

## **HMA Guidelines for Products that Use Historical but Potentially Offensive Terms or Symbols**

The HMA takes the issue of potentially offensive language and symbology very seriously. Many hobby industry products recreate historical artifacts ranging from vehicles to uniforms that may include historically accurate flags or symbols that have the potential to cause offense to people, including retailers, hobbyists, and others. This can create difficulties for manufacturers who seek to provide historically accurate products for hobbyists who want them but who do not wish to offend or to create controversy surrounding their brand.

Moreover, manufacturers must also take pains to ensure that the language and imagery used to describe, market or sell any of its products also does not cause offense.

The HMA supports the manufacturing of historically accurate items but recommends that manufacturers follow these guidelines to avoid causing controversy or offense and to promote a welcome and inviting hobby environment for all.

### Symbols and Imagery

- Potentially offensive symbols and imagery (for example, a Nazi flag on a World War II German model ship, a Confederate flag in a box of Confederate soldier figures, or an SS insignia on a figure) should not appear on box/package artwork, or in any marketing materials (printed or online), so as not to draw attention to the symbol or to give the impression that the manufacturer is using such symbols to market its products.
- For most subjects, there are less-controversial symbols that can be used in artwork instead of symbols that are a lightning rod for controversy. For example, instead of displaying the Confederate battle flag on product artwork, one can have soldiers holding a regimental or state flag instead.
- Be aware of the relevant laws of each country. Some countries may explicitly restrict certain symbols from appearing on a product (e.g., the Nazi logo is illegal throughout Germany in any presentation, even if historically accurate).
- It is suggested to include alternative symbology in products that contain offensive symbology. Some purchasers seek absolute historical accuracy, while others may prefer not to display certain offensive symbols such as a Nazi flag. For this reason, the HMA suggests that manufacturers also include substitute symbology in the product that purchasers can use instead (for example, two sets of flag stickers/decals instead of just one).
- If a product does have potentially offensive symbology or markings, it is suggested to include an explanation and disclaimer with the assembly instructions. This statement can also explain that the substitute markings can be used instead.
- Symbols that are most likely to cause offense or controversy include, but are not limited to, the Confederate Battle Flag, the Nazi flag, and symbols and insignia related to the Waffen SS.

## Language and Terminology

- If a group of people are used in a product title, make sure to refer to them using terminology acceptable to that group of people. In particular, historical informal or slang references to certain peoples or combatants may no longer be acceptable
- Some terms, such as the word “Indian” to describe Native Americans, are preferred by some Native Americans but opposed by others. The fact that some Native Americans accept or use the term does not negate the fact that it may still offend others. Try to use the terminology most widely accepted by the community being described.
- Keep in mind that some terms may be acceptable in one national market but less acceptable in another market.
- Use of historical titles or terms is acceptable; for example, a figure set can be of the “American-Indian Wars,” but it is better to refer to single figures by tribal names such as “Sioux” or “Apache,” or terms such as “Sioux warriors” or “warriors of the Great Plains” than to refer to them as “Indians.” Other generic terms include Native Americans or Indigenous Peoples, but historical and geographic specificity is often preferred.
- For children’s playsets featuring Native Americans, references to “Western” themes (like “the Old West”) may be preferable to “Cowboys and Indians.”