



# Beaundesert Outdoor Adventures

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) & Risk Assessment: **Soft Fencing**

**Document ID:** SOP-BOA-SOFTFENCE-001

**Effective Date:** 5th January 2026

**Review Date:** January 2027

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### 1.0 Purpose

To outline the standardized, safe, and fun procedure for conducting a Soft Fencing session at Beaundesert Outdoor Adventures. This activity serves as an introduction to fencing skills using lightweight plastic equipment suitable for beginners.

### 2.0 Scope

This SOP applies to all instructors and participants engaging in Soft Fencing activities.

- **Instructor Requirement:** Instructors must be briefed on the specific equipment and safety rules but do not strictly require the full British Fencing Core Coach qualification if supervised/signed off by the Operations Manager (In-House Training).

### 3.0 Location & Ratios

#### 3.1 Location

The activity will primarily take place in the Fencing Tent located near the Main Street toilet block.

- **Mobile Option:** This activity can also be run in suitable large indoor spaces (e.g., The Stables/Warren) or flat outdoor areas if approved by the Operations Manager.
- **Space:** The area must be flat, even, and non-slip (approx. size of a badminton court for 12 participants).
- **Zones:** A clear "**Active Zone**" (for fencing) and a "**Safe Zone**" (for rest/waiting) must be identified. No swords are allowed in the Safe Zone.





## 3.2 Ratios

- **Standard Ratio:** 1:12 (One Instructor to twelve participants).
- **Maximum Ratio:** 1:15 (With additional adult supervision and Operations Manager approval).

## 4.0 Equipment

- **Foils:**
  - Plastic Foils.
  - Lightweight, flexible plastic blades with blunt tips.
- **Masks:**
  - Plastic masks with plastic visors.
  - Must be fitted with a secure rear strap/retainer.
- **Bibs/Vest:**
  - Padded bibs or lightweight vests may be used.
- **Clothing (Participant):**
  - **Jackets are NOT required** for Soft Fencing.
  - Participants should wear long trousers and long-sleeved tops (tracksuits/sweatshirts are ideal).
  - Soft, non-slip sports shoes must be worn.

## 5.0 Safety Briefing & Rules

*Mandatory briefing before any equipment is handled.*

1. **Masks On:** Participants must **never** point a sword (even plastic) at anyone who is not wearing a mask.
2. **The "Halt" Command:** If the instructor calls "**Halt**" (or stop), all fencing ceases immediately.
3. **Safe Zone:** Swords must never be taken into the "Safe Zone" / Rest Area.
4. **Non-Sword Hand:** The free arm must be kept behind the back to prevent injury to fingers.
5. **Behaviour:** No brutal hitting or throwing of equipment.



## 6.0 Session Procedure

### 6.1 Pre-Session Checks (Instructor)

- **Kit Check:**
  - **Masks:** Check plastic screen is intact and straps are working.
  - **Foils:** Check plastic blades for stress marks (whitening of plastic) or cracks. Discard any sharp/broken blades.
- **Venue:** Ensure the floor is clear of slip/trip hazards and obstacles.

### 6.2 Introduction & Warm-up

1. **Warm-up:** Games like "Stuck in the Mud" or "Coach Says" to get moving.
2. **Safety Brief:** Explain the Safe Zone vs. Active Zone.
3. **Kit Up:** Participants put on masks and bibs. Ensure clothing covers arms and legs.

### 6.3 Phase 1: Technique (No Swords)

- *Teach the basics without weapons first.*
- **Stance:** "On Guard" position.
- **Movement:** Step forward (Advance) and step backward (Retire).
- **Lunge:** Demonstrate the attacking move.

### 6.4 Phase 2: Introduction to Foils

1. **Masks On:** Ensure everyone has a mask on properly before handing out foils.
2. **Handling:** How to hold the plastic grip.
3. **The Hit:** Demonstrate a light touch. Plastic swords are light but can sting if whipped.
4. **Drills:** Distance games and "Mirroring" movement.

### 6.5 Phase 3: Bouting

- **Etiquette:** Teach the Salute (before and after).
- **Free Fencing:**
  - Pairs fence to a set number of hits (e.g., 5).
  - Rotate partners regularly.
  - **Instructor Vigilance:** Monitor for aggression. Plastic fencing can sometimes encourage "flailing" – correct this to proper technique.

## 7.0 Session Conclusion

1. **Kit Down:**
  - Foils collected first and placed in the Active Zone.
  - Masks removed only after foils are secured.
2. **Storage:**
  - Masks and foils stored in racks or bags in the activity hut to prevent damage.
  - Check foils again for any damage sustained during the session.

## 8.0 Emergency Procedure

1. **Command:** "HALT" or "STOP".
2. **Action:** All fencers stop, masks remain on until safe, swords grounded.
3. **Injury:** Administer First Aid. Contact Duty Manager. Fill out the accident form.

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## 9.0 Risk Assessment

**Activity:** Soft Fencing

**Review Date:** January 2027

**Assessment by:** Martin Kirby – Operations Manager

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls: What are you doing to control hazards?	Risk Rating (with controls)
<b>Being struck by a plastic foil</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Equipment:</b> Plastic foils are lightweight and flexible (low impact risk).</li> <li>• <b>PPE:</b> Plastic masks with mesh visors worn at all times in Active Zone.</li> <li>• <b>Clothing:</b> Long sleeves and trousers required to prevent minor welts/scratches.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>
<b>Eye Injury</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Masks:</b> Strictly enforced rule: "Masks on before swords picked up."</li> <li>• Instructor vigilance to ensure masks stay on during bouts.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	Controls: What are you doing to control hazards?	Risk Rating (with controls)
<b>Overheating</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor monitors group. Allow frequent breaks to remove masks (in Safe Zone).</li> <li>• Hydration breaks encouraged.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>
<b>Slips, Trips &amp; Falls</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Venue:</b> Floor checked for hazards.</li> <li>• <b>Area:</b> "Safe Zone" kept clear of kit. Masks removed when walking off the piste.</li> </ul>	<b>Tolerable</b>
<b>Equipment Failure (Plastic Snap)</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inspection:</b> Daily checks for stress marks/cracks in plastic.</li> <li>• <b>Procedure:</b> Broken plastic can be sharp – discard immediately and inform Senior Instructor.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>
<b>Venue Hazards</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fencing Tent (or similar) must provide adequate space.</li> <li>• Instructor highlights any structural pillars/obstacles.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>
<b>Behaviour / Aggression</b>	Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Halt" command strictly enforced.</li> <li>• Aggressive fencers removed from the bout immediately.</li> </ul>	<b>Trivial</b>



## 10.0 Staff Acknowledgment

I, the undersigned, confirm that I am a designated Instructor for Beaundesert Outdoor Adventures. I have read, understood, and agree to adhere to all procedures and safety rules outlined in this SOP (SOP-BOA-SOFTFENCE-001) and Risk Assessment.

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## 11.0 Document Control & Review History

### Document Creation

Action	Name / Role	Date
<b>Created By</b>	Martin Kirby – Operations Manager	December 2025
<b>Approved By</b>	Martin Kirby, Luke Chance & Oliver Tombs (OM / SI / AOM)	January 2026

### Review Log

This document is to be reviewed annually or following any significant incident or change to the activity.

Date of Review	Reviewed By	Comments / Changes Made	Next Review Due
January 2026	MKirby / OTombs / LChance	Document Created (V1.0). Adapted for Soft Fencing (Plastic Kit).	January 2027

