

Kingdom of Northshield

Youth Boffer Combat Handbook

May 2015 Revision

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OVERVIEW

Youth combat is a program designed for minor's ages 6 to 17. This program emphasizes armor and weapon construction techniques, proper etiquette, and the concepts of Chivalry, Honor, Courtesy, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. Combatants will be practicing these virtues along with learning proper techniques in a competitive environment. These skills learned will aid the youth in transitioning to adult combat if they chose when they reach the required age. Youth combat should not be viewed or used as a substitution for normal play.

It is the intent that the Kingdom of Northshield Youth Combat weapon, armor, and calibration standards will follow SCA Youth Combat minimums. Unless an item is listed as a higher standard follow SCA minimums. In the event that the Society minimum requirements are more restrictive than what is written in this handbook, follow the SCA minimum requirements.

PARTICIPATION

Any youth desiring to participate in youth combat shall have a responsible adult assume all risks and liabilities for any harm or medical condition arising from the youth's participation in these activities. The assumption of responsibility shall be signified by all legal documents required by the SCA and the kingdom of Northshield. For the purposes of youth combat a designated adult is defined as the youth's parent or court-appointed legal guardian.

No youth shall participate in youth combat unless the responsible adult has completed a "Minor's Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement" form. This form is submitted to the local seneschal who will forward it to the Kingdom Waiver Secretary. The minor should also have a copy of this form with them at all times.

Youths may not participate in tournaments or large melees unless first authorized for youth combat using the procedures of their resident kingdom. They may practice or engage in small scale melees of 12 fighters or less prior to authorizing.

AGE DIVISIONS:

There are three age divisions in youth boffer combat:

Eaglet (Division 1): Ages 6-9

Cub (Division 2): Ages 10-13

Fledgling (Division 3): Ages 14-17

**See below for individual division's armor, weapons, and calibration standards.*

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT:

1. **Youth Combat is NOT a babysitting service.**
2. Designated adults have the right to remove their child from any contest or activity which they may deem inappropriate or hazardous.
3. Any adult or child present may call a "Hold" during combat activities if they see a situation that needs to be addressed by the marshals.
4. A designated adult for the child must be present during the armor inspection of their child.
5. Upon completion of the necessary participation forms, and the armor inspection of their child is completed, the level of required designated adult participation will be as stated bellow.
 - a. In the event that the designated adult cannot be present during the armor inspection process, two non-related marshals need to be present during individual inspections.
6. **Eaglet (Division 1):** At least one parent/guardian of the child must be present at the list at all times for Division 1 fighters.
7. **Cub (Division 2):** At least one parent/guardian of the child must be on the site where youth combat is taking place at all times for Division 2 fighters.
8. **Fledgling (Division 3):** A parent/guardian of a Division 3 fighter (ages 14 to 17) must have the program and rules explained to them during the minor's first visit to an SCA youth combat function. After completion of this process, they may designate an adult to be responsible for the minor at an SCA function. **However**, in addition to the "Minor's Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement" form, a copy of the "Medical Authorization for Minors" form must be on file with the kingdom waiver secretary. A copy of this form must also accompany the minor. Parents should be available via electronic communications (e.g. - cell phone) in the event of an emergency.
9. Adults watching youth combat activities shall act in a courteous manner toward the combatants, marshals, youth combat officials, and other parents. Jeering and heckling any child is NOT acceptable. Adults demonstrating bad behavior will be removed from the youth combat area. This may result in their child having to withdraw from that day's activity.
10. Youth Combatants must either have a current signed blue membership card or have their parent/guardian execute a "Minor's Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement" in order to participate in every practice, event, demo, or war. This form must be forwarded to the kingdom Waiver Secretary by the local seneschal. A digital copy that can be produced when requested will be considered acceptable.

