

# **COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™**

## **Range Operations Safety Course**

### **Level One**



## **Student Handbook**

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## **UNIT 1 : Introduction & Course Goals**

Let us Introduce Ourselves!

- Instructor Welcome and Introductions
- Student Introductions:  
Include Name, SASS Alias, location, and experience with SASS & Cowboy Action Shooting.

\*Practical Exercise:

Students should prepare a brief introduction of themselves- include Name, Alias, SASS Number. Previous involvement in general shooting activities, involvement in Cowboy Action Shooting, and their goals for attending this training.

### **Course Expectations**

- Course scheduled time is approximately 4-5 hours
- Breaks will be given throughout the course
- Please silence your cell phones, step outside if you need to use your phone
- The contents of the student course book contain the information in the slide presentation
- Be on the lookout for the ★ symbol throughout the course – you will see it again!

### **Course Goal**

To develop SASS Range Operations Safety Officers who possess the knowledge, Skill, and attitude essential to ensure safety and consistency at all SASS Cowboy Action Shooting matches.

### **RO I Certification Course Requirements**

- Attend the entire course
- Participate in discussions and practical exercises
- Demonstrate knowledge, skill, and attitude necessary
- Commit to know and understand the most recent version of the SASS Shooters Handbook and strive to stay informed.
- Achieve a minimum examination score of 80% (24/30)
- Have fun!

Students are expected to attend the entire course and to participate in discussions and activities designed to increase and reinforce learning.

An examination score of 80% (24/30) or higher is required for certification. \*A passing score (even a 100%) does not guarantee certification if a student displays a careless, negative attitude or a disregard for safety. Determination is up to the Course Instructor.

Students who receive and successfully complete this training course will be awarded a SASS RO I Pin designating them as an RO I.

## **Purpose of SASS RO Training**

Consistency

A standardized set of rules for all to follow eliminates “grey areas” that can lead to arguments, misunderstandings, and most importantly – ensures a safe environment for the enjoyment of the sport- no matter where you travel to shoot.

EVERYONE IS A SAFETY OFFICER. ★

## **UNIT 2: The SASS Shooters Handbook**

The SASS Shooters Handbook is the greatest resource available to all Shooters & Range Officers.

Sections of Content relating to the rules and regulations of SASS and the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™ that directly impact the knowledge and education of Range Safety Officers as it relates to this course are compiled from information contained in the Handbook.

Become familiar with the Handbook and reference it when enforcing the rules – it is your back up!

All SASS Range Officers must know and understand the most current version of the SASS Shooters Handbook (SHB), be informed, and understand any recent changes.

The SASS Cowboy Action Shooting™ Shooters Handbook contains crucial guidelines, rules, and information on:

