

General Orders of a Sentry



Lone Star Squadron, Fort Worth, Texas



Eleven General Orders

- There are 11 general orders for a sentry.
- The next 11 screens will give them to you along with a brief explanation of each.
- You should memorize them word for word.
- You don't need to memorize the explanations, but you should understand the meaning of each order.



First General Order

- **1. To take charge of this post and all government property in view.**
 - The number of the post, type of sentry duty, and limits of your post are part of your special orders. Within the limits of your post, you have authority over all persons, and it's your duty to challenge and, if necessary, detain all persons acting in a suspicious manner.
 - You should apprehend all persons involved in disorder or discovered committing a crime.
 - All persons detained or apprehended are turned over to the petty officer of the guard.
 - You should fire your weapon only as a last resort. Smoking in a prohibited area, for example, is hardly a shooting offense. There are times, however, when firing at another person may be justified, but only after all means of defense or crime prevention have failed. In general, such times are as follows:
 - a. To protect your own or another's life
 - b. To prevent the escape of a person known to have committed a serious crime, such as armed robbery, rape, or murder
 - c. To prevent sabotage, espionage, arson, and other crimes against the government
 - d. If you must fire your weapon, try to wound instead of kill the person you're aiming at



Second General Order

- **2. To walk my post in a military manner, keeping always alert and observing everything that takes place within my sight or hearing.**
 - Keep turning your head as you walk your post, observing everything ahead and to the sides.
 - If you hear a strange noise, investigate it.
 - You cannot expect to stand all your watches in fair weather. When the weather is bad, you will be issued appropriate clothing.
 - Do not stand under a tree to keep out of the rain or stay behind a building to get out of a cold wind; during times of bad weather and darkness, you must be particularly alert.



Third General Order

- **3. To report all violations of orders I am instructed to enforce.**
 - If a person is acting from thoughtlessness, you need only remind the offender of the regulation being broken. For example, if you see a person starting to light a cigarette in a no smoking zone or a visitor blundering into a restricted area, you need only tell the person the regulation in effect.
 - If the person is willfully violating a regulation, however, like trying to jump the fence or stealing Navy property, you must stop the person and place the offender under apprehension; then call for the petty officer of the guard.
 - If the person tries to escape, give the order to halt.
 - If the person does not obey, fire into the air; if the person does not stop, fire at the fleeing party's legs, subject to the limitations given under general order 1. If the offender escapes, report the matter as quickly as you can to the petty officer of the guard.
 - In every instance, try to remember what the offender looked like so that you may identify the person.
 - Do not leave your post to chase the offender unless immediate action is essential.
 - By firing your weapon and shouting, you can alert other sentries to intercept the offender. Do not fire at an offender if anyone else is around who could be hit by your shot.
 - It is better to let the wrongdoer escape for the time being than to shoot an innocent person.



Fourth General Order

- **To repeat all calls from posts more distant from the guardhouse (quarterdeck) than my own.**
 - Suppose your post is number 3.
 - To call the petty officer of the guard for any purpose other than relief, fire, or disorder, you call, "Petty officer of the guard (or corporal of the guard), post number 3." Sentry number 2 will repeat your call, giving your number, and so will sentry number 1.
 - Thus the petty officer will know immediately which post to go to. Similarly, if sentry number 4 calls out, repeat the call, giving his or her number.



Fifth General Order

- **5. To quit my post only when properly relieved.**
 - If you aren't relieved on time, don't abandon your post, but call the petty officer of the guard for instructions.
 - If you require a relief because of sickness or other reason, call, "Petty officer of the guard, post number _____, relief."



Sixth General Order

- **6. To receive, obey, and pass on to the sentry who relieves me all orders from the commanding officer, officer of the day, and officers and petty officers of the guard only.**
 - During your tour of duty, you are subject to the orders of the CO, XO, OOD, and the officers and petty officers of the guard only.
 - Other officers and petty officers have no authority to take or inspect your weapon, to tell you how to stand your watch, or to order you to leave your post. Such other officers, however, still have the authority to investigate your conduct and to report it.
 - Thus an enemy agent cannot dress up in an officer's uniform and order you from your post.
 - You obey orders only from officers whom you know are authorized to give you commands related to your sentry duty.
 - However, a passing naval officer who believes you are standing a poor watch may ask your name and post and report any observations to your superiors.