RULES OF THE LIST:

1. All combatants shall act in a courteous and chivalrous manner at all times.
2. The instructions of the marshal shall be followed at all times. Should a safety issue arise the marshal will call "HOLD" and all combat activity in the list will stop until the marshal indicates that it is safe to resume.
3. A fighter shall not take deliberate advantage of an opponent's safety or chivalry. This includes:
 - a. Walking around an opponent who has lost the use of his legs (corkscrewing).
 - b. Hitting an opponent from behind.
 - c. Hitting an opponent who cannot defend himself (e.g. - lying on the ground).
 - d. Continually dropping a weapon or running into the list ropes.
 - e. Grappling.
 - f. Shield on body contact.
 - g. Hitting with excessive force.
 - h. Using a weapon in a manner for which it was not intended.
 - i. Example: Slashing with a spear, thrusting with a weapon that does not have a thrusting tip, etc.
4. Refusing to acknowledge blows.
5. Shield on shield contact for the purpose of unbalancing or knocking down an opponent (shield bashing).
6. Throwing or launching weapons at an opponent in the list. (Javelins may be thrown in melee combat.)

YOUTH COMBAT AUTHORIZATIONS:

The following criteria will be met to authorize in the kingdom of Northshield.

1. At least one Adult Youth Combat Marshal must witness and approve the authorization.
 - a. It is preferred that two non-related marshals are present during the authorization.
 - b. It is preferred that the authorizing marshal is not related to the child authorizing.
2. Youth combatants must demonstrate their knowledge of the rules of Youth Combat.
 - a. This will be checked by the marshals asking a series of basic questions from the rules.
 - i. Example: What armor do you have to wear? How hard do you hit?
3. Youth combatants must demonstrate that they can safely spar with other youths.
4. They must be able to effectively block shots.

5. They must be able to consistently throw shots at the appropriate level of calibration to legal target areas.
6. Upon completion of the authorization a temporary auth card will be issued. The parent/guardian of the youth is to mail a copy of the card to the clerk of the roster so that they may update the Kingdom roster. A digital copy of the youths authorized card will be available and able to be printed out if desired. This card must be shown to youth combat officials before a youth combatant engages in youth combat activities including tournaments and melees. Showing the digital copy will be considered acceptable.
7. A youth combatant who permanently moves up a Division must reauthorize to demonstrate safety with those divisions' standards.

MELEE RULES:

1. An opponent may not be struck from behind, but their weapon maybe "fouled".
2. Fighters may only charge to gain ground. They may not intentionally run into their opponents.
3. Fighters who have fallen down may not be struck. They must be allowed to rise and defend themselves before they may be struck.
4. Holds will not be called for dropped weapons unless dropping the weapon compromises the safety of the fighter. For example, if dropping a sword with a basket hilt compromises the safety of the fighter's hand.
5. During melees recognition between fighters will be required prior to engagement. A fighter must have visual contact and recognition with his opponent before striking him.
 - a. A fighter may not look away or avoid eye contact for the purposes of avoiding recognition.
 - b. A fighter must not only look at his opponent, but gain visual acknowledgement before striking the opponent.
6. No more than a 4 on 1 engagement may occur.

Crossing Divisions

Younger combatants who are not old enough for Division 2 or 3 may permanently move to a higher division with the approval of the combatant's **parent/guardian** and the Kingdom Earl Marshal or a representative designated by the Kingdom Earl Marshal.

Interdivision Participation

Acknowledging the fact that there might be a limited number of youth combatants at an event or practice, combatants may fight others in another division with the following provisions:

1. Permission of the combatant's designated adult.
2. Permission of the youth combat marshal-in-charge.
3. Older combatants must adhere to the weapon standards, calibration, and rules of the younger combatants being fought (e.g. - Division 3 combatants must fight a Division 1 combatant at the Division 1 level).

CALIBRATION STANDARDS

1. **Eaglet (Division 1):** Intentional Touch- This is a clean, unimpeded blow which is readily felt through a single layer of medium weight cloth, but is not hard enough to leave a bruise on bare skin. No face thrusts.
2. **Cub (Division 2):** Positive Force- This is a clean, unimpeded blow which is readily felt through ¼ inch of open cell padding, but is not hard enough to leave a bruise in an area covered by medium weight cloth. Face thrusts have touch calibration.
3. **Fledgling (Division 3):** Light Force- This is a clean, unimpeded blow which may be readily felt through ½ inch of open cell padding, but is not hard enough to leave a bruise through ¼ of open cell foam padding. Face thrusts have touch calibration.

**It is recommended that marshals use open cell foam of the appropriate thickness to demonstrate levels of calibration.*

Excessive blows are not permitted in any Division. Any combatant who persists in hitting too hard after appropriate warning may be removed from the field and/or have their authorization suspended.