Alias & Costuming

SASS Firearm Covenants

Holsters & Belts

Ammunition

Shooting Categories

Side Matches

Long Range Competitions

Scoring & Timing

Safety Conventions

Range Operations

## **UNIT 3: Cowboy Action Shooting Basics**

### ***What is Cowboy Action Shooting?***

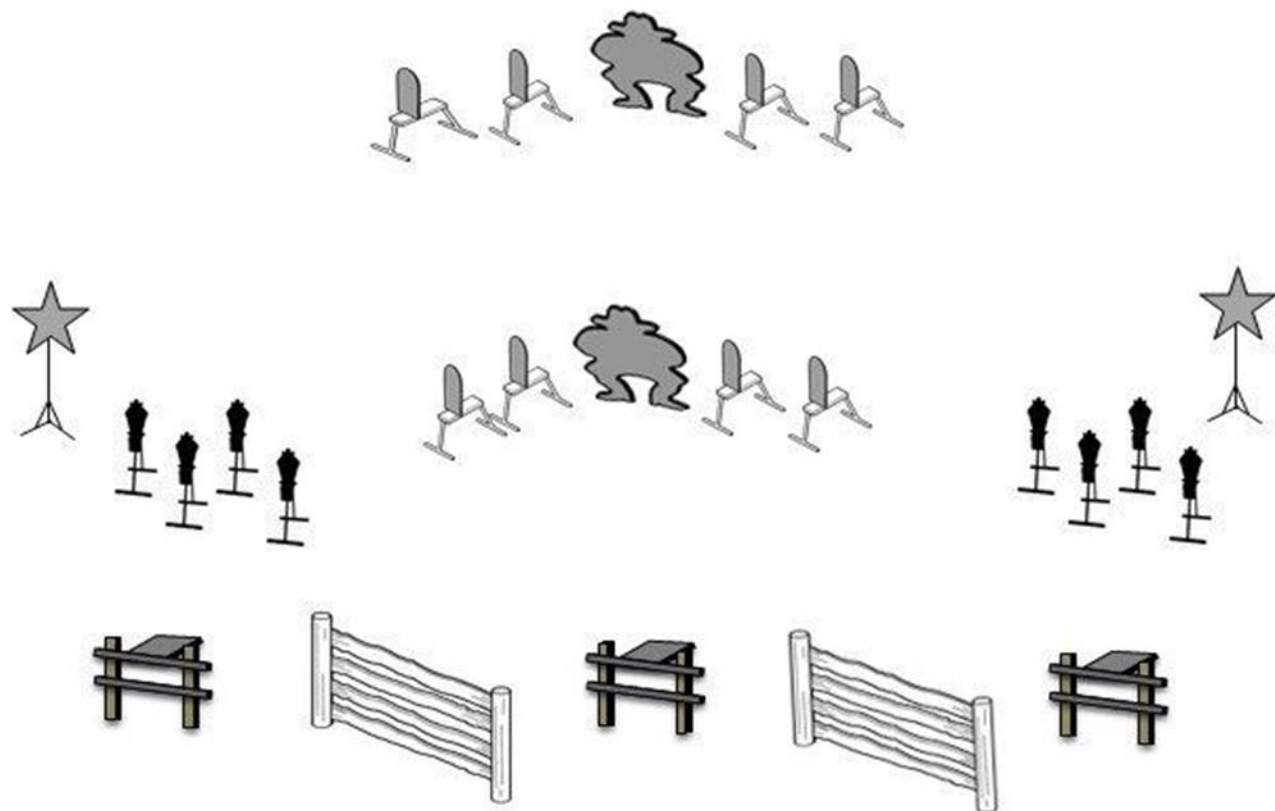
Cowboy Action Shooting™ is a multi-faceted shooting sport in which contestants compete with firearms typical of those used in the taming of the Old West: single action revolvers, pistol caliber lever action rifles, and side by side or pump-style shotguns.

The shooting competition is staged in a unique, characterized, "Old West" style. It is a timed sport in which shooters compete for prestige on a course of different shooting stages and scenarios. Each scenario features an array of situations, many based on famous incidents or Western movie scenes, in which the shooters test their mettle utilizing all four firearms in a designated order and challenge against steel targets.

Class review and brief discussion of the sample shooting stage & shooting scenario provided.

\*This course is not intended to be an introductory course to Cowboy Action Shooting.

**STAGE 7, BAY 7**  
**10 PISTOL, 10 RIFLE, 4+ SHOTGUN**



STAGING: Rifle staged on middle shelf, shotgun at either left or right shelf, pistols holstered.

STARTING POSITION: Standing at middle shelf, hands at low surrender shoulder high. When ready, say, "**Wait' till they get closer, you fools!**"

PROCEDURE: At buzzer with pistols engage pistol targets starting on either end knockdown, knockdown, then three on large cowboy. Then from other end knockdown, knockdown, then three on large cowboy. With rifle engage rifle targets same instructions as pistol. From either left or right shelf engage the four shotgun targets.

Knockdown targets still standing can be made up with the shotgun on the makeup target.

## **UNIT 4: The Role of the SASS Range Safety Officer**

The purpose of trained Range Officers is to provide the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting with competent, firm, and fair officials in all levels of competition and to educate and empower certified Range officers to perform any duty on the posse.

Range Officer's Motto: *The purpose of the Range Officer is to SAFELY ASSIST the Shooter through the course of fire.* ★

Two words are *paramount* in the Range Officer's motto: SAFELY ASSIST.

