge should go by what he saw, unless a line judge is brought in for consultation who had a better view of the situation. "Or" say the safety distance was too close to call, any judge still has the authority to call it too close and give the safety gig, or they might decide to refer to it as a blocking/staging issue and give a gig there instead, so the presenter can correct it in the future. You are the judge make the call, just be consistent, and treat every situation with the same equal consideration.

- Each judge is acting independently in all other matters except the audience's reaction in the opinionated categories. Judges should not confer to reach a final consensus during or while scoring a performance since it defeats the entire purpose of having more than one judge. It is the judge's responsibility to score the merit of each performance on what they saw presented before them, and not presentations seen in the past.
- Any questions from a judge about scoring criteria should be directed to the Head Judge based on the performance given. They should avoid any discussion of personal bias.
- The only exception is at the end of a competition to break a tie. Judges will meet under the guidance of moderator (who has no vote) to review their notes and score sheets. The overall impression of the performances involved will determine the tiebreaker.
There will be no ties.
- All awards are final, so if there is any doubt on a topic or item in question,
DO NOT TAKE A DEDUCTION FROM ANY PRESENTER/PERFORMER.

Score sheets should be given to the presenters after the competition. Judges scores should be accepted as constructive criticism and used as a training guide for future performances. Judging is not easy and sometimes a thankless job, but judges make rulings upon the presentation, their knowledge and opinions. If an obvious mistake is found, the State Director over the event should be made aware of it. In some cases points maybe adjusted to go toward National totals but awards and positions already awarded in past competitions will stand, and are final.

At the end of Q/A, the Event Secretary will collect each judge's score sheet and will double check for to assure every deduction made was addressed and has a comment next to it. They will also check all calculations & deductions, and that the score sheet is completely filled out properly. Any discrepancies will be brought to the judge for corrections and each correction must be initialed.

Understanding the Score Sheet

Judges just like in Old West Performances must be willing and able to critique the Historical Portrayal. To do so you need to understand the score sheets and what you will be judging.

- Each judge will work independently from the other two judges using their own score sheet. IOW keep your eyes on your own paper.
- Each presenter starts with the full 50 points at the beginning of the presentation. All 5 categories have 10 points possible. Whether a performance maintains that score is totally up to the merit of the performance.
- Historical Accuracy/Period Correctness, Performance/Presentation, Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props categories of the score sheet require itemized deductions. Each itemized deduction requires explanation so you may use the back of score sheet or extra paper if necessary (highly suggested), however, be sure to label each explanation with the category it applies too. Itemized deductions serve two purposes. It keeps judges honest and it provides specific information to the performer so they can correct the discrepancies in future performances.
- Only Entertainment Value/Showmanship and Educational value deviates from the itemized deduction requirement. This section is based on opinion, both of how the audience reacts to the performance and the judges overall impression.

Please note that a deduction is NOT to be given more than once, UNLESS the infraction continues to the extent of being extreme.

For example, if a presenter used the word "groovy," obviously this would be a one-point deduction in the category for Historical accuracy/Period correctness (Appropriate language for time period); if he/she says it a time or two more, it still counts as only one deduction, UNLESS they say it so many times that it becomes completely distracting; in this case, a second point could be taken.

Using the same example, if the presenter also said "My bad," another point could be taken. It would be considered a separate infraction.

- *Also only one deduction should be taken for each infraction. Example if a gun is incorrect, for any reason, the deduction should be taken from the Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props category only.*
- *not again in the Historically Accurate/Period Correctness category,*
- *again in the Performance/Presentation as a mistake in the storyline,*
- *and again minus 2-3 more points in the Educational Value category.*

ABOUT THE SCORE SHEET

Itemized Deduction Categories; The first three sections of the score sheet are the technical categories that can easily be itemized with a single deduction and a documented explanation. Remember all technical/itemized deductions are based solely on the performance/presentation going on at the particular moment, and reflects only what that presentation offers. Keep in mind that if you deduct a point for one presentation, and another performance does the same thing it “MUST” for consistency purposes and a sense of fair play/good sportsmanship, be deducted in all presentations.

