

**FENCING**

**EQUIPMENT**

**101**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **BAFC Equipment policy**

### **What you'll need**

- equipment for every fencer
- different weapons, different equipment.
- Lamé
- Mask
- Glove
- Body/mask Cords
- Your weapons

## **Storage and maintenance**

## **How to buy your stuff**

## **What is FIE?**

## **Competition equipment preparation**

## **Buying equipment as a beginner**

## **Sizing**

# AN OVERVIEW OF BAFC

## EQUIPMENT POLICY

- Let's not mince words here, fencing equipment can be EXPENSIVE!! And that cost barrier was a driving factor in forming our equipment policy.
- We do not require you to purchase fencing equipment until you've reached our intermediate training program. When that happens, you will be expected to purchase all necessary equipment
- If you are looking to purchase as a beginner, please refer to the end of this booklet to avoid overspending.
- We are not affiliated with or preferential to any one equipment provider, we highly suggest comparing prices and searching for the best deal possible.
- If you purchase incorrect equipment, BAFC can add it to our loan-out collection, we would be happy to take it off your hands.

**WHAT  
YOU'LL  
NEED**

# BASIC EQUIPMENT FOR EVERY FENCER

## White Jacket

A universal protective layer worn by all fencers, the white jacket features a zipper on the side of the non dominant hand, rather than the middle of the jacket. You must specify whether you want a left or right handed jacket



## Underarm protector

Also called a *Plastron* (french) this piece of kit resembles a shirt cut in half. It is the first thing fencers put on, pulling it over the dominant arm and strapping it around the body. You must again specify left or right handed.



## Chest Protector

Optional for male fencers, but mandatory for all female fencers. Purchasing this is different if you fence foil.

Chest protectors for foil **ONLY** must be certified by the fencing's international governing body. Please refer to our section on the FIE to learn more about how to ensure you purchase the right item.



## Fencing Pants (Knickers)

All fencers must wear these capris style overalls when they compete, they are taken up to the belly button and should hang down to around the mid calf. It is common for fencers to hike up their knickers to fit snug around the base of their knees. The shoulder straps must remain on any time you're fencing.



# Over the Knee socks

There may be no exposed skin on the legs of the fencer. **White** over knee socks are ideal. You can find these at any sports store. There is no reason to get fencing specific socks unless they are a gift.



# Fencing Shoes

The shoes you wear are in large part, a personal preference for every fencer. Any non-high top athletic shoe is ideal. You do not need to purchase fencing specific shoes, but they are an option.

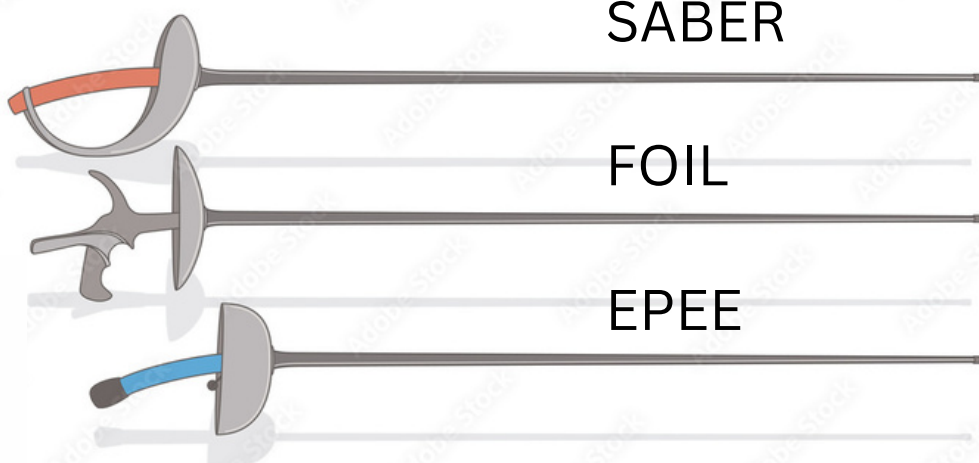
Many fencing shoes have reinforced heels to account for the heel strike when fencers lunge and minimal arch to facilitate a fast change in direction.



# DIFFIRENT WEAPONS.

## DIFFIRENT EQUIPMENT.

BAFC boasts an all weapon program, and your new equipment will differ depending on the weapon you fence. If you're not sure which weapon you fence, check below.



To determine which is your weapon, look at the guard.

Note the difference in the guards at the base of the blades. The saber has a guard which reaches down to the bottom of the handle. The foil has a small circular guard to help facilitate quick blade movement. And the epee has a large bell shaped guard designed to protect the hand.