### **SASS Range Officers 10 "Commandments"**

- Safety First
- Keep it fun
- Use common sense
- The benefit of the doubt goes to the shooter
- Treat everyone as you would like to be treated
- Treat everyone equally (Sam Colt made us that way)
- Keep the stage moving (if a problem arises, take it to the side)
- Make sure all posse assignments are covered
- Coach when needed
- Keep it simple

### **What is the Timer Officer/Timer Operator (TO)?**

The Range Officer serving as the Timer Operator (TO) during any course of fire for any competitor, becomes the Range Officer in charge for the Posse & Shooter if he/she is operating the timer.

The Timer Operator (TO) serves as THE Range Officer for the shooter(s) they are timing.... *The motto, again: ..to SAFELY ASSIST the shooter through the course of fire.*

The term Timer Operator (TO) is utilized most frequently.

Accordingly, to avoid confusion, this course will further direct all references utilizing the term Timer Operator (TO)

The TO, during any course of fire, becomes the Range Officer in Charge if he/she is operating the timer. The timer Officer (TO) is the lead RO in charge of the firing line during that time.

### **SAFELY ASSIST**

The 2 paramount words in the RO Motto are SAFELY ASSIST!

Keys to a winning ASSIST:

1. Consistent information & communication
2. Assessment of the shooter
3. Shooter inventory
4. Anticipate
5. Attitude
6. Coaching

In the upcoming sections, we will review each of the 6 keys to assisting a shooter.

## **#1 – Consistent information & communication**

Always give consistent, complete information about the stage and its navigation, and always read provided stage descriptions word for word.

Be consistent in WHAT you say and HOW you say it.

Established cadences help to alleviate misunderstandings and false starts and can also help to calm a shooter's nerves if they are clear on what to expect from their TO.

*Common cadence: (after the shooter has indicated ready)*

*“Shooter Ready.....pause.....Standby.....pause.....beep”*

## **#2 - Assessment of the shooter**

*Assess the condition of the shooter*

We have all seen (or been) a shooter suffering from a case of nerves. Regardless of the experience level of the shooter, adrenaline is very powerful and can have adverse effects that can pose a danger. Violent shaking, trouble talking, and seeming “lost” about the stage requirements have all been reported.

Some cases warrant gently suggesting the shooter leave the shooting line, sit down, and wait a little longer before shooting the stage.

Additional Assessments of the Shooter's condition include staying alert for any signs of the use of any substance that may affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner.

Safety is ALWAYS the #1 priority.

The consumption of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited for all persons, shooters, guests, range officers, and others in the area until all firearms have been stored and shooting is completed for the day. No shooter may ingest any substance that may affect their awareness—including both prescription and non-prescription drugs that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment. -SASS Shooters Handbook

## **#3 – Shooter Inventory**

Visually inventory each shooter at the line before you start your Range Commands.

Do they have everything they need to complete the course of fire?

- √ Shotgun shells
- √ Eye Protection
- √ Ear Protection
- √ Required firearms
- √ Ammo needed for reloads

## **#4 – Anticipate**

*Anticipate the shooter's next move.*

With time and experience, you will be able to anticipate the shooter's next move. In doing so, you may prevent him or her from acquiring penalties or performing an unsafe act.



## #5 – Attitude

*Attitude is everything.* The best Range Officers have the best attitude. If you can do your job well and have fun too, then you will find the posse and your fellow shooters will too. Your attitude sets the tone and the mood for the entire match!

### Attitude

- √ Be courteous, considerate, and respectful
- √ Always be firm, but fair
- √ Do not be intimidated- make the call, and call them as you see them
- √ Do not be over-zealous and don't be harshly tough
- √ Be helpful to the competitor
- √ Always refer to the SASS Shooters Handbook when stating the rules
- √ Never allow a shooter to badger, abuse, or argue with you or any other match official. Bring this type of behavior immediately to the Match Director or Range Master.
- √ Always give the shooter the benefit of the doubt
- √ Be positive, encouraging, and HAVE FUN

## #6 – Coaching

### *What is Coaching?*

Coaching is the most direct way to assist the shooter after the course of fire has begun. The TO should coach only when someone looks like they need it – are they momentarily confused or lost, or if are they attempting to address the wrong target?

