

USPSA – Northwest Section

Practical Shooting Safety Check

USPSA rules are all important to safe and fair competition. The Northwest Section Safety Check includes discussion of safety rules and basics of competition. Competing safely in a USPSA event requires competitors to understand equipment requirements, range commands, and types of safety infractions listed in the current rule book.

Be sure no one is carrying a loaded gun before beginning the safety check.
The new competitor must pass each item to be allowed to compete.

DISQUALIFICATIONS (summarized)

ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE – Specific rules in Chapter 10.4

- Any shot directly over the backstop/berm. (This is a really bad situation. Explain that our club may be shut down permanently if a bullet strikes a person, car, or house outside of the range.)
- Any shot fired while not actively and obviously engaging a target.

UNSAFE GUN HANDLING – Specific rules in Chapter 10.5

- Handling a firearm anytime except in a designated safety area, or in response to direct RO command.
- Muzzle breaks the 180, whether loaded or not (to the side, above, or below).
- During the Course of Fire, dropping or losing control of the firearm (Do not attempt to catch it!)
- Muzzle points at any part of any person's body (sweeping).
 - Exception: DQ does not apply to sweeping of the legs/feet while drawing or re-holstering.
- Failure to keep the finger outside of the trigger guard unless actively and obviously engaging a target.
- Holstering or placing a loaded firearm down with the hammer back and the safety not applied.
- Handling live or dummy ammo, training rounds, empty cases, or loaded magazines in the safety area.
- Having a loaded firearm other than when specifically ordered to by the Range Officer.
- Retrieving a dropped firearm anywhere on the range. (Stand over the firearm and get an RO to assist.)

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Specific rules in Chapter 10.6

- Cheating, dishonesty, or failing to comply with the reasonable directions of a match official.

PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES – Specific rules in Chapter 10.7

- Competitors may not be under the influence of alcohol, non-prescription and non-essential drugs, illegal or performance enhancing drugs, or medications that negatively affect a competitor's mental and physical control.
- If your medication says that you should not be driving a car or operating heavy machinery, you should probably also not be running around with a loaded gun.

RANGE COMMANDS – Chapter 8.3

"Make Ready" – This command signifies the start of the Course of Fire. Once this command has been given, the competitor must not move away from the start location without approval.

"Are You Ready?" – The lack of any negative response from the competitor indicates that he/she fully understands the requirements of the Course of Fire and is ready to proceed. The competitor may indicate that he/she is not ready for any reason.

"Standby" – The competitor must remain still until the start signal.

"Start Signal (Beep)" signifies the competitor may begin their attempt at the Course of Fire.

"Stop" – Immediately cease firing, stop moving, and wait for further instruction from the range officer.

"If you are finished, Unload and Show Clear" – If the competitor is finished shooting, present the firearm to the RO with the magazine removed, action open, and chamber/cylinder empty.

"If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster" (self-loading pistols), or

"If Clear, Hammer Down, Flag" (PCC), or **"If Clear, Cylinder Closed, Holster"** (Revolver)

After this command is issued, the competitor may not resume firing.

It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure the firearm is clear, close the action, pull the trigger (except revolvers), and holster/flag/bag the firearm.

"Range is Clear" – Command issued after the handgun is holstered/bagged or PCC is turned vertical. This signifies the end of the Course of Fire. Scoring and resetting can begin.

BASIC RANGE SAFETY BRIEFING

Start with Safety Areas. Explain when/where it's OK to put on the belt/holster, unbag the gun, load the mags, and remove the gun at the end of the match. Discuss procedure for arriving with loaded CCW. **(Go ahead and gear-up.)**

COMPETITOR EQUIPMENT – Chapter 5

Firearms:

Recommend an appropriate division for the new competitor based on the equipment he/she intends to use. Check that the magazine length complies with the division and address common modifications.

***Perform safety function check as outlined in the next section.

Holsters, Mag Pouches, Belts:

Check that the holster secures the handgun properly and prevents access to the trigger. Thigh straps not allowed.

Check that the holster/mag pouches are within the legal distance from the inside of the inner belt.

(3-3/8" – Long edge of overlay: Open, Limited, Limited 10, Revolver)

(2-1/8" – Short edge of overlay: Production, Single Stack, Carry Optics, PCC)

Eye and Hearing Protection:

Competitors and observers must wear appropriate eye and hearing protection on the range property.