# LAMÉS

The Lamé is an electric outer layer used to help keep score during a bout. Like the white jacket it changes based on your dominant hand. But each weapon's Lamé look different. So be sure you pick the right one!

## FOIL



## SABER



**\*\*\*Epee does not use a Lamé\*\*\***

# MASKS

Every weapon uses a different kind of mask, however these differences are subtle, so be sure to look carefully at our diagrams

## FOIL



← Matte Black face

← Combination electric and non electric bib

## SABER



← electrically conductive. face

← Fully Electric Bib

## EPEE



← Matte Black face

← non electric bib

# GLOVES

Gloves for foil/epee are identical. But saber gloves are unique, and recently, the USFA has adopted new requirements to increase the safety and durability of the Saber glove.

**FOIL/EPEE**



white, non electric  
bottom cuff

**SABER**



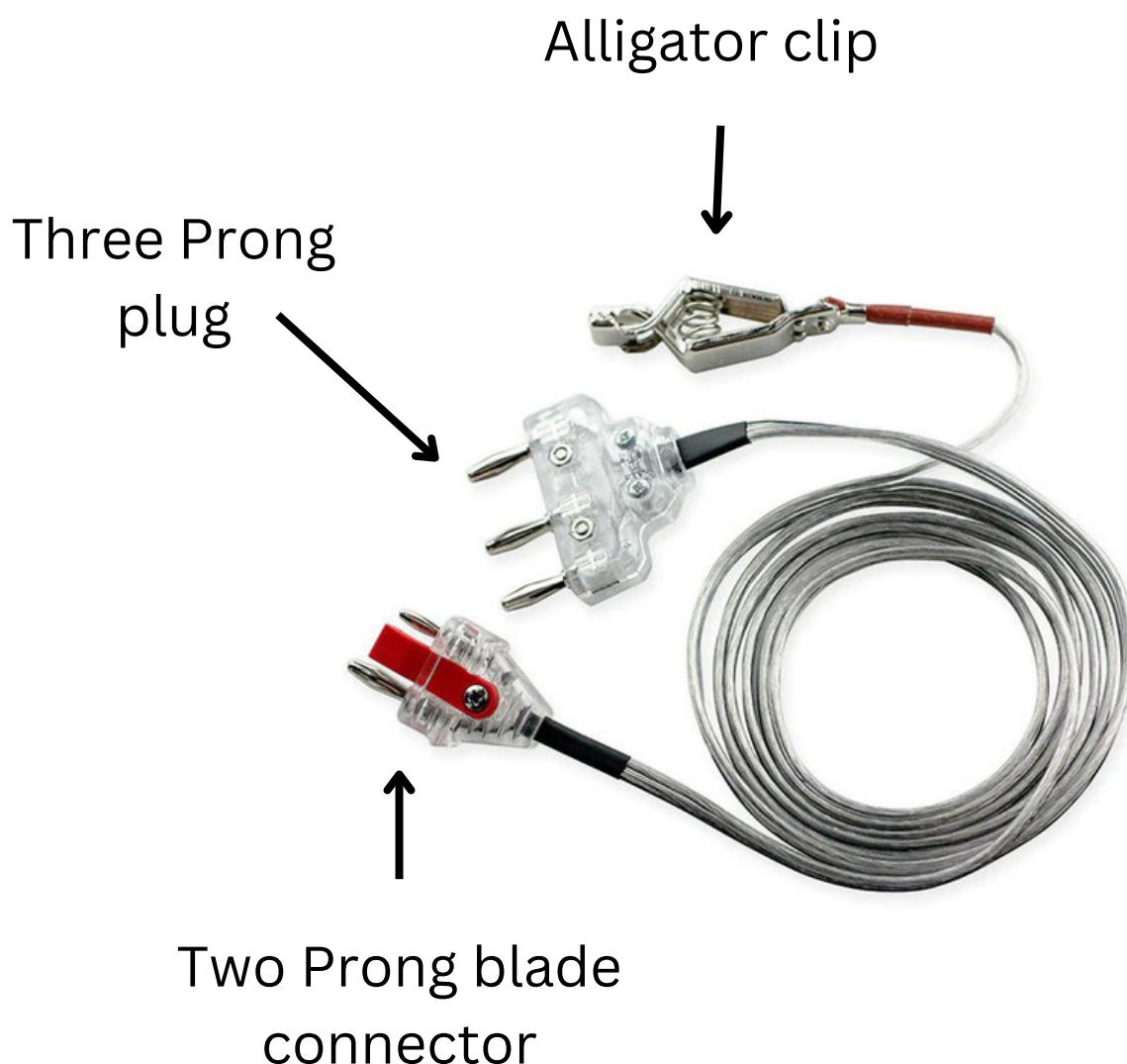
Electric Bottom cuff

Importantly, saber competitions require an FIE certification on your glove. To learn more about FIE certified equipment, please refer to our FIE section.