It is not your job to “shoot the stage” for the shooter, coaching him or her in every action. Some shooters do not like to be coached at all. New shooters might require more coaching at first. It is prudent to determine those shooters on the posse who may require a little more coaching and those who prefer no coaching at all.

### Proper Coaching vs. Improper Coaching

- Proper coaching is not considered RO Interference and will never be grounds for a reshoot.
- Improper coaching that either impedes the shooters progress or results in a procedural penalty may be grounds for a reshoot.
- Any Procedural penalties are the responsibility of the shooter; an RO/TO who does NOT provide coaching, is not responsible for a shooter's procedural penalties. NOT coaching does not waive any procedural penalties.

### “SAFELY” Assist

*Safely assisting the shooter through a course of fire means “without incident.”*

- *Course Design* – Do not be afraid to refuse to allow your posse to shoot an unsafe stage. Insist the stage be made safe before proceeding.
- *Watch the Gun* – As a TO, to make exact calls and anticipate the shooter's next move, watch the gun! By looking at the gun, you can identify target engagement, squib loads, warn the shooter if he or she is getting close to breaking the 170°, and stop the shooter if there is a problem.
- *Stay within Arm's reach* – In order to stop an unsafe act, the TO must be within arm's length of the shooter. The TO should be positioned behind and off to the strong side of the shooter. Never let the shooter get away from you.

## **Reshoots/Restarts**

SASS matches above the club level are “no alibi” matches.

Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability.

Reshoots are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, failure of the timer, or Range Officer interference) *beyond the competitor’s control*, a reshoot may be granted.

The competitor starts over clean – carrying only accrued safety penalties forward.

**Restarts** shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “Clean” start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range.

Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgement of the TO, are seen to be taking advantage will not be entertained or allowed- this behavior is in contradiction of the *spirit of the game*.

No reshoots/restarts will be given after the first shot goes downrange as determined by the TO and Match Director – EXCEPT for:

- Prop or match equipment failure
- A Range Officer impeded the progress of the shooter (RO Interference)
- Timer failure or unrecorded time

Example: An RO stops a shooter from completing a shooting sequence due to a suspected squib load, but the firearm turns out to be clear. The RO has impeded the progress of the shooter and a restart/reshoot is in order. The shooter starts over with no misses or penalties (except safety infractions).

The Match Director has the authority to override an RO assisted MSV penalty for a reshoot.

## UNIT 5: Ammunition Components & Common Firearm stoppages & malfunctions

### Instructor Notes:

Introduce Unit 5 – “Every shooter should understand basic ammunition and firearm functions. As a Range Officer, it is important that you have a thorough understanding of not only firearms, but also of the functions of basic ammunition to assist you in identifying and assisting the shooter with potential ammunition functions and malfunctions.” ..... “Let’s start by taking a look at Ammunition.....”

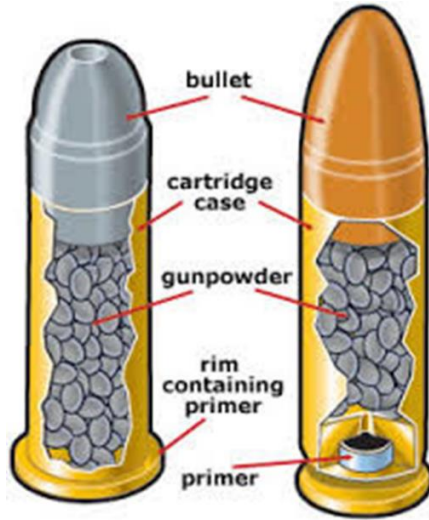
### Ammunition Basics

#### Two types of Modern Ammunition

#### Rimfire

The firing pin strikes and crushes the base rim to ignite the primer.

The rim of the rimfire cartridge contains the priming compound, the case contains the powder and the bullet.



#### Centerfire

The firing pin strikes the primer cap at the center of the base of the case.

Most used type of modern ammunition. \*Used in Cowboy Action Shooting\*

## Cap & Ball Blackpowder Ammunition

### *Understanding the basics of loading a Percussion revolver*

Due to the common use of Blackpowder (Cap & Ball) percussion firearms in Cowboy Action Shooting, It is important for Range Officers to have a basic understanding of the ammunition and functioning of these firearms.