SEMI-AUTO SAFETY FUNCTION CHECK

FUNCTIONING THUMB SAFETY: Put safety on, firmly press trigger, remove trigger finger, take safety off. Hammer should not fall.

FUNCTIONING HALF-COCK NOTCH: Hold hammer, press trigger, release trigger, slowly lower hammer. Should stop at notch.

FUNCTIONING DISCONNECTOR: Cock hammer. Move slide back about 1/8", press trigger. Hammer should not fall.

FUNCTIONING TRIGGER SAFETY: Cock striker. Press trigger without pressing on the trigger safety. Trigger movement should be blocked.

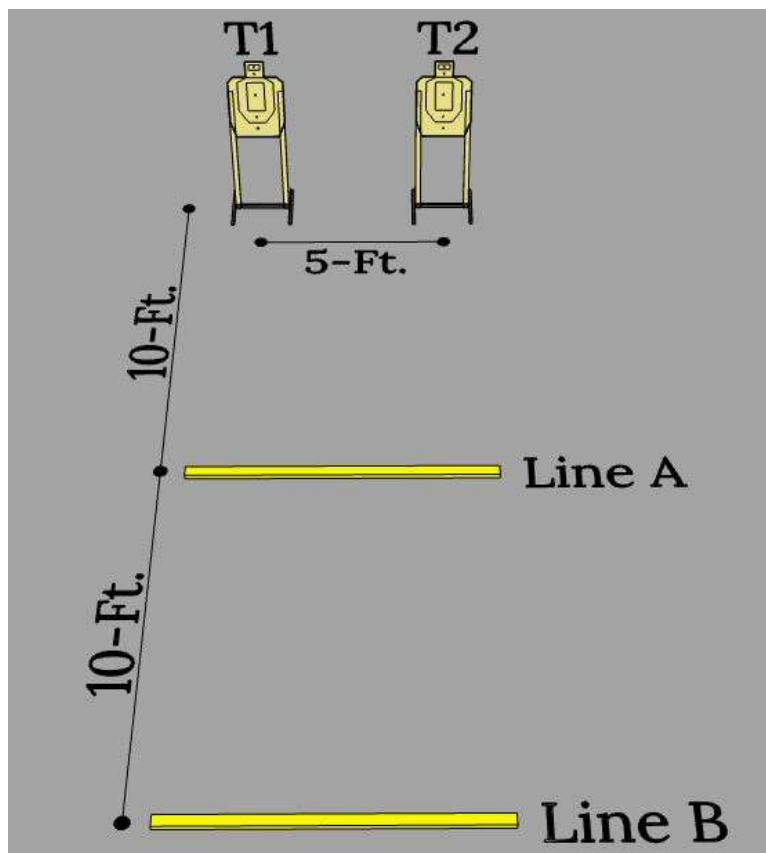
FUNCTIONING FIRING PIN BLOCK: Firing pin block should be installed and functional.

REVOLVER SAFETY FUNCTION CHECK

HAMMER BAR OR BLOCK FUNCTIONS: Check by cocking pistol, press trigger while holding hammer, release trigger and slowly lower hammer.

TIMING ACCEPTABLE: Chambers line up with barrel as you rotate the cylinder by pressing the trigger double action.
CYLINDER does not have excessive fore and aft movement.

RANGE TIME: SETUP THE COURSE IN THE DIAGRAM OR SOMETHING SIMILAR.



SCORING - CHAPTER 9 (Basics)

Discuss A-C-D Scoring Zones and Point Values (5-4-2 Major PF) (5-3-1 Minor PF)

Penalty Values (-10 for Miss, No-Shoot, Foot Fault, Procedurals)

Discuss No-Shoots and Simulated Hard Cover on targets.

Hit Factor Scoring: Add up all earned points and penalties, divide by time (points per second).

SCORING METHODS

Comstock: Unlimited time. Minimum number of hits on each target. "Keep shooting until you're done."

Virginia Count: Unlimited time. "Shoot exactly the required number of rounds on each target."

Extra shot penalties for excess rounds fired. Extra hit penalties for excess holes on any target.

Fixed Time: Limited time. "Shoot exactly the required number of rounds on each target within the time limit."