# BODY/MASK CORDS

All fencers use a cord to connect their Lamé to their scoring machines and weapons. These cords differ slightly depending on the weapon.

## FOIL/SABER BODYCORD



# BODY/MASK CORDS

## EPEÉ BODYCORD

Note: No Aligator Clips

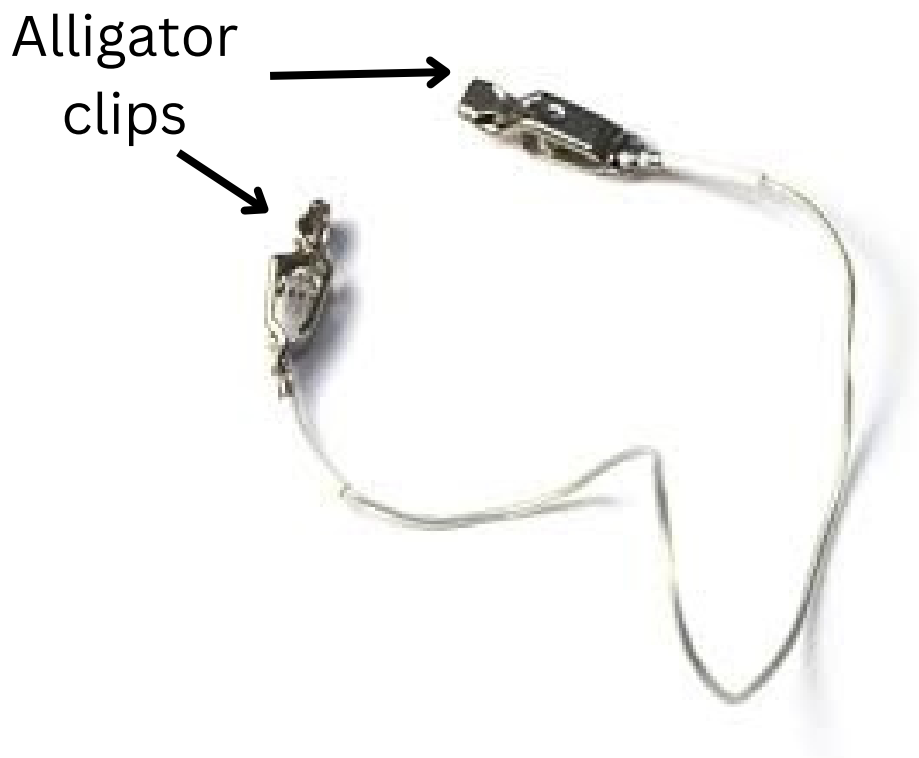


Three Prong plugs

# BODY/MASK CORDS

## MASK CORDS

Note: only required for foil/saber



## Word to the wise:

Treat it nice, or buy it twice. Cords are the most commonly broken pieces of equipment. Treat them like you might treat an old cell phone charger, no sharp bends, no pulling weight with them, and no knots.

# WEAPONS

Buying weapons could be a booklet all its own. So we'll keep the advice limited to what's relevant for first timers. Weapons must meet strict requirements depending on your age and competition level.

## Basics

- Its easier to buy the complete weapon, rather than attempt to assemble it on your own.
- Always buy an electric weapon, ***not standard***. You can look on a website for their electric weapon section.
- There are a lot of variables to specify. Ensure you've chosen the correct ones, it could mean the difference between a legal and an illegal weapon.
- For your understanding, each variable is given its own section
- A good rule of thumb for your first time is to avoid anything that costs extra, you can learn your preferences later

# WEAPONS

## Length/size

- There are four lengths of blade, #0 #2 #4 & #5  
Certain age groups are restricted to certain lengths. Smaller sizes are lighter and shorter
- This graph shows the allowable lengths for each age group.

| AGE GROUP | BLADE SIZE  |
|-----------|-------------|
| Y8        | SIZE 0 ONLY |
| Y10       | SIZE 0-2    |
| Y12       | SIZE 2-5    |
| Y14       | SIZE 2-5    |
| CADET +   | SIZE 5      |

- You will have to specify what length you'd like in order to purchase the weapon, double check you have the right one!!



# WEAPONS

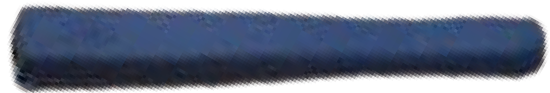
## Grips

- Foil & Epee have two grips, french and pistol. Consult your coach on which to get.



