



Fencing Safety Rules & Guidelines

Is Fencing Safe?

Fencing is a very safe and lifelong sport. Fencing is often said to be safer than golf. Whether or not this is true, it is an extraordinarily safe sport considering its heritage and nature. If you are new to fencing, the first question you'll likely ask is, "Are the weapons real? Are they sharp?" Yes, they are "real". No, they are not sharp. The ends are blunted and covered by either a rubber tip or flat metal "button". Risks of being injured by broken weapons are phenomenally rare. Proper protective gear significantly reduces any potential risks. Centuries of fencing practice has led us to state-of-the-art protection. Today, the best fencing jackets, breeches and masks are often made with puncture-resistant fabrics such as "bullet-proof" Kevlar.

Both men and women from teens to seniors are learning to fence. It's a great way to get and to stay in shape. Anyone can learn to fence safely with the right instruction. The following common-sense safety rules and guidelines help make this sport one of the safest and most enjoyable experiences.

Safety Rules

1. Mask, plastron, jacket, breeches and glove must always be worn when fencing.
2. The weapons are to be treated with respect and awareness at all times. Weapons must be carried point down at all times. They are not toys. A weapon is only pointed at another person when that person is fully masked and ready to fence or drill.
3. Fencers must always be masked when weapons are raised, point forward. This means on all occasions, including discussion of actions and during drills.
4. Violent fencing actions are not permitted. Fencers must control parries and attacks so that the opponent is not injured by whipping or hard stabbing actions of the blade. If you cannot execute a flick properly, don't do it. Do not cause body contact nor use the unarmed hand against your opponent. Do not turn your back on your opponent.
5. Stop fencing instantly if you think something is wrong or if your opponent retreats and waves the unarmed hand or gives any sign of wanting to stop.
6. If you think a weapon is broken, stop fencing instantly.
7. If you counterattack, you are responsible for preventing body contact, injury, and weapons breakage.



8. If you feel a fencer is behaving in a dangerous or uncontrolled fashion, report it to an instructor immediately. They will speak to the fencer without disclosing your identity.
9. Inspect your weapons and mask each time you use them. If you are using club gear and find any problems please report it to an instructor. Do not put the item in question back into club storage without reporting it. You will not be penalised for reporting broken gear.
10. Wear proper shoes for fencing (court or fencing shoes). Please be sure that shoes are clean when entering the fencing floor to avoid dust and moisture build-up which make the floor slippery. Make sure your shoes are tied properly.
11. Fencers on the floor have right of way. Persons not fencing are obligated to keep themselves and their gear clear of fencers on the floor.
12. Report injuries immediately to an instructor.
13. Stop fencing immediately when and if someone in the venue calls "Halt!"

Guidelines for Clubs & Classes

The goal is to teach the art and science of fencing in a safe environment of mutual respect and self-discipline. Just as in a martial arts dojo, the traditions governing behaviour in a fencing club have developed over the centuries. These traditions promote respect for one's self, one's opponent, the instructors, the weapons, and the tradition itself, as well as promoting safety. Repeated or egregious violations of protocols, safety, or sportsmanship will not be tolerated. Violators may be removed from class at the coaches' discretion.

- It is expected that each student enter and exit the venue respectfully.
- The instructors are to be addressed as Coach by the students. Students will respond to a Coach's request promptly and respectfully.
- Each fencer will salute his drill partner before and after every encounter. Each fencer will salute his opponent, the referee, and his club mates before every bout, and salute his opponent and shake hands after every bout.
- Mask and weapons should be returned to their bags/containers when class is over. During class they should be placed (not dropped!) on the floor during water breaks. Jackets should be placed neatly in the bags/containers after each use, along with gloves and other club equipment.



Lisburn Gladiators
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- When we are playing games or having team contests, cheering for your team is encouraged, but name calling and displays of poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated.
- Food and beverages are not allowed on the fencing floor, unless authorised by the Coach beforehand. Students are expected to clean up after themselves. In a club, each student is responsible for maintaining a clean, safe environment for learning. We all depend on one another for the maintenance of the club venue.
- Respect for one's self and others are also a major goal of good sportsmanship and discipline. Profanity, racial, religious or sexually degrading comments and coarse joking will not be tolerated. Persons receiving such comments should report them to the Coach immediately.

The sport of fencing is by its very nature competitive. In any given encounter, one person will be victorious, and one will be defeated. Learning to accept victory gracefully is at least as important as learning that defeat can be a lesson. Thus fencing by its very nature teaches sportsmanship, resilience and mental toughness.

The heart of a fencing club is its students. Following these guidelines, students and instructors can create a safe and fun learning environment.

One more question,

Does it hurt?

Not if done properly. Even if executed with appreciable energy, a good, clean fencing attack hurts no more than a tap on the shoulder. The force of the blow is normally absorbed by the flex of the blade. Reckless and overly aggressive inexperienced fencers who have not yet acquired the feel of the weapon can occasionally deliver somewhat stronger blows. However, fencing is a sport and a martial art, so you should expect minor bruises every now and again. They are seldom if ever intentional!

The primary source of injury in fencing is from pulled muscles and joints. Proper warm-up and stretching before fencing will minimise these occurrences. As with any sport or physical activity there is always a risk of injury. Common sense precautions and realistic training goals are the best ounce of prevention!

Enjoy this great sport!

Felix Yim
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