

NORTHERN ROCKIES BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION

SAFETY PLAN AND GUIDE

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Signature Sheet

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Foreword

Safety is paramount and cannot be overly expressed. Two of the main elements of Safety are:

- Common sense
- Attitude

Using common sense and having the proper attitude about safety will bring many hours of injury free blacksmithing. There are many potential hazards associated with blacksmithing. The object of this "Safety Plan and Guide" is to minimize these hazards yet allow the Blacksmith to fully enjoy the craft.

We have come a long way in the practice of safety. "Practical Blacksmithing" by M.T. Richardson, which was originally published in four volumes in the 1800's, and still used today as a blacksmith's guide, never mentioned the word "SAFETY". Today we consider safety paramount as we have come to realize that workers and their respective skills are not expendable.

The requirements of this "SAFETY PLAN and GUIDE" are considered to be safety as a minimum and therefore the requirements of this document can always be exceeded.

Revision Page

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This safety plan defines the safety policy for the Northern Rockies Blacksmiths Association (NRBA).

1.2 Application

This safety plan will continue in effect until rescinded by the Northern Rockies Blacksmiths Association. The safety plan and guide will be revised as necessary to accommodate updates and improvement in techniques. The requirements and guidelines contained in this plan are applicable to all Members, Instructors, Demonstrators, and Guests attending NRBA sanctioned functions.

1.3 NRBA Safety Policy

The strength of any organization is built upon the collective wisdom and talents of its members. The prevention of blacksmith related injuries will be given precedence over every decision whenever and wherever necessary. It is the policy of NRBA to provide a safe environment and to follow practices and principles which will safeguard all Members, Instructors, Demonstrators and guests.

Safety is the responsibility of every Member, Instructor, Demonstrator, and Guest. All the above are responsible for strict compliance with all NRBA established safety rules and for performing tasks in such a way as not to endanger themselves or others.

In the event of an emergency during an NRBA sanctioned event local 911 services will be utilized. NRBA will provide a portable eye wash station at all sanctioned events.

During an NRBA sanctioned demonstration an area around the Demonstrator of approximately 15ft X 15ft (as a minimum) will be cordoned off. This will provide an uncrowded work area for the Demonstrator and Assistants. The area outside the cordon rope will provide an area reasonably free of risk for observers.

It is recommended that jewelry not be worn while smithing.

1.3.1 Responsibility and Authority

The Board is responsible to ensure that training of NRBA members is conducted in a safe manner and shall ensure that NRBA sanctioned Demonstrations are conducted in a safe manner. To this end Safety Monitors will be solicited from the NRBA membership and assigned to aid the Demonstrator in following the intent of this plan. NRBA instructors are responsible to conduct the training of NRBA members in a safe manner in accordance with this Safety Plan. NRBA members under instruction and NRBA members in general will provide their own personal safety equipment e.g., safety glasses, hearing protection, etc. NRBA will have extra safety glasses and ear protection available at events.

1.3.1 Disciplinary Action Program

In order for this Safety Plan to work, disciplinary action must be taken when violations occur. The forms of discipline for violations will vary dependent upon the seriousness and frequency of the offense. In most cases a simple discussion with one of the NRBA elected/appointed officers will suffice. However if a member habitually violates safety rules or shows no regard for themselves or others the members affiliation with NRBA may be terminated. It is most important that NRBA Instructors set a safe example for other members.

2.0 Blacksmith Safety

2.1 Eye Protection

2.1.1 Impact-Type Safety Glasses or Goggles

Safety glasses and goggles are the blacksmiths first line of defense against injury. Eye protection will be worn anytime an NRBA member or guest is smithing, watching, or demonstrating. This is a mandatory requirement.

ANSI approved impact-type safety glasses or goggles shall be worn to ensure greater eye protection from flying particles. The glasses shall meet the requirements of ANSI Z 87.140 with side shields. Poly carbonate lenses meeting these requirements are acceptable. Tasks which dictate the need for such eye wear include:

1 Forging	Forge Welding	Blowing	Pneumatic Tool Use
1 Scraping	Hammering	Drilling	Punching
1 Buffing	Grinding	Slitting	

2.1.2 Contact Lenses

Contact lenses are not considered approved eye wear when working in the environment that the blacksmith is subjected to.

2.1.3 Face Shield

An approved face shield may be used in addition to eye protection for added protection from flying particles. The use of face shield will always include the use of safety glasses under the face shield.

2.1.4 Oxygen-Gas Welding or Burning Goggles

Approved burning goggles shall be worn to provide protection from ultra-violet radiation. (number 5 shade of lens is considered adequate) Number 5 shade is considered a minimum the shade used shall be appropriate for the operation. Burning goggles shall be used when ox-gas torch is used for cutting or burning.

2.1.5 Welding Hood

A welding hood with a filtered lens of number 10 shade shall be used to provide protection from ultra-violet rays produced during arc welding. Number 10 shade is considered a minimum the shade used shall be appropriate for the operation.

2.2 Hearing Protection/ Conservation

2.2.1 Approved Hearing Protection

The ring of the anvil is usually greater than 85db and requires the use of hearing protection. Approved hearing protection shall consist of ear plugs, ear muffs, or a combination thereof, which must eliminate the noise exposure to within a permissible limit.