LEGAL TARGET AREAS

1. "Edged weapons" must strike with the "blade" in order to be considered good.
2. Legal target areas for all divisions are the same as those in adult rattan combat:
 - a. Legal target area is one inch above the knees to the top of the head, and one inch above the wrist to the top of the arm
 - b. A good blow to the arm will result in the loss of the arm.
 - c. A good blow to the leg will result in the loss of that leg.
 - d. A good blow the torso, neck or head results in the opponent being "killed".
Shots to the groin and throat are legal, but discouraged.
3. Alternative formats may be used to determine victory such as counted blows or first touch provided that the combatants know and understand the format being used.
4. **Face thrusts are not allowed for Division 1 fighters.**

ARMOR REQUIREMENTS:

These are minimum required armor standards for the kingdom of Northshield. While it is the goal of the SCA to encourage a medieval appearance for all participants given the specific nature of youth combat, visible modern sports equipment may be worn as armor.

Armor Requirements (All Divisions):

Head: Helmets must completely cover the head. Hockey helmets, lacrosse helmets, and catcher's helmets with face masks are acceptable; however they may have to have additions or alterations made to them to fully enclose the head. Period looking helms are permitted, but bearing in mind the size and development of the youth the marshal-in-charge may disallow the use of a helm deemed too heavy for the youth to wear safely.

- a. All helmets must have grills, rigid mesh, or face plates which prevent a weapon from making contact with the face. No helmet shall have a gap exceeding 2 inches in the area protecting the face.
- b. The helmet must be constructed of a continuous rigid material. Segmented or jointed helmets are not permitted.
 - a. Helmets may have hanging aventails, camails, or bevors to aid in protecting the neck.
- c. Helmets must have a chin strap or back strap to hold it securely on the head.
- d. Helmets must be padded inside so that the rigid portions of it do not contact the head.
- e. Helmets must fit properly.

- f. Helmets in conjunction with neck protection (such as a gorget) must be constructed so that a weapon may not touch **any** exposed area of the head or neck.
- g. If the combination of the helmet and gorget do not fully cover the combatants neck/throat during normal range of motion a modification, such as an aventail, will be required.

Body: All combatants must have the torso, arms, and legs covered with a minimum of cloth. Long sleeve tunics, shirts, and long pants or skirts are acceptable.

Groin: Groin protection is required at all times during combat activities.

- a. For boys, the groin must be covered by a minimum of a rigid athletic cup (e.g., an ice hockey, soccer, karate, or baseball cup) worn in a supporter or fighting garment designed to hold the cup in place, or equivalent armor.
 - a. Equivalent armor is to be defined as rigid protection that fully protects the groin area during normal combat activities.
- b. For girls, groin protection of closed-cell foam or heavy leather or the equivalent is required to cover the pubic bone area. The wearing of a male athletic cup by female fighters is prohibited.

Feet: All combatants must wear shoes which cover the feet. Sandals, flip-flops, crocs, etc. are NOT acceptable.

Shields:

- a. Shields may be made of wood, plastic, aluminum, or an equivalent material.
- b. Edges must be covered by plastic tubing, leather, or foam.
- c. No wires, bolts, screws, or other objects may project more than ¼ inch without padding or tape covering them.
 - a. Center bosses are not considered projections, and do not need to meet this requirement.
- d. Shields should be of a shape appropriate to that used in period.
- e. Shields should be of an appropriate weight for the size and strength of the combatant.

**Additional division armor requirements are outlined below.*

Additional Armor Requirements by Division:

Eaglet (Division 1)

Neck: The throat and larynx shall be protected by a minimum of light leather or the equivalent.

Hands: A minimum of light gloves is required.

Cub (Division 2)

Neck: A minimum gorget of rigid material or medium weight leather with a half inch closed cell foam (or equivalent) is required. The larynx and cervical vertebrae must be covered by rigid material or medium weight leather. Aventails, camails, and coifs may be substituted or used in conjunction with gorgets as long as all required areas are protected.

Torso: Kidneys must be protected by a minimum of a medium weight leather kidney belt with a half inch closed cell foam (or equivalent). It is recommended but not required that girls have chest protection.