### **Pistol Grip**

- LH/RH specific
- Comes in XS-XL
- refer to sizing section
- if in between sizes, choose the smaller one
- Choose the basic visconti grip for your first time.



### **French Grip**

- LH/RH specific
- one size fits all
- Be sure to confirm with your coach if you need this grip.

# WEAPONS

Saber grips are simple, there is only one shape really, just choose the option that comes with the weapon. Lucky saber.....

## Tips/pads/guards

- For all three of these variables, just getting the option the weapon comes with is easiest. You can hone your preferences as you progress through your career.

## We can fix it!

- Never fear, BAFC is here, if your weapon breaks or arrives with defects. Our coaches are expert armorers, and can fix/replace most issues.
- If your blade is unfixable, don't throw it out! We can use the parts to fix other weapons.

**STORAGE**

**AND**

**MAINTENANCE**

# STORAGE & MAINTENANCE

The main focus of this document is to teach you how to buy the correct fencing equipment. Therefore, this will be only be a brief overview of how to store and maintain your equipment to avoid failure

## The Fencing Bag

There are seemingly countless options when it comes to what bag to buy for your equipment. And when you get to a level where tournaments require a significant amount of travel, it is nice to have a bag designed for fencing (see below). But for the novice fencer just looking to lug stuff to and from practice and local competitions, there are a plethora of option to choose from. Just be sure that whatever IKEA tote bag or repurposed golf club bag you use, it has at least two seperate sections, and is large enough to acomodate the length of your blade.



# STORAGE & MAINTENANCE

## Electric gear

Do not store your electric gear with your white dry gear. The sweat will cause the metal in the electric gear to rust and become unusable

The best way to store your electric lamé is on a clothing hanger, held and carried separately from the rest of the bag.

## Green is MEAN

Green is a fencers least favorite color. When electric equipment rusts to the point of disrepair, it turns a sickly green color.

These green patches are referred to as 'dead spots', and will cause you to fail equipment checks at competitions.

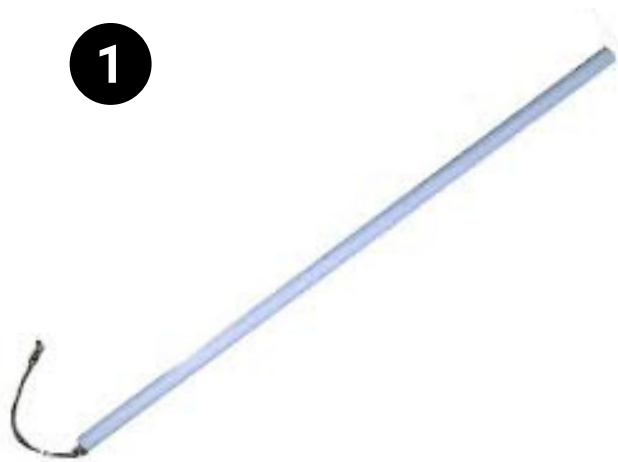
Note the green spots where sweat most often concentrates, another common area is the collar.



# Storing your blade

The blade is most often carried in the bag with all other equipment. This is why we suggest a double pocket bag to prevent sweat soaked clothing from rusting the blade.

An additional precautionary measure is to provide a makeshift 'cover' for your blade. This is done by cutting a length of PVC piping, inserting the blade, and securing it to the guard on one end.



**HOW TO BUY  
YOUR STUFF**

# HOW TO BUY YOUR STUFF

Please note that this section contains lists of stores distributors and vendors. These lists are not exhaustive or ranked in any way. We only include stores that our coaches have used, and we encourage you to do your own research and find what works best for you.

## Local Stores



- Try before you buy
- Armory services.



- Limited inventory
- Inconvneient hours

### **Victory Fencing Gear**

2530 Taraval St

San Francisco, CA

### **Alliance Fencing Gear**

3201 Balboa St.

San Francisco, CA



# HOW TO BUY YOUR STUFF

## Online Distributor



- Tons of options.
- Comparable prices



- Must know what you want before you buy

### **Absolutefencinggear.com**

- One of the largest manufacturers in the US, has everything you could need.
- ships from NJ

### **Thefencingpost.com**

- Carries major manufacturers and some smaller ones so more price variety.
- Ships from the west coast

# HOW TO BUY YOUR STUFF

## Advice Column

Don't be afraid to Mix and Match! You can buy your mask from one store and your weapon from another. Do whatever you can to get the best deal on quality equipment.

