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# Equipment Requirements

Technical and Authentic Equipment  
Requirements for HMB events



This document is the Historical Medieval Battle International Organization (hereinafter HMBIA) approved technical and authentic requirements for equipment used during Historical Medieval Battle (HMB) events.

- 1. Only offensive and defensive equipment that has historical equivalents academically proven to exist during the period of the XIV–XVII centuries is permitted for use in HMB.**
- 2. All edges of all hafted and bladed weapons must be rebated in compliance with this document before each tournament.**

**Important!**

Points must be rounded to a diameter of 20 mm before a tournament.

- 2.1** All blades must be rebated and have a thickness of 2 mm or more. This requirement applies to the indentations of the blades.

- 3. All shields (wooden, metal, leather, or woven) must be modelled after a historical artefact and repeat the form of the original in all three dimensions. A shield must match the armour kit of the fighter in period and region.**

- 3.1** The entire edge of a wooden shield must be covered with either: a band of thick leather (not thinner than 2–4 mm), or with at least three, or more layers, of fabric. A leather band must be glued, and also stitched, or riveted, to the shield. The rivets must be neatly finished, the edge of the rivet should not stick out.
- 3.2** The flat outside of wooden shields must be covered with leather or fabric.
- 3.3** The entire hems of metal shields must be rolled to the thickness of a minimum of 4mm or more.

**Important!**

Metal shields must be of round shapes, based on a historical artefact and repeat the form of the original in all three dimensions. *Full-size metal shields must match the kit in both region and period* (for example: the XVI century European, or Eastern, kits).

- 3.4** Punch shields must have the striking edge rounded to a radius of at least 70 mm, and measure at least 550 mm long and 300 mm wide.
- 3.5** All modern fastenings (screws, bolts, nuts, staples) must be concealed. On the back of the shield, the bolts must be cut in one level with the nut, nuts must be painted.
- 3.6** All images on shields must be stylized in correspondence with the region and period of the whole kit.

**Important!**

It is prohibited to decorate shields with images that are modern or/and derogatory.

**3.7** There is the option to use rigid handles for shields with a central grip.

**Important!**

Additional straps are prohibited for all shields with central grip and boss, except for bucklers.

**3.8** For the category 'Sword and shield' the maximum shield dimensions are no more than 750 mm tall and 620 mm wide, or in the case of round shields, have a maximum diameter up to 700 mm.

**3.9** For the category 'Sword and buckler' the maximum diameter of the buckler is no more than 350 mm.

**3.10** A rigid handle and additional straps are permitted for bucklers with a centre grip and boss.

**3.11** The weight of all shields must not exceed 5 kg.

**4. A fighter is accountable for the quality, protective properties, and durability of the defensive equipment they are using.**

**4.1** A fighter controls the security and reliability of their protective equipment, sufficient level of protection it provides and must check it before the fight.

**4.2** A fighter is ultimately responsible for their offensive and defensive equipment, its quality, historical accuracy, aesthetic appearance, and compliance with the requirements of this document.

**4.3** A suit of armour must fully and securely protect the fighter's spine including the tailbone, sacrum, neck, and joints in any body position.

**4.4** Textile adhesive tape of neutral colours is permitted for urgent reparations during the tournament.

**5. The list of offensive equipment and technical requirements is as follows.**

**5.1** Bladed weapons:

- Single-handed: straight or curved, double-edged or single-edged swords
- Long or two-handed straight or curved, double-edged or single-edged swords

**5.2** Hafted weapons:

- Single-handed
- Long-handled
- Two-handed

### Important!

Every weapon to be used at a tournament must be first approved for safety by the representatives of the Marshals' and Authenticity Committee for each tournament separately.

- 5.3** Technical requirements for the permitted weapons can be found in the table "TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HMB PERMITTED WEAPONS".