Arms: Elbows must be protected by a minimum of soft pads.

Legs: Knees must be protected by a minimum of soft pads.

Hands: Gloves with a minimum of at least ¼ inch padding protecting the fingers, back of the hand, and wrist are required. Street hockey gloves or light glove in a rigid basket hilt with wrist protection is acceptable.

Fledging (Division 3)

The practice of hard over soft will be followed for all areas requiring rigid protection. This means that under the rigid protection there should be a half inch of closed cell foam padding, or its equivalent.

Neck: A gorget of rigid material or heavy leather with a half inch closed cell foam (or equivalent padding) is required. The larynx and cervical vertebrae must be covered by rigid material.

- An aventail, camail, or coif may be substituted or used in conjunction with gorgets as long as all required areas are protected.

Torso: Kidneys and the xiphoid process must be protected by a rigid material, or medium weight leather in conjunction with half inch closed cell foam (or equivalent padding). Girls are required to have chest protection of medium leather, heavy quilted material, or the equivalent.

Arms: Elbows must be protected by a rigid material covering padding.

- Hockey, motocross elbows and other similar sports elbows are acceptable.

Legs: Knees must be protected with a rigid material covering padding.

- Hockey shin guards with attached knee protection or similar sports equipment are acceptable.

Hands: A gauntlet of heavy leather or rigid material lined with at least ½ inch of closed cell foam or heavy padding are required.

- An ice hockey glove or lacrosse glove with additional thumb protection is acceptable.
- Light gloves with a half gauntlet and a basket hilt of rigid material are acceptable.
- Street hockey gloves alone are NOT acceptable, but may be used in conjunction with a basket hilt or additional added protection.

WEAPON STANDARDS

All Divisions:

1. All weapons must be inspected regularly for deteriorated or compromised foam as well as damaged or broken components.
 - a. All weapons that will be used are to be inspected by a marshal prior to use at all official practices and events.
 - b. The participant/parent/guardian is responsible for regularly inspecting the weapons as is the marshal.
2. No weapon shall use materials which might shatter or splinter on impact.
 - a. Materials may be tested by placing the material on an anvil and striking it several times with a hammer.
 - b. **PVC may NOT** be used in any component of a weapon.
3. No metal may be used in any weapons. This includes, but is not limited to: basket hilts, pommel weights, and hose clamps.
4. Flails, pole axes, and two ending striking surfaces are not permitted.
5. Weapons may not be excessively heavy. Weapons may not exceed 8 ounces per foot in weight.
6. Thrusting tips shall be constructed of closed cell foam covered with duct tape or cloth. They must extend 2 inches past the end of the core and be at least 2.5 inches in diameter.
7. Striking surfaces must be covered with at least 3/8 closed cell foam extending at least 1 inch past the core material. The foam must be covered with a single loose layer of duct tape or a cloth sleeve.

8. Thrusting tips and “edges” must be marked with contrasting colored tape.
9. Thrusting tips should be constructed so that they do not fold over.
10. Pommels and the butt ends of weapons without butt spikes or basket hilts must be covered with at least 3/8 inch closed cell foam extending at least 1 inch past the end of the core material. This must be covered with a loose single layer of duct tape or cloth.
11. Lanyards or triggers are required on all single-handed weapons.
12. Basket hilts are permitted on single-handed weapons.
13. Experimental weapons must be approved by the Society Deputy for Youth

Additional Weapon Standards by Division

Eaglet (Division 1)

1. The following are permitted as core materials for Division 1 weapons- rattan with a diameter between $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1 inch, golf tubes, siloflex with a diameter of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch, PEX tubing with a diameter of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.
2. Rattan core weapons must have the ends rounded and/or covered with cloth or leather to prevent the edges from cutting through foam tips.
3. All other core materials must have the ends covered with cloth, leather or similar material.
4. Two-handed weapons made with golf tubes shall be constructed of two tubes taped together with an overlap of 3 inches.
5. Butt spikes are NOT permitted in Division 1.
6. All weapons must be proportional to the combatant. No weapon may be longer than 5 feet.
7. Spears are not permitted in Division 1.

