

## Chapter 7

# RANGE SAFETY RULES

### Three Fundamental NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling to live by:

- **Always** keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. Make sure the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off, it would not cause injury.
- **Always** keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot. The finger(s) should rest alongside the gun, i.e., on the frame, receiver, or trigger guard.
- **Always** keep the gun unloaded until ready to use. Safeties can fail.

***Safe gun handling rules should be followed all the time!***

## Additional Rules for Safe Use

### Range Limitations and Safety Requirements. Live-fire shooters shall:

Read these rules prior to handling and using firearms at these ranges. In addition,

- ◆ Know and obey all range commands.
- ◆ Know where others are at all times.
- ◆ Fire only on scheduled ranges.
- ◆ Know your target and what is beyond.
  - The shooter must be sure that projectiles will safely impact into the backstop.
- ◆ Do not handle a firearm or stand at the firing line where firearms are present while others are downrange.
- ◆ Fire only authorized firearms and ammunition.
- ◆ Be sure the gun is safe to operate.
- ◆ Know how to use the gun safely.
  - Shooters need to know how the gun operates, its basic parts, how to safely open and close the action, and how to remove ammunition.
- ◆ Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.
  - Only ammunition designed for a particular gun can be safely fired in that gun. Shooters should ensure that the caliber or gauge marked on the barrel, ammo box, and cartridge case match. This is especially true for antique firearms.
- ◆ Carry only one caliber or gauge of ammunition when shooting.
  - When at the range with more than one firearm of different caliber or gauge, use only one firearm at a time and when finished firing with one firearm, store and secure that firearm and all of its ammunition before using the next one.
- ◆ Fire at authorized targets only, i.e. rifle range metal silhouette targets and private targets placed on backboards only.
  - Clay targets must be used only at the shotgun range, either with hand throwers or provided mechanical traps.
- ◆ Targets must be placed at the shooter's eye level to ensure bullets hit the impact area.

- On the rifle range backstops, targets are to be placed only on the whiteboards or backboards, NOT in front of or on top of the posts. Only paper or cardboard targets are to be placed on the backstops. NO cans, bottles, or explosive materials shall be shot.
- ◆ Ensure all projectiles impact within the established range safety limits.
- ◆ Appoint a temporary range officer when multiple parties are using rifle ranges.
- ◆ Call **“Cease Firing”** and make safe all firearms when a shooter moves forward of the firing line or during any unsafe condition.
  - Shooting at different targets, e.g., steel targets, at different distances or angles may result in hazardous conditions.
- ◆ Call **“Cease firing”** if a firing line becomes staggered (one shooter forward of another) anywhere on the range complex.
- ◆ Stop shooting immediately upon the command of **“Cease Fire.”**
  - Anyone can call for a **“Cease Fire.”**
  - Await further instructions from the RSO or whoever called the Cease Fire and insure conditions are safe before resuming shooting.
- ◆ All firearms must remain unloaded with actions open except when on the firing line and authorized to be loaded.
- ◆ When firearms are benched or grounded, keep the actions open and ejection ports facing upward so chambers are visible.
- ◆ Ammunition is not permitted in the cleaning area.
- ◆ Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate.
  - Guns are loud and the noise can cause hearing damage. Guns can also emit debris, hot gas, and cartridge cases that could cause eye injuries. Users of air gun ranges, including spectators, need eye protection to prevent injuries from ricochets.
- ◆ Use appropriate ear protection.
- ◆ Wear appropriate eye protection.
- ◆ Leave dropped ammunition on the ground until the stage of fire is completed and firearms are benched or grounded. When applicable, raise a hand if assistance is required by a safety officer.
  - This policy prevents shooters from unintentionally pointing the firearm at other users while retrieving dropped ammunition, or inadvertently moving in front of the firing line.
- ◆ Notify other range users when there is a firearm stoppage malfunction or misfire.
  - Notification is critical for safety at the end of the course of fire. In the case of a muzzleloader, if the muzzle loading firearm failed to fire, a hazardous condition may exist.
  - The misfire in a muzzle loader could actually be a hangfire, which is a delay in the ignition of the cartridge. Due to the possibility of a hangfire, the shooter must keep the firearm pointed downrange and wait at least 30 seconds for modern firearms, or at least two minutes for muzzle loading firearms, prior to correcting the malfunction.