1. Bladed weapons (sword, saber, broadsword, falchion):		Weight, kg	Length, cm	Length of the blade, cm	Length of the handle, cm	Special restrictions
<b>IMPORTANT! TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR HMB PERMITTED WEAPONS WILL BE EFFECTIVE SINCE THE 1ST OF JANUARY 2020</b>						
1.1 one-handed	1,3 - 1,7	72 - 100	60 - 80	12 - 20	The hilt should not extend for more than 35mm over the bearers hand.	
1.2 longsword	1,7 - 2,3	100 - 140	80 - 100	20 - 40		
1.3 two-handed	2,3 - 3,0	120 - 160	90 - 130	30 - 50		
2. Polearms:		Weight, kg	Length, cm	Length of the cutting edge, cm	Special restrictions	
2.1 one-handed axe	0,7 - 1,3	50 - 90	>7	Axes and polearms with sharp corners (less than 90 degrees) and corners that can be considered dangerous are not permitted. Any point on the cutting edge of weapon should have an angle more than 90 degrees. If you are not sure, whether your weapon is safe, consult with the Marshalls Committee. Must only have wooden handles and no sharp edges.		
2.2 long axe	1,3 - 2,5	90 - 130	>9			
2.3 two-handed axe, poleaxe, halberd, glaive etc.	2,2 - 3,2	130 - 220	>12			
2.4 mace, six-flanged mace	1	50 - 70	-			
<b>Other restrictions for all types of weapon</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The permissible upward error for <b>one-handed</b> weapons is <b>100g</b>.</li><li>• The permissible upward error for <b>long</b> weapons is <b>200g</b>.</li><li>• The permissible upward error for <b>two-handed</b> weapons is <b>300g</b>.</li><li>• Heavier weapons or thrust weapons are not allowed for use in historical medieval battles under any circumstances.</li><li>• The <b>edges</b> of all the <b>striking parts</b> of any weapon are must be <b>blunted</b> and <b>beveled</b> and must have <b>thickness</b> no less than <b>2mm</b>.</li><li>• The <b>radius</b> of the <b>peak</b> and all the <b>edges</b> should be <b>more than 10mm</b>.</li><li>• Only arms, which have chronological validity of a specific historical period as confirmed by extensive research carried out and confirmed, are allowed.</li></ul>						

- 5.4** The heads of all hafted weapons must be secured to the haft by several methods (for example: wedges, straps, glue, and pins). Weapons with poorly secured heads are prohibited.

- 5.5** Weapons heavier than the Technical Regulations prescribe are prohibited. Weapons constructed solely for stabbing are prohibited. Long and two-handed impact weapons are prohibited.

- 5.6** The weapon may have decorations modelled after the elements of the impact weapon on the non-striking side. Any strikes with decorative elements are strictly prohibited.

- 5.6.1** The hafted weapon may have rebated hooks on the non-striking edge. Any strikes with decorative elements are strictly prohibited.

**6. Protective equipment used in HMB is armour reproductions of the High Middle Ages. All armour elements must be historically plausible in proportions, construction, and appearance of the original. Armour must:**

- 6.1** Have academically acknowledged originals of the XIV–XVII centuries.
- 6.2** Be manufactured using historically plausible materials (for example: steel, leather, textile, wadding, tow, and felt).

- 6.3 Be constructed to fully and securely protect the vital organs and joints of the fighter.
- 6.4 Function properly.
- 6.5 Adhere to the requirements for the thickness of the protective layers (as listed later in this document).
- 6.6 Maintain the size and proportions of the original.
- 6.7 Have a historically plausible aesthetic appearance.
- 6.8 Show no signs of modern materials or manufacture techniques (for example: nylon cords and straps, welded seams, plastic ties, synthetic materials, unintentional heat tints, modern athletic gear).

**7. All elements of the kit must comply with the current technical and authentic requirements outlined in this document. A full kit must be comprised of the elements of the same region and within a 30-year time period.**

**Important!**

30-year periods are defined by decades. For example: 1360–1390, 1380–1410, 1400–1430, etc.

- 7.1 Stylised element is permitted if:
  - 7.1.1 Authenticity Committee (specialists/officers) have approved its use.
  - 7.1.2 It is enhancing a protective function of the kit during HMB tournaments.
  - 7.1.3 Information about the material culture of the relevant period and/or region is insufficient.

**Important!**

In rare cases when information on the material culture of the region or/and period is insufficient it is possible to replace missing elements of the protective equipment with the analogues of the adjacent regions and/or periods provided the kit looks proportionally correct and aesthetically pleasant. The replacement must be approved by the HMBIA Authenticity Committee.

- 7.2 When the historically accurate suit of armour fails to comply with the requirements of this document, a fighter must use additional layers of concealed protection worn under a soft kit.
- 7.3 Modern protective elements with an independent fastening system are permitted as a third layer of protection and must be concealed at all times.
- 7.4 All additional modern protective elements must remain concealed at all times in all body positions.