Example; If you write up one presentation for not being loud enough (which you should), you cannot, not give the same gig to anyone else with that problem. It is imperative that if you are critical of an authenticity/historical accuracy for one presentation, all performances must be held to the exact same standard, whether the script depicts a comedy/drama, or an actual/fictitious event, no exceptions.

1. **Historical Accuracy/Period Correctness:**

All aspects of the performance must be true to the time period/era, being depicted, whether it is a comedy/drama, truth/fictitious. It should be evident to the audience and other judges the performer(s) is/are knowledgeable of the material at all times DURING presentation...not only during the question and answer session.

- General knowledge of the time period
- Times/Dates
- Names/Places
- Dialogue, Accents/Dialects, Clichés’/Slang, etc...
- The Character(s)- Is the Portrayal true to who the character really was? Did the presenter develop a characterization through his research or is he/she just mimicking a Hollywood stereotype of the individual? At the same time judges should be open-minded and not be prejudiced by their own stereotypical image of the character being portrayed. Keep in mind that the more research a presenter has done on a character it could possibly be a side of the character generally overlook.

2. **Performance/Presentation:**

This is the category that covers all aspects of the theater/performing arts and the techniques exhibited that identify the qualities and criteria of a good presenter/teacher.

- **Timing;** Flows well, no dead spaces (or as few as possible keeping in mind the stage being used might require some improvising), movements and gestures felt natural not forced or sporadic.
- **Blocking/staging;** Imagine a painting that comes to life. Was the best use of the stage apparent? Did the movement on the stage appear balanced, natural or did it come across as unprepared, distracting, and/or inappropriate for what was happening?
- **Projection/Enunciation;** Was it clear and at a pace that was coherent and easy to follow.
- **Acting;** Was the character believable, not forced but natural? Was it too over the top, too melodramatic that it appeared to be a caricature rather than a real person? Did the performer come across unprepared, nervous, and/or choppy? Did it seem like they were just reading a script?
- **Storyline;** Did the performance seem complete, did it have a distinct, beginning (proper introduction), middle (body of information), and an appropriate ending (in closing), well written & laid out properly and easy to follow and understand, etc...,

3. **Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props:**

Historical accuracy and period correctness applies to all items used, so keep those issues isolated to this category only, as well as appropriateness for the character. Clothing must reflect both the time-period and activity which the character is playing at the moment in the character's life. Beware of common stereotypes..., and think of a character like Davy Crocket while we usually think of him as a frontiersman in buckskins, toting a long gun, powder horn, knife/tomahawk, and sporting a coonskin cap, as a senator on the floor of Congress or in the streets of Washington DC, he would be wearing formal clothing, coat & tails, top hat, gloves, dress shoes, all fitting the character of a senator of the time period.

Note; Again a judge should only question clothing that is visible; there is no need to ask the presenter to disrobe to inspect something that was never exposed during the performance, where would you stop?

- Clothing, hats, footwear
- Jewelry, watches, hair styles
- Firearms/guns, other weapons and accessories
- tools, etc...
- Props; Every effort should be made to assure the prop is a reasonable facsimile of the item it is intended to replicate if not the real McCoy. Judges can be critical of items that are too distracting or are obviously not representative of the item being simulated, but in certain situations circumstances might require a modern folding chair or table to be used and a blanket tossed over it to somewhat cover it. It would be better for the judges to put more weight on how the stage, space available, and props were used to help the audience connect to the characters' moment in time than the fact the tea cup had "made in China" stamped on the bottom.

Opinionated/Sliding Scale Categories; The next 2 categories are opinionated sections and rely on the judge to evaluate the performance as an overall impression, based on the reaction of the audience and the judges own opinion, combined. Since these categories are impossible to itemize, a sliding scale will be recognized.

Scale for all practical purposes is a scale of 0-10, 0-3 poor, 4-6 good, 7-8 very good, 9-10 excellent, if the entire scale is used.

You must keep in mind that if the first presentation comes across as excellent and you start off the first group as excellent 9 or 10 you have nowhere to go if others come later do a better job. Since you are evaluating the overall impression you need to start somewhere closer to the middle like a 6 or 7 in this case, as a base number, and if nobody does a better presentation, then the 6 or 7 will be considered excellent, the best performance of the day, and the highest scored presentation in the appropriate category. This is the only place that other performances of the day might come into play.

