

MPAGB - Fencing Personal Equipment Guidelines

1. These guidelines are issued by the Modern Pentathlon Association of Great Britain (MPAGB) to ensure that members participate in fencing in a safe environment. These guidelines are confined to personal equipment (i.e the equipment used by the individual fencer). Please refer to <http://www.britishfencing.com/safetystandards.htm> for wider guidelines addressing fencing in general. Please study these guidelines carefully, and always follow them. Bear in mind that it is in your interests to take positive steps for your safety and the safety of others, and that if you see that your fencing opponent appears to be fencing with unsafe equipment it is in both your interests to speak up, and draw the potential difficulty to the attention of your opponent and the President / referee.
2. Fencing is inherently safe, but only with the correct equipment correctly worn and correctly used.
3. In light of the recently introduced European CEN standards, the MPAGB have decided to formalise certain minimum safety standards for fencing clothing and epees. Some of these standards are in force already for certain competitions for example UIPM International competitions and from 1 January 2006 certain British Fencing Competitions.
4. Pentathletes are therefore strongly advised to conform to the new recommendations with equipment meeting the new standards from now on; certainly on renewal of their equipment between now and 1 January 2008; and in any event from 1 January 2008.
5. The new standards will become in force from January 2008 for MPAGB competitions. The requirements may be summarised as follows:
6. **CLOTHING.**
You must wear equipment complying with the following standards applicable to the following levels of competition:-

- MPAGB International & FIE A-grade competitions

Jackets	Plastrons	Trousers/breeches	Masks
CEN 2	CEN 2	CEN 2	CEN 2
800 Newtons	800 Newtons	800 Newtons	1600N bib

- MPAGB National Championships, club competitions and training (Minimum Recommendation)

Jackets	Plastrons	Trousers/breeches	Masks
CEN1	CEN2	CEN1	CEN1
350 Newtons	800 Newtons	350 Newtons	350 Newtons

7. All masks must be fitted with safety back straps.
8. Take particular care to notice that there are no gaps between the bottom of the bib on your mask and your opponent's mask and the top of the jacket. A prime area of risk is the neck, if unprotected.
9. **EPEES**
You must use equipment complying with the following standards applicable to the following levels of competition:-
 - **For UIPM International level competitions**
 - FIE Approved Epee Blades
 - **MPAGB National, Club Competitions and training**
 - FIE Approved Epee Blades
 - Non Maraging Blades
 - Youth D&E Competitions Size 2 Epees must be used.

Avoiding Broken Blades

10. Penetration by a broken blade is the most likely cause of serious fencing injury.. There are four ways of reducing the risk of a blade breaking.
 - Never use a blade that shows signs of 'softness' or is badly bent.
 - Use a blade made out of special steel, such as maraging steel, which on average will last longer than a blade of conventional steel.
 - Never fence against anyone who is using a blade that shows signs of 'softness'.
 - Renew your blades regularly.
11. Weapons checking: You should check your weapon regularly particularly in the course of competition to ensure that it is in a safe, usable condition.
12. If you are in doubt about the safety of your weapon use a new blade.
13. Blades should be observed and tested to see whether any portion is 'soft,' that is to say whether any portion of the blade bends more than the rest. 'Softness' indicates a dangerous weakness that may lead to a break. A 'soft' portion is indicated when a blade bends into an irregular or uneven curve. A new blade should be tested by placing the point on the floor, depressing the top about six inches and checking that it curves evenly.
14. If blades are 'soft' or severely bent, they must not be used.
15. If blades develop sharp edges, these should be rounded with an emery cloth; they should never be filed or ground.