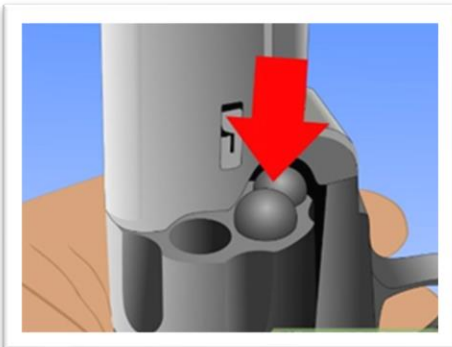
### Steps to loading a Percussion Revolver



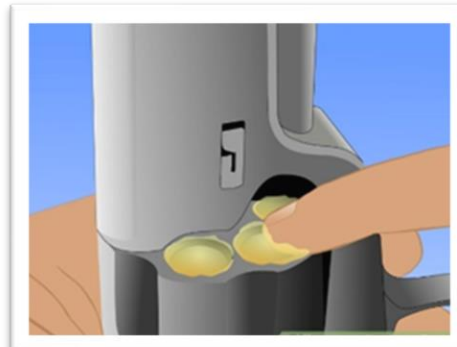
STEP 1:  
Pour a  
Measured  
charge  
(powder)  
into the  
chamber



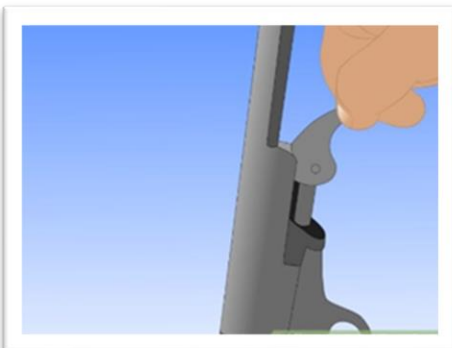
STEP 4:  
Repeat with  
the  
remaining  
chambers



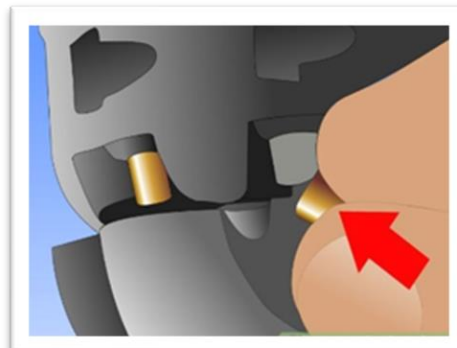
STEP 2:  
Place the  
wad  
and then  
the  
Ball over  
the  
chamber  
opening



