

FAQ - NEW AC-RATTAN HANDBOOK (*updated 10/28/2025*)

Greetings! This is the first of several posts in our efforts to boost and broaden communications on the new AC-rattan Handbook, and future handbook updates. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback directly or through your KEM.

- Part 1 – FAQ on new handbook process and updates.
- Part 2 – FAQ on Rules we received feedback on, changes and/or explanations.

This FAQ can also be found at: https://society-rules.fullmesh.co.nz/index.php/Main_Page

PART 1 - FAQ ON THE NEW HANDBOOK PROCESSES AND UPDATE

1) Question – Who worked on the new AC rattan handbook? Were the KEMs involved?

Answer: Starting in Nov 2024 and over the course of 7 months, approximately 60 people were part of the review and feedback process for the newly drafted Armored Combat – Rattan Handbook. This included 22 current KEMs (all 20 kingdoms and 2 changeovers) and Society Deputy Marshals, plus kingdom deputies, former KEMs, a “red team” of active marshals, and 3 special review sessions with the BoD. Summaries and details of the changes were provided to all KEMs during these 7 months, and multiple changes and edits were made based on their feedback.

Leading up to the Nov 2024 review cycle, a cross-kingdom core team worked for about a year developing the online format, outline, and technical approach. They also did the initial conversion and updates of the old handbooks to the new format. This team included the Society marshal and AC and CA Deputies, several current and former KEMs, former Society marshals, and IT/tech writer specialists. The team built upon the Lochac conversion to an online/wiki-format, and also prior efforts to do this at a Society level which had started almost 7 years ago.

2) Question – Is it too late to make any changes or submit feedback?

Answer: It’s never too late! Please reach out to your KEM (or to the Society Marshal and AC Deputy) with questions, concerns, and suggestions. While we don’t make changes based on every input, we will at least provide you an explanation. Based on feedback, we have made multiple changes and submitted those to the for BoD for approval (See Part 2). As we continue the modernization of the other handbooks over the next year, we expect further edits may be needed, and will submit those changes in batches.

Also, as part of the regular marshal process, rules interpretations and updates happen quarterly (in between handbook updates).

3) Question – Why did they change the rule on XXX?

Answer: Rule changes are captured in the Change Logs (located at the end of the handbook), which include the changes and why they were changed. There is also a “Cliff Notes” on the rule changes for easier reference. Also, please see “Part 2 - FAQ on Rules we received feedback on” for edits we plan to include in the Dec launch.

Overall for this major online/wiki-formatting effort, there were no intended changes to game play (i.e. fighting conventions, target areas, use of weapons), other than the minor change to no longer strike siege equipment with weapons. There were some minor equipment changes. Most of the functional changes were to administration, management, oversight functions.

4) Question – I sent feedback on rule XXX. Are you going to fix rule XXX before Dec?

Answer: Yes for some, no for others. Sometimes the effort to convert to “plain English” style, or capturing common conventions, or consolidating common processes into a global one didn’t quite work – we are fixing those! (See Part 2 for details)

Some of the feedback we received were about existing rules that have been in the handbook for decades. Some were identified as long-time problematic rules (not well defined, too many variants, etc). We looked at some of them, others we will continue to review with the KEMs. “Fixing” a long time game play rules can be tricky, and we didn’t want to add even more inadvertent changes at this time.

5) Question – Why is the handbook so much longer?

Answer: There are two reasons.

1) Online vs printed formatting. The new handbooks are formatted for Online viewing, editing, and updating, rather than just a printed document. The online version is then converted to pdf. This created larger spacing between lines and dedicated blank pages in the printed pdf version.

2) The new format is intended as handbook for both fighters and marshals (not just marshals), and also as a “first contact” document to support both new and current people interested in learning about SCA martial activities. So, several new sections were added to provide context, capture current processes and existing rules of engagement (not previously written down), respond to safety resource requests by Crown and fighters and marshals, and add a little guidance for completely new people. Overall, these new sections account for about ~30% of the new handbook. (The new sections

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include: *Introduction, Overview of AC, Activity guidelines, Authorization process, Rules of Engagement, Designated Areas, Accessibility, Safety resources, and handbook updates.*)

6) Question – Why didn't you put the new information and resources in a separate handbook?

Answer: We did consider that. However, much of the information is adjacent to or pertinent to the core information in the handbook. Also, separate handbooks would require searching two books to get the full picture, and continuity and context is lost.

As an alternative, we kept all the information together and leveraged the online wiki-format architecture, which allows people to skip to the section they need. We also structured the handbook so core information vs. context/resource information was easier to identify by chapter name, and separated it into 3 sections (Fighter, Marshal, Administration).

7) Comment - I have concerns with a Wiki format. It will make it harder for KEMs to insert kingdom specific rules inline with the Society rules. And a wiki is too easy to update, how can we do version control?

Answer: This is not a traditional wiki, where a large number of people can edit. It is more accurate to say the handbooks utilize a wiki-formatting engine, which provides multiple benefits such as automatic formatting and number updating, global content capabilities, color/highlighting and tagging.

Version control - The official versions of the handbooks are still pdf, found on SCA.org, just like we have always done. For the online Society versions, only 2 people have edit access (the Society Marshal and Special Projects Deputy). Each Kingdom will only have access to their kingdom-specific online additions. And all changes are tracked in the Change Logs. A completely separate "draft" online wiki-format version enables multiple people to propose and view edits, which once approved is ported over to the Official versions.

Kingdoms specific rules - The handbooks are architected specifically to enable Kingdoms to add their specific rules in multiple ways. We are in the middle of helping Kingdoms get those set up over the next few months for the Dec launch. They can add their kingdom specifics in several ways: in-line with the society rules, at the bottom of a page, as an addendum, or some combination of all three. Kingdom specific rules will also be a different color or highlighted, for ease of identification comparison.