These are the categories that can make or break a presentation, especially if there are several good performances. You can have a very entertaining presentation with little to no educational value, or a completely educational presentation that is lacking entertainment wise (dull and boring), but excellence in one should never override a presentation that emphasizes both.

1. **Entertainment value/Showmanship:**

There can be a very well put together technical presentation, that is just plain boring and not entertaining at all. So you need to look to the audience to see how it came across.

How did they react during the performance?

How did they react after it was over?

Did it hold the interest, and captivate the audience?

Was it entertaining?

Would you recommend it to others?

2. **Educational Value:**

Was the presentation informative, and accurate?

Was the information significant, and represent the era well?

Would it be well recommended to others, and since the time allotted is not enough to completely cover most topics, did it spark enough interest that audience members might want to know or read more on the subject?

Most important did it require a significant amount of research to compile, or was it basic information that could come from a Jr. High history book, or a pamphlet in a tourist information center?

These are all important questions that need to be addressed when evaluating the educational value.

Please remember that all RGA presentation/performances are supposed to be an educational experience, so listen for facts specific to the subject matter's history, time-period/era, details about the people, their lives, experiences, occupation, etc. When the presentation has finished, the audience should have had the opportunity to have learned something about the character much like a history lesson.

Completing the score sheet,

- As you observe the presentation, make a quick note of the infractions on a piece of scrap paper or the back of the score sheet, you will deduct one point for each infraction under the appropriate category after the performance when you fill out your score sheet. If there is one infraction, circle "1" with a brief but clear explanation, for each infraction in the appropriate category and so on.
- It is imperative for each deduction to have a brief explanation stating the reason for the deduction so if two deductions occur in a category, there should be two brief but specific explanations in the space available. If more room is needed use the back of the score sheet or a piece of extra/scrap paper.
- If a brief explanation is not made for each deduction or if the explanation is not clear/legible/understandable, the deduction will be removed when the final tally is made at the end of the event.
- When your judging sheet has been completed, disregard the circled 1's and tally the 1's with no circle placing that number in the total = area to the right.
- In the Opinionated section choose the appropriate # in the sliding scale and place that number in the total = area to the right. Add the 5 numbers together and this will determine the sub total

- Determine the time infractions if any are needed. If the performance is within the 8-15 minute time limit no deductions will be written down. Only in the case that the time is under 8 minutes or over 15 minutes is a deduction taken, and 1 point per minute over or under is required. So if the performance is 7 minute – 7 minutes 59 seconds, 1 point would be deducted, and if it was timed in at 6 minutes – 6 minutes 59 seconds 2 points would be deducted and so on. If the performance runs over 15 minutes, 1 second – 16 minutes would be a 1 point deduction, 16 minutes 1 second to 17 minutes would be 2 points, and so on. If any points are deducted they need to be placed in the deductions for time (if any) area (line b).
- If a safety violation takes place circle a one in the safety section box on the bottom right for each infraction, with a brief explanation in the box. Use the back of the score sheet or a piece of extra/scrap paper if more room is needed, and identify it as a safety violation. Three safety violations can result in a complete disqualification, or a zero score. If the violation is too severe it could result in a disqualification from the event and possibly a review by the board to continue as a member. Note total on line (c).
- Deduct all deductions on time (if any) line (b), and safety if they apply line (c), from the subtotal on line (a) carried down from above, for final score.
- Enter the total at the bottom of the form on line (d) total score, and sign your name and initial where designated to do so.

Typical write up;

Points will be deducted for specific infractions only.

For each infraction 1 point will be deducted.

Example:

The presenter is portraying an emigrant from Ireland in 1869 fresh off the boat. He is new to this country, but he has a Cowboy hat and boots on.

Answer: In the upper deduction section under 3. 3. Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props – document inappropriate for Character, and deduct one point by circling one of the ten 1’s in that section for the cowboy hat and circle another one of the 1’s for the Boots. The Judge should explain to the presenter that the next time he portrays this Character he portray him as an immigrant actually getting off the boat wearing a popper hat such as a derby and some brogans.