STEP 5:  
Apply  
additional  
grease



STEP 3:  
Seat the  
ball using  
the loading  
lever



STEP 6:  
Place a  
percussion  
cap on  
each  
loaded  
chamber

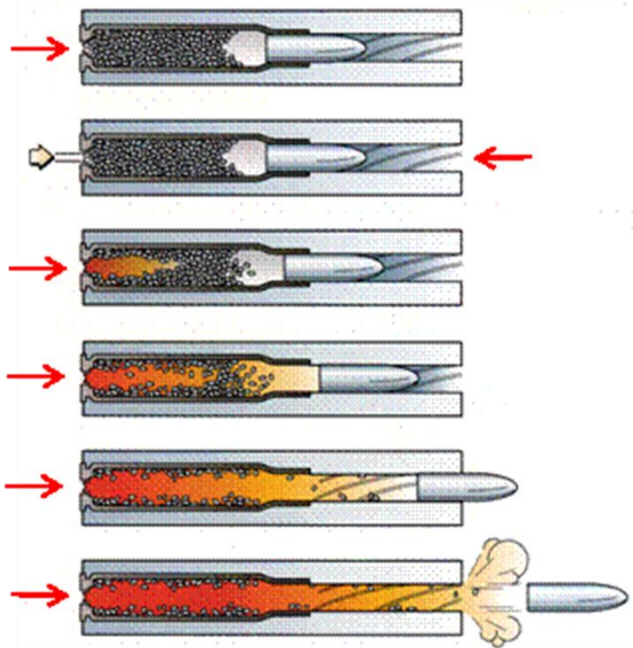
## Cartridge Ammunition

### Basic Components & Function of Ammunition



## Ammunition Firing Sequence

### Centerfire Ammunition



## CARTRIDGE FIRING SEQUENCE

CARTRIDGE IN CHAMBER

FIRING PIN STRIKES PRIMER OR CASE RIM AND IGNITES THE PRIMING COMPOUND

FLAME GENERATED BY PRIMING COMPOUND IGNITES POWDER CHARGE

POWDER BURNS RAPIDLY, GENERATING A VOLUME OF HOT, HIGH-PRESSURE GAS

GAS PUSHES BULLET THROUGH BORE AT HIGH SPEED

BULLET EXITS MUZZLE, HOT GAS MAKES "BANG"

## Ammunition – SASS Standards

The minimum standard for center-fire ammunition used in all smokeless categories in all SASS sanctioned competitions must:

- √ Meet the minimum \*power factor of 60
- √ Meet the minimum velocity of 400 fps
- √ Maximum velocity standard for revolvers is 1000 fps
- √ Maximum velocity standard for rifles is 1400 fps



\*Pocket pistols, derringers, and long-range rifles are exempt from the power factor and velocity requirements.

**Power factors** are calculated by multiplying the bullet weight times the velocity and then the resulting number is divided by 1000.

Examples:

- 100 grain bullet travelling at 600 fps has a power factor of 60:  $(100 \times 600) / 1000 = 60$
- 77 grain bullet travelling at 800 fps has a power factor of 61.6:  $(77 \times 800) / 1000 = 61.6$
- 200 grain bullet travelling at 400 fps has a power factor of 80:  $(200 \times 400) / 1000 = 80$

## Malfunctions

*Malfunction – Failure of a firearm or ammunition to function as designed or to fire satisfactorily.*

Two types of malfunctions:

- Gun malfunction
- Ammunition malfunction

## Firearm Malfunctions

*Note: A gun malfunction is different from a gun stoppage.*

*Gun Stoppage – a stoppage is an unintentional interruption in the operation cycle of the gun. Stoppages can typically be cleared quickly, returning the gun back to operational condition.*

*Malfunction - Failure of a gun or ammunition to function as designed or to fire satisfactorily. Firearm malfunctions require the gun to be repaired by a qualified gunsmith or reasonably competent person to return it to a correctly functioning state.*

## Ammunition Malfunctions

*There are four types of ammunition malfunctions we will discuss today.*

- Misfire
- Squib load
- Hangfire
- Chainfire

## Misfire

A misfire is when a cartridge does not fire after the primer has been struck by the firing pin. Misfires typically do not require any handling. Understanding the occurrence of the misfire is key.

## Squib Load

A squib load is when there is less than normal pressure or bullet velocity after ignition of the cartridge.

- The bullet may or may not exit the barrel
- Squib loads are usually identified by a difference in recoil or noise

### Procedure for handling a squib load ammunition malfunction:

In the event a Timer Operator suspects a squib load has been encountered, an immediate command shall be given to the shooter to make that firearm safe and continue with the next procedure. The TO will allow the shooter to make the suspect firearm safe, preferably on a nearby and appropriate horizontal surface (box, table, straw bale, ground, etc.)- or, if necessary, assist the shooter by allowing them to "hand off" the firearm. Multiple squibs by a shooter will be cause for the Timer Operator to request the shooter change ammo.

At the Unloading table:

- Unload the gun, make sure the chamber is empty
- Insert a rod down the barrel from the chamber end (if possible) to make sure the bullet is not lodged in the barrel of the firearm ★

## Hangfire

A perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin. *A Hangfire malfunction is most common with percussion firearms.*

There is no immediate method of differentiating a hangfire from a misfire, except in percussion revolvers the hangfire generally last far shorter than one second.

### Procedure for handling a possible Hangfire:

- Keep the gun pointed downrange (in a safe direction)
- Wait at least 30 seconds in case it is a hangfire

## Chainfire

Also known as Cross-firing- references when multiple chambers discharge at the same time. *Chain firing is exclusive to Percussion firearms.*

Chain firing has several causes, most commonly, the powder can get between the ball and the chamber wall and without adequate grease, the flash can travel up and around the ball, into the neighboring chamber- creating a powder flash chain through multiple chambers.