Cub (Division 2)

1. The principle core material for all weapons is rattan with a diameter between $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1 inch. One inch diameter PEX or Siloflex may also be used as a core material, but both ends must be capped with leather, unbreakable plastic or similar material. Given the excessive flexibility of PEX or Siloflex in warm temperatures it is recommended that these cores be limited to single-handed weapons.
2. Both ends shall be rounded and/or capped with cloth or leather to prevent the rattan from cutting through the foam.
3. Butt spikes are permitted on two-handed weapons.
4. Spears are not permitted in Division 2.

All weapons must be proportional to the combatant. No weapons may be longer than 5.5 feet.

Fledging (Division 3)

1. The same weapon standards as Division 2 apply with the following exceptions:
2. Spears up to 7.5 are permitted. They may not have butt spikes.
3. Pole arms up to 6 feet are permitted.
4. Two-handed swords up to 6 feet are permitted. The hafts may not exceed 18 inches in length.
5. Weapons longer than 5.5 feet may use rattan up to, but not exceeding 1 and 1/4 inches in diameter.

Javelins

1. Javelins made of one inch diameter PEX or Siloflex may be used in melee combat in Divisions 2 and 3. They may be thrown or be used as a single-handed thrusting weapon.
2. The thrusting tip must conform to standard weapon thrusting tips.
3. The butt end may not be used offensively. It must be padded with foam in such a manner that it will not penetrate a 2 inch opening.
4. Javelins must be between 4 and 5 ½ feet long.
5. Fins or stabilizers of foam or duct tape may be attached near the backend.
6. Calibration level for a THROWN javelin is intentional touch.
7. Calibration level for a javelin used as a one-handed thrusting weapon is the same as any weapon appropriate for that division.
8. Face thrusts are legal for thrown javelins.

MARSHALS REQUIREMENTS:

To be a warranted Youth Boffer Combat Marshal an individual will demonstrate the following:

1. Know the kingdom of Northshield Youth Combat Rules as well as the SCA standards.
2. They should be able to supervise youth combatants both in the lists and in melee combat.
 - a. Marshals will demonstrate an ability to stay calm and collected, and be respectful towards the youth when working with them.
3. They should promote safe practices and enforce the rules of the list.
4. They will be able to inspect weapons and armor and ensure that they meet the required standards.

5. They should be able to authorize youth combatants according to the rules of the kingdom of Northshield.
6. All marshals must be paid members. They must have a current blue signed SCA membership card, or have signed an Adult waiver form, and also have proof that they have been warranted by their kingdom to marshal youth combat (e.g. -warrant card).
7. To be a fully warranted marshal in the kingdom of Northshield they must have a completed, and passed, background check.
 - a. **Marshals in Training** may begin training as a marshal without a completed background check. They will not be promoted to fully warranted status until their background check passes, and they can demonstrate the ability to perform the duties of a marshal.

MARSHAL TYPES

Adult Youth Combat Marshal.

1. These are marshals who have been warranted by the kingdom of Northshield and have passed a current SCA background check. Further information on background checks may be found in the SCA Youth Policies.
 - a. Duties include inspecting armor, supervising combat and melees, sparring with youth, handling any issues that may arise with combatants or present adults.
2. Adults may not participate in youth combat tournaments or melees.

Adult Youth Combat Marshals in Training

1. These are marshals who have not been fully warranted by the Kingdom. They may perform all duties of a warranted marshal with the following exceptions:
 - a. While working with children they must be supervised by a warranted marshal at all times.
 - b. May not be marshal in charge.
 - c. May not be an authorizing marshal.
 - i. Marshal in training may assist with an authorization, but may not run the authorization.

Line Marshals

1. These marshals work under the supervision of a Youth Combat Marshal.
2. Line marshals do not perform inspections or conduct authorizations, or directly work with youth participants.
3. Line Marshals will provide an “extra set of eyes” in the lists during tournaments or during melees.