Example:

Section 3: 3. Wardrobe/Clothing, Accessories, & Props

Deductions Explanation:

3. Wardrobe/Clothing Accessories & Props: **○ ○** 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 Total = 8

 Wrong hat for character 1 deduction

 Wrong footwear for character 1 deduction

FINAL SCORE CALCULATIONS;

1. Max score is 50 the number of points all presenters start with.
2. Add up the total = areas for the deduction and opinionated section of the score sheet and place that number in the sub total = area. Carry that number down to line (a) in the lower section of the score sheet.
3. Every 1 minute the presentation goes under 8 minutes or over 15 minute will receive a 1 point deduction (per judge). The total number of points to be deducted will be placed in the time section line (b) if any.
4. Place all safety violation points on line (c) if applicable.
5. Subtract all additional deductions on line (b) and (c) from the sub total line (a), and place that total on line (d) Total Score. This the final score. Initial the score sheet.

(a) Sub Total points from above + _____

(b) Deductions for time (if any) - _____

(c) Safety Deductions (2 points per infraction) - _____

(d) Total Score - _____

Judges Signature _____ Total Score _____ Initial of Score Keeper _____

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Code of Ethics

The Reenactment Guild of America, Hereafter referred to as "RGA" is dedicated to the accurate and historical presentation of life in the American West during the 19th century.

It is the desire of the guild membership to preserve this part of American history and to provide a safe avenue where the public may be both educated and entertained at the same time. All members of the guild will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will not bring discredit to RGA. RGA does not tolerate nor will it condone or support discrimination of any person or entity in any form or manner. RGA members will be expected to follow all the guild rules and guidelines set forth by the board and to adhere to all Local, State and Federal laws of the United States of America. Because historical truths are sometimes found to be fluid and open to interpretation, every effort will be made to insure that members portray their characters or events in a historically correct manner which shall include but is not restricted to clothing, utensils, weapons, behavior and speech. Questions regarding these areas will be professionally presented for clarification. Members, in response to such questions, will refrain from action or speech that could be construed as hostile. In all cases of competition, the judges will have final say on issues of safety or historical correctness.

No discourse will be allowed in front of the judges table. Performers must honor historical records and knowledge and should document such sources used in their presentations so that they may withstand critical review. RGA members will strive to assist each other in the pursuit of historical accuracy and understanding. Further, members will respect the integrity of historical records while investigating and interpreting the past during presentations as a matter of practice. Membership will also respect the presentations and portrayals of the past by all other members and will not resort to plagiarism. RGA members are to consider themselves as mentors/teachers to young and old alike and behave at all times while representing RGA in a manner above reproach. Inappropriate actions or behavior by any member is subject to review by the board and may result in expulsion of the member.

The Performers are professionals bound by a love of the Western frontier as well as a love for history and their fellow human being. These are values shared by all members of the guild.

Safety Rules

1. As a performer, "YOU" are ultimately responsible for the safety of the viewing audience, the safety of your fellow cast members and your own, PERIOD!
The event managers and their crew are responsible for creating and maintaining safe conditions in the environment in which you will be performing but it is your right and your responsibility to insure the safest of conditions and to double check the "SET UP" and guarantee the safety of "ALL" involved!
2. It is each individuals' responsibility to be familiar with & adhere to all federal, state and local laws established in the areas you are performing or choose to wear a weapon, whether in wardrobe or not. This includes usage, handling thereof and transporting of any and all weapons.
3. Absolutely "NO" live ammunition will be allowed at any performance location (private or sanctioned) or on the person of any performer during the entirety of the event or while in wardrobe.
4. Nothing *potentially dangerous* is to be done, especially anything that could be categorized as "out of the ordinary", without the approval of the assigned Head Safety Officer (H.S.O.) at each and every event or individual performances.