The result is the discharge of multiple chambers at the same time.

## Lead Precautions

An often-overlooked aspect of shooter safety is exposure to lead.

Lead exposure concerns are not limited to the reloading process. Shooters handle lead ammunition while loading their firearms and may be exposed to lead dust in the air on or near the firing line.

Over time, lead exposure can result in lead levels that are higher than most Doctors recommend.

Simple precautions can help lessen and/or eliminate high lead levels. After shooting, handling ammunition, or reloading- always wash your hands thoroughly- especially before eating. Hand

wipes will help at the range where water may be spares, and there are specialized wipes and hand soaps on the market designed to clean lead from the skin.

Due to the risk of over exposure, TO duties should be shared with other qualified shooters to limit exposure.

## **UNIT 6: Range Safety Rules & Conventions**

*Instructor Note:*

*Unit 6 is an in-depth description and listing of all SASS Range Safety Rules and includes Firearms, Range conduct, Ammunition, and Stage Conventions. It is important that the upmost care is taken in presenting the sections in this unit to the class, and to ensure their understanding of each section completely prior to proceeding.*

### **What is a Convention?**

Conventions refer to *standard range behaviors, rules, and expectations.*

- SASS Safety Conventions are *not negotiable and shall never be overruled by match design or shooting course descriptions.*
- Stage Conventions are standard default rules *unless otherwise directed by stage design/description. (example: Knockdown targets must go down to count, etc.)*

### **Range Safety Rules**

Everyone is a safety officer; however, it is the ultimate responsibility of the Range Officers to ensure the safety rules are consistently followed.

Enforcing all Safety Rules is not negotiable.

SASS Rules supersede any Range specific safety rules that do not meet the minimum SASS Safety rules. If the Range rules are more stringent than the SASS rules or differ in disallowing an action that is allowed under SASS rules, the Range rules are to be followed. (Above and beyond set SASS rules)

A Range Officer electing to not penalize a match participant that has not complied with a safety rule has a detrimental effect to the sport as a whole and ultimately results in penalizing all other match participants who did comply.

### **Shooter's Responsibility**

*Safe Gun Handling is the shooters responsibility.*

All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used.

Monthly matches are an excellent training ground; however, SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearm handling. Basic firearm safety and rudimentary proficiency training are more appropriately learned under non-match conditions.