"Shoot as many rounds as you can. No penalties for misses or targets not engaged."

Over time shot penalties. Extra shot and extra hit penalties just like Virginia Count.

RO DEMONSTRATIONS WITH UNLOADED FIREARM:

RANGE COMMAND EXERCISE: Standing at Fault Line A, with an unloaded firearm and empty mags, the RO will demonstrate and explain procedures of loading, holstering, drawing, firing, reloading, unloading, and re-holstering while going through the range commands. (Modify as necessary for PCC.)

STUDENT DRY FIRE EXERCISE:

With an unloaded firearm and empty mags, have the new shooter go through the procedures demonstrated by the RO above. Repeat as necessary to assess safe firearm manipulation before moving onto live fire exercise.

LIVE FIRE DEMONSTRATIONS – Go through all Range Commands for each sequence:

(Reverse the order of the 1st and 4th procedure for Left-handed shooters.)

- Start Position: Standing at the left end of Fault Line A, wrists below belt.
Procedure: Draw and fire two rounds on T1, reload, fire two rounds on T2 from right end of Line A. (Left-Right)
- Start Position: Standing at Fault Line B, wrists above respective shoulders.
Procedure: Draw and fire two rounds on T1, mandatory reload, fire two rounds on T2 from Line A. (Advancing)
- Start Position: Standing at Fault Line A, wrists below belt.
Procedure: Draw and fire two rounds on T1, mandatory reload, fire two rounds on T2 from Line B. (Retreating)
- Start Position: Standing at the right end of Fault Line A, wrists above respective shoulders.
Procedure: Draw and fire two rounds on T2, reload, fire two rounds on T1 from left end of Line A. (Right-Left)

RANGE OFFICER’S EVALUATION OF SHOTER:

- New Shooter has proper Eye and Hearing Protection
- New Shooter has proper Holster and Mag Pouches attached to a Belt
- Firearm passes Safety Inspection / Function Check
- New Shooter understands all DQ types / Safety Infractions
- New Shooter understands Range Commands
- New Shooter understands basics of Scoring and Penalties
- Safe Demonstrations with Unloaded Gun
- Safe Live Fire Demonstrations

Firearm type used in Safety Check: Semi-Auto, PCC, Revolver

Division the new shooter will compete in: _____

NEW SHOOTER’S NAME _____ DATE _____

The shooter is rated as:

- OBSERVER: Your gun handling skills need more work before you can safely compete.
- COACH THRU: The RO may recommend, or shooter may request coaching or assistance at Level 1 matches without incurring additional penalties. Standard penalties and disqualifications will still apply.
- UNCLASSIFIED: You may compete in the next match as an Unclassified shooter.

TRAINING RANGE OFFICER _____ CLUB _____

Shooter: Retain a copy (scan/photo) of this page until you have been classified in one USPSA division.

This is still a draft.

Summary of how this is organized by my logic.

The minimum the new shooter needs to understand about our sport is what can get them disqualified, range commands, safety check their equipment, and basics of scoring.

The order of this document currently is this:

1. First be sure no one is carrying a loaded gun. This happens.
2. Go through the types of DQ's and explain each one, and what it means to DQ from a match.
3. Explain our Section DQ policy.
4. Go through the list of range commands and what they mean. Tell them not to respond to anything but the official "Make Ready" command.
5. Explain the safety area, where/when it's OK to handle guns or ammo. Explain the normal procedure of showing up, gearing up, and the location of all safety areas, and what is not a safety area.
6. Setup a simple stage as shown on page 3. (This could be the first thing you do if desired.)
7. Put on Belts, load mags, holster unloaded firearm. Keep one empty mag for use later.
8. Check everyone's equipment for safety, legality, and help them choose a division to compete in.
9. Explain scoring zones of the target, hard cover, no-shoots and scoring methods.
10. RO, go through range commands and demonstrate each action with unloaded firearm.
11. Have the shooter go through each action with unloaded firearm.
12. Proceed to run them through the four strings as listed, or any way you wish to test their safety skills.
13. Fill out Page 4 and retain. Have the shooter take a photo of it. This is their safety check card.
14. Send NW Section Training Officer (Larry Leone) a photo of Page 4 to record all safety checks.

I suggest printing this out once, and then make multiple copies of Page 4.