Each team should have a designated H.S.O. for their group and an assigned S.O. for each and every performance the H.S.O. cannot attend. This could be the most knowledgeable, reliable and safety conscious member of the team that everyone feels comfortable trusting them to the task. It is your responsibility to explain what you want to do, show that you are knowledgeable and capable of accomplishing the feat and assure them that you know of what you speak of from your experience. It is NOT the H.S.O.'s responsibility to show you how to do something considered "out of the ordinary". Specific stunt work like hangings, horse stunts and/or technical issues like reloading on stage, blood effects, etc....., also come to mind.

5. Pyrotechnics will be allowed by "licensed/insured" experts only with the express written approval of event location officials and event coordinators/managers and with the complete cooperation of the designated H.S.O. for that specific event. This includes common fireworks, special effects devices such as gerbils or exploding squibs and/or homemade improvised explosives/fireworks. If you need an explosion in show, it is recommended that you use a double barreled shotgun with full loads. Keep It Simple Stupid (K.I.S.S.) is the simplest and safest policy. Once again, **ALL** federal, state and local firework display ordinances should be adhered to.

Weapons & Performance Ammunition

6. **A.** Every performer should be familiar with handling, wearing and/or using and all weapons that they will be asked to use in any performance. This would include proper maintenance, cleaning, care, proper loading, arming and unloading/disarming of any and all guns/weapons. All performers must display the capabilities of insuring weapons that they use are operational, in safe condition and unloaded to the satisfaction of the assigned event S.O. upon request. (See information on Jr. Reenactor's Program at the bottom of these safety rules.)

B. All blanks used in any performance must adhere to the established safety distances of 15' (or 5 yards) for all pistols and 25' (about 9 yards) for shotguns/long guns (over 9") and be able to pass a splatter test at the appropriate distances. No exceptions. No crimped blanks PERIOD will be allowed in any performances.

C. All loaded blank ammunition should be stored and transported in an ammo box, preferably a locking, metal container and in control of the teams designated S.O. or armory. All teams performance ammunition will be carried in this container only. The container should be available for inspection by the assigned event H.S.O. or their assigned assistant S.O.'s, in the designated loading/unloading area for the splatter test before the event or during the individual teams performance window.

NOTE: Performance window is defined as 10 minutes before and after each performance.

D. Blanks or casings/brass with live primers should never be carried casually on performers person either in their pockets or in bullet loops on cartridge belts.

The Performance

7. **A. Safety Perimeters** - Basically this is the area in which a show will be performed and should be established before any and all performances. All performers need to know the established boundaries and be conscious of the audience's location at all times during the performance. Stages, dance floors, streets on a parade route, an arena, etc....can all be designated and used as a show area. When performing for large audiences and especially crowds where small children are present, the usage of safety ropes/tape and line present S.O.'s for security should be used to insure the safety of all involved.

B. Disclaimers - A disclaimer should be used to start any and all performances.

Example: "Ladies and Gentleman, the blanks the performers are using can be quite loud and are filled with a powerful powder charge that can burn, maim or kill at close range. For this reason, we ask you the audience to please remain in your present location until the show has been announced over and all the guns have been picked up and secured. If you have children with you, please insure they are under your control at all times. We ask this for your safety and the safety of our performers. A simple disclaimer like this can protect against lawsuits and will help make audience members aware of our safety consciousness!

C. Safety - In the event of an unsafe situation, an audience member walks into the show area, a performer is injured, etc.....shows should be stopped with the use of a designated code word such as

"**SAFETY**". An S.O., a judge or any performer that recognizes a safety concern may yell out so these issues can be corrected. Performers freeze and when the threat is removed/corrected, the S.O. can yell "**ACTION**" and the show may continue.

D. Shooting a Gun at a Performer - While firing blank ammunition at another performer, the gun should never be pointed directly at the individual being shot at. The gun should be pointed in the general direction of the intended target and slightly off toward their backstage side. This gives the audience the illusion that the gun is being fired directly at the person being shot. Appropriate safety distances should always be adhered to (15' for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns). This includes the intended target and all other players on set...

If shooting from a door of the set or in front of the set at a performer in the direction of the ropes/audience, the target should be stage left or stage right and the gun should never be fired closer than 30' from the audience. All other gunfire should be directed parallel to the audience or directed away from them. No gun should be fired within 10' of the audience - this is the audience buffer zone!