## Site-Specific Range Rules

### Authorized & Prohibited Firearms.

- ◆ Fully automatic firearms are not authorized and are prohibited.
- ◆ Armor-piercing or tracer ammunition is not allowed.
- ◆ Muzzle loading firearms are allowed.

**Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs.** Shooters may not consume alcoholic beverages or drugs (including prescription and over-the-counter medications) before or during live firing. The PAGC officers or RSO will deny range access to anyone in violation.

- ◆ Never use alcohol, drugs, or any substance that may impair normal mental or physical bodily functions before or while shooting.
  - Examples include prescription and non-prescription drugs, e.g., cold medicines that may cause drowsiness, nervousness, balance problems, etc. Anyone taking any medication or substance that may impair normal mental or physical bodily functions is not allowed on the range.

## NRA Hygiene Guidelines

NRA hygiene guidelines are intended to minimize exposure to airborne particulate lead and cleaning product residues. Everybody exposed at the range or cleaning area--even if they did not participate in the shooting session--should follow these guidelines:

- Refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, applying makeup, or otherwise placing hands in proximity to the mouth or nose while on the range or cleaning a gun.
- Wash your hands and face with cold water after leaving the range or cleaning area before eating or drinking. Cold water will minimize skin pores opening and absorbing toxic materials.
- Change and wash clothing after a shooting or gun cleaning session to minimize exposure to airborne particulate lead or solvent and cleaning product residues. Shooters will be reminded that the minimum foot ware requirement is sandals. Going barefoot on the ranges should be considered dangerous and will not be permitted. Stepping on fired brass does present a serious puncture and laceration type foot hazard.

## FIRING LINE COMMANDS

Standard range commands will be used for specific shooting event(s), i.e. formal competition rules are specified in NRA Rule Books.

- ◆ “As you were” means to disregard the command just given.
- ◆ “Carry on” means to proceed with what was being done before an interruption.
- ◆ For trap squads, “Squad # \_\_\_\_\_ (or naming the squad), on the firing line” means shooters are to move to their firing points. “Squad # \_\_\_\_\_ on deck” means that squad will be next on the firing line and should prepare to have guns and ammo in the ready.
- ◆ “Is the line/squad ready?” by the squad leader allows a shooter with problems to raise an arm and call “Not ready on post....” Squad leader should verify all squad members have eye and ear protection in place.
- ◆ “Scorer ready?” by squad leader asks scorer if he/she is ready for the squad to call for targets.
- ◆ “Can we see one?” by squad leaders requests scorer to launch a target for the squad to see. Guns shall remain in the relaxed or ready position and shall not track the sample target.

## Authorized Personnel

The following persons are allowed to use PAGC facilities:

- a. Current paid members of the PAGC. Memberships can be deposited in the drop box at the range, or obtained from any PAGC officer. Membership card must be presented on request of RSO or other PAGC officers.
- b. Invited guests of the above, provided the authorized person is present and assumes full responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest(s).
- c. Personnel approved by the PAGC officers or RSO on a case-by-case basis.
- d. Scholastic youth shooting sports teams and club participants under the direct supervision of certified coaches and volunteers during scheduled practices and competitions. PAGC membership is not required by youth team participants.
- e. Members of Palo Alto County Law Enforcement Agencies conducting training exercises. Outside county law enforcement agencies are allowed to use PAGC facilities for training exercises with prior PAGC notification.

Note: **ALL** law enforcement staff and personnel must have a PAGC membership for off-duty personal usage of range facilities.