Treat it nice or buy it twice is the motto for equipment. Make an effort to invest in quality equipment and storage. Watch how the elite fencers treat their equipment and make sure your fencer knows the value of what you've given them.

Beware of Amazon. Suppliers that list products on amazon usually aren't run by fencers, they have a history of badly made equipment that does not meet the right specifications.

On a final note, don't feel like you have to do this all by yourself. Tons of parents here at BAFC have done this. We have Slack channels and parent lounges so that you can learn from the community. Who knows, maybe you can get some stuff second hand!

**THE F.I.E**

**AND YOU**

# THE F.I.E AND YOU

## Fédération Internationale d'Esgrime

The international fencing federation is our sport's governing body. It creates everything from equipment standards to rule books. When you fence internationally your equipment must follow FIE specifications. Most websites will have FIE vs. Non FIE equipment sections.

## Stamp of approval

This symbol appears on equipment sanctioned by the FIE, From top to bottom, It includes the certification year, the manufacturer, and the letters FIE.



# THE F.I.E AND YOU

## FIE in the USA

Certain FIE equipment specifications also apply to competitions within to the United States.

In order to compete, Certain pieces of a fencer's equipment must bare the FIE stamp of approval. For those pieces of equipment, it is easier to buy FIE at the outset.

## Foil Chest Guard

Every foil competition, from the local to international, requires that chest guards be brought to FIE standards. You can identify an FIE chest guard by the stamp, and the soft outer layer.

Dual layer FIE  
chest guard



## Saber Glove

Saber Gloves in competition must be puncture resistant up to a certain amount of pressure, you can find the FIE stamp of approval on the inside of the glove. Your first glove should be FIE approved.

**EQUIPMENT**

**FOR**

**COMPETITION**

# EQUIPMENT FOR COMPETITION

## Buying double

Breakage surprises even the best of fencers. You can often be caught off guard by failing equipment only weeks before competition. A good fencer gets around this by frequently checking their equipment and having spare equipment ready.

On the next page you will find an equipment checklist, it not only includes everything you need for competition, but also what you should buy double of. Body/Mask cords and blades are the most common items to break during a fencing competition. A well prepared fencer always carries a double in case of emergency. A higher level fencer may also buy one they use in practice, and one they use ONLY in competition.

# Equipment Checklist

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Fencing Pants

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Underarm protector

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Chest guard for Females (Foil must have FIE)

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Jacket

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Lamé

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Mask

---

2 Mask Cord (Foil/Sabre only)

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2 Body Cords

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2+ weapons (size 0-2 for Y10)

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Glove (Sabre must have FIE glove)

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Fencing Shoes

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Knee High Socks

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**BUYING  
EQUIPMENT  
AS A  
BEGINNER**

# **Happy Birthday!**

Equipment for a beginner is best bought in short sudden bursts. A glove for their birthday, a mask for Christmas, and maybe a jacket for Hannukah. In general the same rules as intermediate fencers apply. This section is meant to temper the eager parent who maybe wants to buy too much too fast.

## **What not to buy**

For starters, lets avoid anything electric, our beginners focus primarily on the fundamentals of fencing, and only use electric equipment on special occasions

Don't invest in fencing shoes, a beginner needs to be able to do footwork before they purchase shoes to do it in.

This portrays the upper limit of time as a beginner.  
Some fencers can move through class in as little as 3mo.

**Start**



**Finish**

**SIZING**

We're getting to the end of the book, so let's go ahead and speed through how to size our equipment.

## **Knickers:**

Take your fencer's waist measurement between their hips and their belly button. Add one size (2 inches); remember that if you get an odd number of inches, always go up one. The resulting number is your knicker size.

## **Jacket/Lamé:**

Take a chest measurement in inches just below the armpits. For a regular fit add 4 inches to this measurement – this is the jacket size you will need to order. Lamés are usually the same size

## **Gloves**

The easiest thing to do is ask your fencer what size their glove is. Otherwise, measure around the hand just below the knuckles. Take this measurement in inches to determine your glove size. Do not include your thumb.

Some gloves express their size as inch hand measurement, and some use XS-XL instead. Please use the following conversion chart.

| Hand Inches | 6.5-7.0 | 7.5-8.0 | 8.5-9.0 | 9.5-10.0 | 10.5-11.0 |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| Glove Size  | X-Small | Small   | Medium  | Large    | X-Large   |

## **Grips**

Your glove size is often also your grip size. But, people tend to buy a grip that's one size too big, so always air on the smaller side. Sometimes a small glove requires an extra small grip. ask your coach to help size a grip for you.

## **Ask for help**

Our coaches have done this a million times, come in and schedule a time for a fitting and we'd be happy to help.