At no time should a gun be fired at an individual standing, kneeling, sitting or lying within the blast pattern of the approved safety distances. The blast pattern is an imaginary cone that expands from the end of the barrel of the gun being fired and extend out to the appropriate safety distances (15' for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns).

NOTE: Anyone firing a gun on stage should be familiar with the 180 degree "blocking" rule. If any performer is within the half circle that extends from the end of the barrel at the appropriate safety distance for the gun being fired, adjustments need to be made before firing. The splatter from a gun can be inconsistent and can cover a large area, depending on the type of blank, so a little more room is better than not enough.

E. Pointing a Gun - No loaded gun should be pointed at another performer within 5'. No loaded gun should be cocked or ready to fire at another performer until the appropriate safety distance is reached for the gun being fired (15'for pistols and 25' for shotguns/long guns).

No loaded gun should ever deliberately sweep or be pointed at the audience. Anyone who is careless in the use of a gun/weapon, especially firing towards the audience for a laugh or to intentionally draw attention to themselves.... S.O.'s, judges, group leaders should immediately stop the show to disarm the individual and remove them from the show area. A blatant act such as this could also result in the disqualification of a team in a competitive situation and definitely be grounds for the revocation of said member from RGA roles if they are indeed a member. Intimidation of another player or addressing the audience with a loaded gun should be done by pointing the brandished gun toward the sky.

A good rule of thumb for this technique is to leave the gun un-cocked and keep your finger off the trigger.

F. Dead Gun - A loaded gun that has been dropped, falls out of a holster or the barrel comes in direct contact with the ground (dirt, gravel, etc...) is considered to be a dead gun. Guns properly secured in a holster with a hammer thong, tie down for fights/falls, will not be declared dead unless they become obstructed in the action (dirt, gravel is packed into the holster or gun mechanism).

If a gun becomes dead by said definition, do not leave it laying on the set where someone else can fall on it. Unless it is the finale of the show it should either be removed from the set or secured by placing it out of the action area (on a chair/box, up against the sets, etc....). A dead gun cannot be used for the rest of the show or in any shows following until it has been properly inspected and cleared for use by the SO.

For a gun to remain in play off of a dead body or shot player, the gun should remain in the holster with a thong or tie down to secure it and the dead/shot player should fall on the opposite side of the holster so the gun can be easily retrieved by another performer. Also, the un-cocked gun must come to rest on the chest or belly of the wounded/dead player for the gun to remain in play.

G. Dummy Guns - A dummy gun is either a non-firing replica or an unloaded and cleared gun (inspected by the S.O. or a judge during the performance window before the show begins) that can be used for cocking and pointing at any distance less than the appropriate established distances for loaded guns at another performer. Dummy guns can be dropped, knocked out of someone's hand or holstered and reused since they are not able to fire and/or remain unloaded.

H. Dead Bodies - If a body is removed from the stage for any reason (dead, drunk, injured, etc....), steps must be taken to insure that no firearm (dummy guns would not apply) is dropped or falls to the ground while moving the body(s). The firearm should either be secured with a thong/tie down, removed from the body or another approved method. Performers should never fall with a gun that is still cocked. Fire the gun off at another performer within appropriate safety distances for that gun, towards the set where no one is effected, in the air to clear properly before the fall, etc. Never fire a round directly into the ground to prevent potential shrapnel that can cause damage or injury.

I. Mandatory Safety Meetings - Every competition or event must accomplish three (3) things before performances can begin for insurance to be in effect.

1. Gun Checks - Every gun that is to be carried or used must be checked by a safety officer, or his representative, to make sure it is unloaded, functional and has no barrel obstructions before they are authorized for usage. Gun belts should be also be checked for any live rounds or blanks.

2. Splatter Tests - All ammunition must be splatter tested to ensure safety to the satisfaction of the HSO. Blank ammo should be tested in advance if a splatter test cannot be accomplished at the location before the performance takes place by team SO's. This a required standard practice before any blank ammunition can be used for any performance, private party/gathering or competition.