It is ***strongly recommended*** that all NRBA members and guests use hearing protection whenever work at the anvil is in progress.

2.3 Hand Protection

2.2.1 Recommendation for Hand Protection

The need for hand protection is a matter of choice. Some smiths use no hand protection. Some smiths use a glove on the tong/tool or hot metal holding hand and no glove on the hammer hand. The tong /tool or hot metal holding hand is usually closer to the hot work and protection is helpful. However a glove on the hammer hand results in a loss of grip on the hammer handle. If a glove or gloves are used it is recommended that the glove is of flame resistant material. Gloves made of synthetic materials, except for kevlar, should not be used. Synthetic materials can melt onto the skin if exposed to hot sparks or flame.

A glove becoming hot it can be soaked in water to cool the glove. Cooling a glove in water can produce steam in the glove. A glove that is soaked with sweat can also produce steam.

Wet gloves should never be used to hold hot iron or tong handles. Steam can be produced that can lead to severe burns.

2.4 Foot Protection

2.4.1 Recommendation for Foot Protection

Heavy duty, high topped leather shoes are important. Many athletic type shoes are made of synthetic materials and can melt onto your skin when exposed to heat, flame, or sparks and therefore will not be worn in the forging area. Low quarter shoes are not recommended. Sparks or hot slugs can find their way into these shoes. Closed hi-top shoes constructed of canvas will be allowed in the forging area.

2.5 Clothing

Cotton is the best all-around material to wear. Synthetic materials are not recommended because they melt easily and some may burn rapidly when exposed to flame. Synthetics will not be allowed when working or in close proximity to the forging area.

2.5.1 Standard Work Clothes

Clothing that is in a good state of repair should be worn. Active participants in NRBA sponsored events must wear clothing that covers the tops of their footwear. Spectators are advised to do likewise. Spectators choosing to wear clothing that exposes the legs do so at their own risk.

2.6 Alcohol/ Drugs

NRBA members, NRBA Instructors, and Demonstrators shall not consume alcoholic beverages when:

- Forging.
- Demonstrating.
- Instructing.

Be aware that some prescription and over the counter medications can cause drowsiness.

NRBA will not tolerate the use of illegal drugs at any NRBA sponsored event. Use of illegal drugs will be grounds for expulsion from the NRBA event.

2.7 Tool Box Safety Meeting (Safety Review)

Instructors will conduct a tool box safety meeting at the start of each day and prior to beginning a training session. The subject of the meeting will include the contents of this plan, discussion of the pending hazardous operation, or other safety subject as determined by the instructor.

A NRBA representative will conduct a tool box safety meeting prior to a NRBA sanctioned demonstration. The subject will include a discussion of pending hazardous operations.

2.8. Power tools

2.8.1 Pedestal, Bench, Portable Grinders, and Wire wheels

Face shields and safety glasses or mono goggles will be worn when grinding or polishing with a wire wheel. All shirts must be tucked into trousers and loose clothing secured prior to using grinders or wire wheels. Care should be taken to keep long hair out of harms way.

Guards, work rests, eye shields and other permanent protective devices must not be removed from any grinding or buffing wheel.

Cotton, Hot Mill, or Kevlar gloves are not recommended for use at a wire wheel. In this application a good fitting leather gloves can be used.

2.8.2 Power Hammers

Power hammers come in many sizes and shapes. Power hammers use various sources of energy to produce the high energy required for their powerful striking blow. They all have two things in common. They are efficient and dangerous. Power hammers deserve your respect. When using a power hammer always:

Keep hands clear of the falling weight and anvil/bottom tool or die.

Wear proper eye protection.

Wear proper hearing protection.

Having said all that, it is recognized that for every rule there can be an exception. For example when using a treadle hammer with a chisel or chasing tool where good control and accuracy are required it is possible ***with a proper positive safety stop*** to hold the chisel or chasing tool in the hand. This type of operation should only be performed by a smith with sufficient experience; as a minimum Journeyman level.

Insure that the hammer is turned off and rendered inoperable when not in use. Power hammers will not be used untrained members unless supervised by an instructor. At Conferences students may use power hammer provided they are under supervision.

2.9 Basic Blacksmith Tools

Hammer: Keep the head tight on the hammer handle. Frequently inspect the hammer face to insure the face is free of pits or cracks.

Tongs: When picking up tongs assume the jaws are hot. Use tongs that have been adjusted to fit the work. A loose fit can allow the hot piece to fly out of the tong jaws.

Hardie: Always remove the hardie from the hardie hole before you continue hammering. The sharp edge of the hardie can do major damage to your hand.

Post Vice: Assume the jaws are hot. When finished with the post vice close the jaws, and put the handle in the vertical position. The handle is one more thing to run into.

Chisels, Punches, and Drifts: Keep the head free of burrs (mushroom).

Files: Never use a file without a handle.

Forge: Assume any thing on or under the forge is hot.

Compressed Air: Be cautious when using compressed air to clean parts or operate tools.

THE LAST WORD

Follow this safety plan. Get it hot, hit it hard. Have a good time.