**8. The head of a fighter must be protected with a metal helmet. Its protective features should be equivalent to those of 2.5 mm thick construction grade (for example: ST3 as by GOST, Grade A in the USA, etc.) steel helmet. A helmet must protect the face.**

**Important!**

A helmet is identified as open-faced if it is possible to fit a bare fist between the brim of the helmet and neck protective piece while a fighter maintains an upright head position. Open-faced helmets are strictly prohibited.

- 8.1** A helmet must have a quilted, or padded, coif inside, or a leather suspension system with a quilted coif. The minimum thickness of the coif is 3 mm for the quilted, and 5 mm for padded (while compressed).
- 8.2** A chin strap must secure the helmet to the head. If the construction of the helmet excludes the use of the chinstrap, the helmet must be secured on the head by other means.

**Important!**

A helmet may be secured to the backplate of the body protective element with an additional strap for enhanced protective properties.

- 8.3** It is permitted to install additional bars to the eye slits of the helmet if the construction is approved by the HMBIA Authenticity Committee.
- 8.4** If a helmet modelled after a historical artefact is not sufficiently protective, it is encouraged to use additional rigid protective constructions made of metal bars or plates if they are concealed under a chainmail or textile aventail.

**Important!**

All additional modern protective elements must remain concealed under a suit of armour at all times.

- 8.5** An additional plate can be used on top of the chainmail elements of the helmet. Its shape must be historically proven. Heater shield shapes are permitted. Alternatively, an additional padded collar with the plates sewn under, or inside of the collar, is permitted.

**9. The body and the limbs of the fighter must be protected at least with plates of metal. Chainmail elements can be used as supplementary protection or as an articulation of the plate elements.**

- 9.1** A fighter's equipment includes an under-armour layer protecting the torso. It should consist of at least a layer of felted wool quilted with linen fabric.
- 9.2** Vertebrae of the neck and upper back must be protected with a metal plate

with a padded or quilted layer (as a separate collar or an additional layer of the aventail) . Riveted chainmail can cover the element and its padding.

- 9.3** The spine including the tailbone must be protected by plate elements of the armour with the layer of padded or quilted protection. The thickness of the layer must be over 3 mm for quilted and 5 mm (compressed) for padded elements.

**Important!**

It is recommended to use modern protective elements; for example cycling, snowboard, and other spine protectors, as the third layer of protection hidden under the gambeson, or its alternatives..

- 9.4** The crotch area must be protected by the elements of the kit or modern protective elements hidden under elements of soft kit at all times.

**10. Gauntlets or plate mittens must protect hands. Chainmail can be used only as a supplementary element or for the articulation of the plates.**

**10.1** Protection of the hand holding a shield with metal plates means that a fighter can continue fighting after a shield loss. Alternatively, a shield hand must be protected by the elements of the soft kit and quilted mitten from all sides. Soft protection for hands must consist of at least two layers quilted together; for example felted wool and linen.

**10.2** Plate elements must protect elbows and knees. If plate joint protection is missing in the material culture of the region, the replacement must be hidden under other elements or in soft kit.

**10.3** Cuisses and greaves can leave the back of the leg open. In this instance, soft kit consisting of at least one layer of the dense fabric must cover the open areas.

**10.4** Metal plate sabatons must protect the feet of a fighter.

**10.5** Modern boots are prohibited, especially if outsoles have deep lugs.

**Important!**

Flat rubber sole shoes are permitted to replace historical shoes. Modern outsoles with deep lugs are prohibited.

**11. Tabards (surcoats) should be historically plausible in colours and construction and match the suit of armour in the time period. Modern and derogatory images are prohibited. It is advised that the coat-of-arms follows heraldic rules in shapes and colour use.**

## 12. Explanation of the terms:

- Historically plausible/authentic: material or an item modelled after a primary source. Historically plausible materials and elements of equipment approved for use by the HMBIA Authenticity Committee can be found on the website: [hmbia.info](http://hmbia.info)
- Stylization is an item without a historical prototype, albeit constructed in the overall style of the kit with its aesthetic and functional features.
- A primary source is textual or visual evidence; for example: images, paintings, illuminations, statues and other documented sources and their combinations, that establish the authenticity of an item. A primary source is mandatory for less known, or new items, within the HMB community. A decision on the historical accuracy of the item can be made only based on primary sources.
- The rolling of the hems is a treatment mechanically increasing the thickness of the hem.
- A striking edge of the weapon is an edge touching the opponent at the moment of the strike.

Detailed information can be found on [hmbia.info](http://hmbia.info) and in appendices.