3. Safety meetings - The attendance of the safety meeting is necessary for all team members. Any team member not using a weapon/knife during a show does NOT have to attend a safety meeting. Anyone that is going to carry a weapon/knife MUST be in attendance at the safety meeting. The HSO may suspend this rule based on his determination that the teams member's absence was necessary such as a medical emergency or situation out of control of the team member.

Props/Special Weapons/FX Equipment

8. Any of these items that are used in the performances or as tools should be serviceable, safe in every manner of thinking especially pertaining to the security of these items. They should never be left unattended and when worn they should have a tethered line, thong, tie down, etc.... to prevent them from falling or inadvertently dropped and to keep unwanted hands (children and immature adults) from handling them.

Weapons intended for use in performances should only be used within the protected confines of the stage/show area with the full knowledge and permission of event coordinators and the H.S.O. Things like whip snappers should be changed regularly and kept in safe working condition at all times.

Knives - Any knife used in fight scenes or worn/used by any performer who is scripted or tasked to fall down, be shot or engaged in a fight must have a safe rounded edge and tip. Stunts like this can be extremely hazardous even with a dull knife if proper preparation and the appropriate training and practice is not strictly adhered to. There are also many types of prop knives available on the market with effects that vary for different uses. Make sure the weapons/props used are designed appropriately for the intended use.

This rule allows the possession and use of sharp knives both in Old West /Historical Portrayal performances and while in an encampment as long as the character being portrayed is not scripted or tasked to take a fall, be shot or engaged in a fight. Common sense should dictate that no one fall with a sharp knife, sheathed or otherwise. These knives are to be considered as tools (whittling, cutting food, throwing knives, etc....) that may have an appropriate edge for which they are/were designed. Sharp knives should only be used in stage/show areas or in encampments for general use or demonstration purposes.

Realistically, groups cannot be expected to bring out museum quality, period correct items to be abused and potentially damaged during a performance, so many props are going to have to be homemade or modified items. Every effort should be made to assure that it's a reasonable facsimile of the item it is intended to replicate. This does not mean that modern items should be acceptable representations of earlier models that did exist either. A telephone should look like a period correct telephone, a broom like a period correct broom, etc.....Judges can however be critical of items that are too distracting or are obviously not representative of the item being simulated. A gold coin, even if it is a metal slug, should at least be gold in color. Badges should be made out of nickel or brass or at least look like they are. If a pocket watch looks like a pocket watch there should be no real concern about the inner mechanics and wooden buckets or boxes should be made out of wood. Any and all props should look believable at a minimum distance of 10 feet. Judges should NOT question or deduct points for props if they meet the above requirements.

9. **FIRES** - Fires are subject to all federal, state and local ordinances. Fire's only with permits, (if required), owner/manager permission and approval of event manager/coordinator and S.O. You must have a 5 gal bucket of water at hand and a small fire extinguisher for emergencies. You must return the area to it's original condition when breaking down. Fires must be completely extinguished before leaving the area. All fire pits will be covered/buried and please save the sod so it can be replaced. Fires should be attended to at all times. Large audiences or high traffic areas should use a rope as a perimeter around areas with fires to keep folks from knocking something over or getting burned.

10. **ALCOHOL and DRUGS** - This should already be an accepted practice of each and every group but here it is in writing so there will be "NO" misunderstandings. At no time during any performance, (private functions, events or competitions), should any performer be under the influence of any drug, illegal or legal. After you have completed your performance and all guns have been secured for the evening, then and only then should any adults of legal age decide to imbibe in accordance with local laws and regulations. Individuals who are carrying weapons and appear to be inebriated will be asked to leave the area immediately. Upon the review of the board, individuals who seem to have a problem abiding by the safety rules related to alcohol and drugs can lose the right to membership permanently and will only be taken under consideration for re-application after presenting documentation of rehabilitation. This is serious folks!

The Junior Reenactors Membership Program

Note: Individuals who are over 14 can start training as Jr. Reenactors and between the ages of 16 -18, upon completion of all requirements as outlined in the Junior Reenactment Application may carry and use a gun in performances without further special requirements to finish their qualification requirements.

Must always be accompanied by parent or legal guardian (proof required), until the age of 18 and parent or guardian must be a member of RGA in good standing.