4. Line marshals do not need a completed background check.

MARSHAL DUTIES

1. All SCA youth combat activities including practices, events, demos, and wars must have at least one Adult Youth Combat Marshal and another non-related adult supervising the activities in each youth combat area at all times.
 - a. In accordance with the Society Youth Policy's "Two-Deep Rule" at least 2 adults not related to each other must be present in each area where youths are engaged in youth combat activities.
2. An appropriate ratio of marshals to combatants should be used to ensure safety criteria are met.
 - a. Larger melees may require more than two marshals.
3. Marshals shall make sure that all armor and equipment is inspected and safe to use.
4. Marshals shall monitor activities and behavior on the field and immediately stop all potentially hazardous or unchivalrous activities by calling "HOLD".
 - a. Use of calling "HOLD" is not limited to marshals only. Anyone may call hold if the above conditions occur.
5. Youth violating rules on calibration or appropriate behavior shall be given a minimum of one warning before being removed from the field.
6. Marshals should keep in mind the age(s) of the youth and strive to minimize inactive time while the children are in armor.

REPORTING

Youth Combat is a subsidiary of Armored Combat. Kingdom Youth Combat Marshals should report their activities to their Kingdom Earl Marshal with three exceptions.

1. Any progress reports about using pre-approved experimental weapons should be reported to the Society Deputy for Youth Combat.
2. An incident involving serious injury to a youth fighter should be reported to the Society Deputy for Youth Combat as well as the Kingdom Earl Marshal. A serious injury is something which involves emergency medical treatment or hospitalization.
3. Incidents of inappropriate behavior by a youth combatant or participating adult which is serious enough to warrant revoked authorization, warrant, a court of chivalry, possible banishment, or legal action should be reported to the Society Deputy for Youth

Combat as well as the Kingdom Earl Marshal. A copy of this report will be forwarded to the Society Special Deputy for Family and Youth Programs.

GLOSSARY

Aventail- A piece of metal, heavy leather, or other rigid material attached to the back of a helmet. It protects the back of the neck.

Bevor- A piece of metal, heavy leather, or other rigid material attached to the front of a helmet. It protects the throat.

Camail- A drape of chainmail, leather, or padded cloth which hangs from the helmet. It protects the neck.

Coif- This is cap of chainmail or padded cloth worn under a helmet which extends to the base of the neck. It may be long enough to also cover the shoulders.

Gorget- This is a protect collar which protects the neck. It may also protect the larynx and cervical vertebrae.

Heavy Leather- This is at least 10 ounce leather (approximately 1/4 inch thick).

Light Gloves- These are gloves made of cloth, canvas, or thin (2 to 4 ounce) leather. **Light Leather-** This is 4 to 6 ounce leather about 3/32 inch thick.

Medium Leather- This is 7 to 9 ounce leather about 1/8 inch thick.

Melee- This is fighting between teams of two or more persons per side.

PEX- This is flexible, shatterproof, white plastic pipe which can be found in some large hardware stores.

PVC- This is flexible pipe usually white or gray in color which may shatter upon impact. It is NOT legal for youth combat.

Rigid Material-

- Steel of no less than 18 gauge, or aluminum of no less than 0.075 inch (1.9mm)
- Other metals of sufficient thickness to give similar rigidity to those listed above to include treated steel or aluminum.
- High-impact-resistant plastics such as ABS or polyethylene of sufficient thickness to give similar rigidity to those listed above.

- Heavy leather (as defined above) that has been hardened in hot wax, soaked in polyester resin (properly catalyzed), or treated in such a manner as to permanently harden the leather.
- Two layers of untreated heavy leather (as defined above)
- Other materials equivalent to those items listed above (Any armor of unusual construction or materials must meet the approval of the Kingdom Earl Marshal or their designated deputy.)

Siloflex- This is flexible, shatterproof tubing which can be found in many hardware stores. It is usually black in color.

Xiphoid Process- This is the area at the base of the sternum.

Minor Waivers

No youth shall participate in youth combat unless the responsible adult has completed a “Minor’s Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement” form. This form is submitted to the local seneschal who will forward it to the Kingdom Waiver Secretary. The minor should also have a copy of this form with him/her at all times.

Youth Combatants must either have a current signed blue membership card or have their parent/guardian execute a “Minor’s Consent to Participate and Hold Harmless Agreement” in order to participate in every practice, event, demo, or war. This form must be forwarded to the kingdom Waiver Secretary by the local seneschal. A digital copy that can be produced when requested will be considered acceptable.

<http://www.sca.org/docs/pdf/chldwaiv.pdf>

<http://www.sca.org/docs/pdf/treatminor.pdf>

<http://www.sca.org/docs/pdf/treatminor-notary.pdf>