

The Seven Sandbag Sector

No more Aiming Stakes! Marines use aiming stakes to define a sector of fire in a fighting position. Aiming stakes, usually made from tree branches, have always been a challenge:

- Aiming stakes are seldom steady when emplaced.
- Aiming stakes are difficult to move after they have been emplaced.
- Even when emplaced properly, aiming stakes do not define the elevation of the weapon. In some terrain, especially desert and MOUT, field expedient aiming stakes are not available.

Many units fabricate aiming stakes from lumber, tent stakes, or engineer stakes. Although better than stakes made from tree branches, such methods are costly, difficult to carry, and still suffer some of the same shortcomings of “natural” aiming stakes.

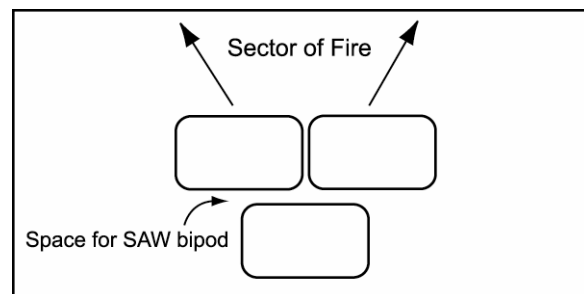
There is, however, a simple, inexpensive, and more effective alternative: **Use seven sandbags to designate your sector of fire.**

A seven sandbag sector is easily emplaced, modifiable, and reusable. With seven sandbags, a Marine can:

- Clearly and accurately designate his sector of fire for both elevation and deflection.
- Improve the survivability of his position.
- Be independent of available vegetation

The procedure is as follows:

1. Carry seven empty sandbags. When building your fighting position, fill all seven sandbags with the spoil from your position. In MOUT, find some nearby dirt, sand, or gravel.

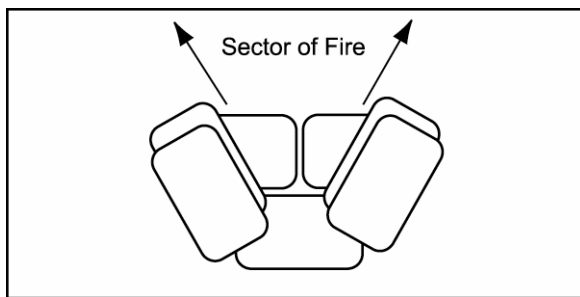


2. Place three sandbags in front of your position with their long sides perpendicular to your direction of fire.

The sandbags should form a triangle, two bags forward, one bag back. For SAW gunners, leave a two-inch space for the bipod legs between the forward and rear bags.

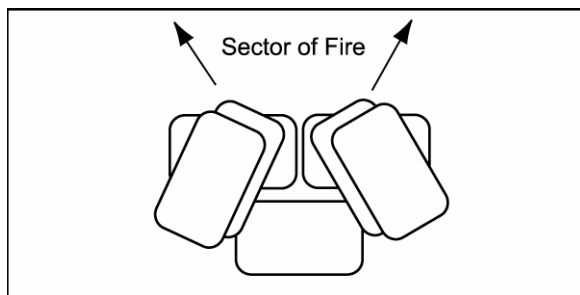
3. Stack two sandbags on the left and two on the right. Align the inner edges of the bags with your assigned sector of fire. This is best done with two Marines: one to aim in on the left and right sector limits, and one to position the sand bags.

When completed, the weapon will slide smoothly across the sandbag base on its hand guards. The magazine will descend behind the rear bag. At the left and right lateral limits, the weapon will rest solidly against the inside edge of each sandbag stack.

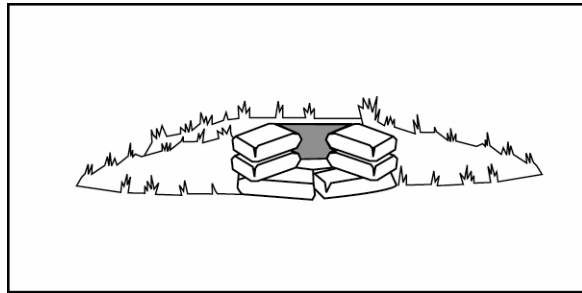


4. For the SAW, place the bipod legs in the gap in the sandbag base, allowing enough room for the SAW to traverse its sector of fire.

Align the inner edges of the bags with your left and right lateral limits. Since the pivot point for the SAW is forward, the sandbags will angle inwards.



5. To define a SAW PDF, insert a marker post such as a stick, bayonet, or K-Bar behind the sandbag base. Rest the weapon's pistol grip on this post to define the direction and elevation of the PDF.



The seven sandbag sector is now your fighting position's aperture. It should be integrated into your fighting hole parapet and then camouflaged.

Using sandbags is a more efficient, flexible, and more effective way to define a sector of fire. If you want to accurately mark your sector of fire, provide yourself more protection, do so quickly, easily, and repeatedly, get yourself seven sandbags.