* Must be a child member in good standing.

* Must have age verified by documentation (birth certificate, drivers license, etc...)

* Must pay an adult membership once certified to carry a gun..

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- * Must attend a minimum of 2 competitions or gatherings where other groups are performing and perform in 4 shows witnessed by members in good standing that are of no relation nor on the same team.
 - * Must be approved/certified by H.S.O. at each event (all 4 shows) and display proficiency with the gun they will be allowed to carry "during performances only". Jr. Reenactors can and will be questioned by the S.O. on general information pertaining to gun safety and RGA safety rules during the events and can be asked to perform splatter tests, load, unload and clear their gun in the presence of the H.S.O. or assigned S.O.
 - * Must be recommended by the state S.O. (or other unrelated S.O.), 2 unrelated RGA members in good standing from their team and 2 unrelated RGA members in good standing from another team who has seen them perform.

Once all above requirements are fulfilled, the certified individual will be allowed to carry a gun until the age of 18 (when he/she will be eligible for regular membership), while accompanied by their parent or legal guardian at all private shows, events and competitions. State and federal laws will take precedence when the Jr. Reenactor is carrying a gun and it is the responsibility of the guardian to guaranty said laws are followed (see rule #2). Failure to do so will result in dismissal from RGA. A regular membership card will be issued upon completion when the permit is submitted to the Director.

It is the parents responsibility to insure that their child is familiar with RGA safety rules and guidelines and the information below before the age of 16 so they can be approved as soon as they reach the appropriate age.

Rules & Guidelines for all Animals/Livestock

It is the owners who are ultimately responsible for ALL animals brought to an RGA event.

* Horses must have a current negative Coggins test; dogs must have current state-regulated vaccinations, etc. The SO may ask for papers proving both/either at his/her discretion. Failure to provide documentation may result in the removal of the animal(s) in question.

- All animals whether ridden, lead or driven must not be skittish around gunfire during any and all performances. Animals must be cleared by the SO prior to the event and the intended use of the animal must be clearly detailed. Safety checks for animals can be accomplished during splatter tests to prove that the animal is conditioned to gunfire and thereby not a safety threat.
- Unattended animals shall be tied, secured or enclosed to protect visitor. The SO has the final say on a case-by-case basis. Their requests are to be adhered to or removal of animal and/or owner may be requested for non-compliance.

NOTE: The Safety Officer, State Rep and/or Event Manager each have authority to request removal of any animal brought on location if the animal's behavior is deemed as disruptive or dangerous in any way to the general public and/or performers/performances (ie. Biting, kicking, barking, growling, etc.). They also have authority to request an owner to modify their own behavior with said animal in terms of abuse or dangerous activity! Cruelty to animal, dangerous use of animal or being in an unauthorized location will not be tolerated! Failure to comply could result in the removal of animal and/or owner if requested.

Final Note

These rules are established to reduce the level of possibility for an accident to occur. As professionals, we must adhere to maintaining a safe environment for all reenactors and any and all of the viewing audience. If your individual groups feel it necessary to expand these rules or implement rules that are more stringent for your own performances, please feel free to do so. If a safety concern is discovered that you feel needs to be reviewed/considered, provide an example in writing and submit it to your state director for that consideration. The board will give it thorough consideration and if it is something that they feel is necessary it will be added to the RGA safety rules and guidelines for all groups and individual members to adhere too.

Any violation of the safety rules in a competition will result in point deductions and a verbal reprimand will be issued to the performing group or individual involved. Any obvious neglect of the RGA safety rules and guidelines or obvious continued violations by the same group or individual will result in a review by the RGA board and membership can/will be in jeopardy. A continued lack of responsibility will not be tolerated and an individual and/or group can be removed from the role upon board's request. If asked for a reference from RGA, any and all groups who have shown to have an unsafe performance record will be considered a danger to the public.

It is important that ALL groups and individual members be able to and have prepared a safety demonstration that can be done any place, at any time. Safety IS and should be our main concern above anything else and NEVER must the show go on if safety is a concern, period! Once corrections have been put into place to ensure the safety of all participants and the general public then by all means, let the show go on!

Play safe and have fun!!

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