Seventh General Order

- **7. To talk to no one except in the line of duty.**
 - When you challenge or talk with a person, take the position of port arms.
 - Answer questions briefly but courteously. Normally, if you maintain silence and military bearing, visitors will not try to engage you in long conversations. If, however, visitors or other naval personnel show a desire to pass the time of day with you, you must say politely to them “Excuse me, I am on duty and cannot talk with you further. Please move on.” If they refuse to move on or show signs of becoming disorderly, you should call for the petty officer of the guard.
 - Remember, if your superiors see you chatting while on duty, they will hold you responsible-not your visitor.



Eighth General Order

- **8. To give the alarm in case of fire or disorder.**
 - In case of fire, you immediately call, "Fire, post number ____" and sound whatever alarm is available.
 - When you are sure your alarm has been heard by the other sentries or by the petty officer of the guard see what you can do to put out the fire. (If you can do so safely and without leaving your post, do so; otherwise, remain where you can direct apparatus to the fire.)
 - Remember that the fire may be a trick to lure you away from your post. You must remain vigilant (alert), even amid the confusion and excitement that accompanies a fire.
 - What we have said about fire applies also for disorder. In the event of a disorder, call the guard immediately; then try to quiet the trouble.
 - If you approach the disorder first, you might be overcome and then could not give the alarm. Sometimes you can stop a disorder before it becomes too serious by calling to the persons involved, "I have reported you to the guard, who will be along immediately. Come to order now; further trouble will make matters worse for you." The persons concerned might realize you are right and follow your orders. If they do, maintain watch over them but do not approach too closely.
 - Keep your weapon at port arms.



Ninth General Order

- **9. To call the petty officer of the guard in any case not covered by instructions.**
 - When you do not know what to do, call the petty officer of the guard.



Tenth General Order

- **To salute all officers and all colors and standards not cased.**
 - As used here, colors and standards both refer to the national ensign.
 - The ensign is called the national colors (or just colors) when it is flying from a staff or pike carried by an individual or displayed in a fixed location, as from a flagpole.
 - When mounted on a vehicle, the ensign is called the national standard. (Colors and standards are cased when they are furled and placed in a protective covering.)
 - For sentries, the rules for saluting are the same as those described in chapter 9 of the BMR with the following modifications:
 - a. If you are walking your post or patrolling while armed with a rifle, you halt and salute by presenting arms; when at sling arms, you render the hand salute.
 - b. If you're in a sentry box, you stand at attention in the doorway when an officer approaches; if you're armed with a rifle, you present arms. If otherwise armed, render the hand salute. If you're on duty in front of a building or passageway entrance where there is heavy traffic of officers, you may render the rifle salute at order arms. If you're in conversation with an officer, you don't interrupt the conversation to salute another officer. If the officer with you salutes a senior, however, then you also salute.
 - c. During the time of challenging, you don't salute an officer until the officer has advanced and has been duly recognized. You don't salute if to do so will interfere with the proper execution of your specific duties.



Eleventh General Order

- **11. To be especially watchful at night and during the time for challenging, to challenge all persons on or near my post, and to allow no one to pass without proper authority.**
 - When you see a person approaching your post, take the position of port arms and call, "Halt! Who is there?" The challenge must be made at a distance sufficient to prevent your being rushed by the person being challenged. If the person answers "Friend" or "Petty officer of the guard" or gives another reply indicating a friendly nature, call, "Advance (friend, and so on) to be recognized."
 - If you challenge a party of persons, after receiving a reply indicating the party is friendly, you call, "Advance one person to be recognized."
 - When you have identified the one, you have the person bring up the rest of the party and identify each individual.
 - You must positively identify all persons challenged before permitting them to pass.
 - If you can't identify them to your satisfaction, detain them and call the petty officer of the guard.
 - Never let more than one person advance at a time.
 - If two persons approach at the same time, have them halt; then advance the senior and pass that person (if properly identified) before advancing the other person.
 - If the people are in a vehicle, you halt the vehicle and inspect the driver's or the passengers' credentials, as appropriate. (Normally, inspecting the driver of a military vehicle is sufficient; but for a commercial truck or taxi, you should check the passengers too.) If you believe there's something suspicious about the vehicle or its occupants, direct one of the occupants to get out and approach you for recognition. If you aren't satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the people are authorized to pass, detain the person or party and call the petty officer of the guard.
 - When challenging, advancing, and passing persons and patrols, always stand where you can get a good look at them in such a way that you are protected from a surprise attack.