### **The Magnificent Seven**

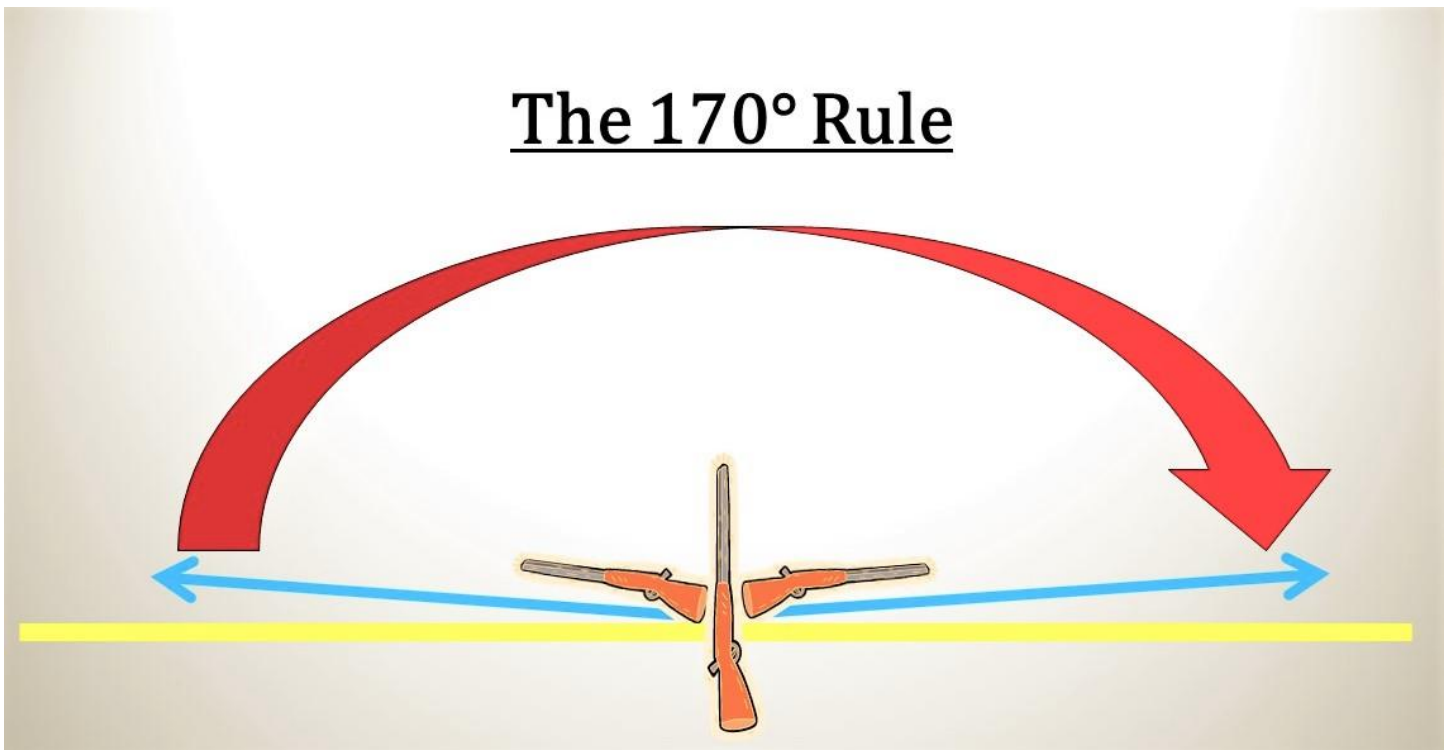
These are the 7 rules for range safety. These rules must be followed by all shooters, Range Officers, directors, personnel, and anyone in the area at all times.



1. Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded
2. Never let the muzzle of a firearm break the 170° rule
3. Be sure of your target – and what is beyond
4. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire
5. Firearms remain unloaded outside of the normal course of fire – loading table to unloading table (Cold range)
6. Treat all firearms with respect
7. Speak up

### **The 170° Rule**

170° Rule means that the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85° in any direction.



### **Safety Rules – Revolvers**

#### **Revolvers Safety Conventions**

- Six-shot revolvers are ALWAYS loaded with only 5 rounds and the hammer lowered and resting on the empty chamber
- Five-shot revolvers may load 5 rounds, but the hammer must rest on a dummy chamber or safety slot/pin in the cylinder to avoid the hammer resting on a live cap/round.
- A cocked revolver may never leave a shooter's hand- including from one hand to the other. \*Does not apply when loading or reloading on the firing line
- Cowboy Action Shooting is NOT a fast-draw competition. Any unsafe handling during a draw from the holster or any "fanning" to shoot a revolver is strictly forbidden. \*Note: slip-hammering is not the same as fanning and is legal.

### **Revolvers - Safe conditions of revolvers during a course of fire**

Revolvers are considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while holstering, while moving through a stage, and safe to leave the shooters hand) in the following condition ONLY:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber ★
- Hammer fully down on an expended round

Gunfighter considerations: When shooting "Gunfighter", a gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another revolver sequence.

### **Revolvers - Staging & Handling Conventions**

The following are SASS conventions for handling and staging revolvers.

- Revolvers are drawn and used in accordance with the shooter's category.
- Revolvers are returned to leather (in a safe condition) after the shooting string unless otherwise directed by the stage design/description.
- De-cocking is not allowed on the firing line once a round has gone downrange. Once a revolver is cocked, the round must be expended (shot) under the direction and supervision of the Timer Operator (TO)
- When drawing a Revolver from its holster, the revolver may not be cocked until it is at least at a 45° angle downrange.

## **Safety Rules – Rifles**

### **Rifles – Staging & Handling Conventions**

The following are SASS conventions for handling and staging rifles.

- Rifles may be staged with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer fully down on the empty chamber (not on the safety notch), as long as the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction – adheres to the 170° safety rule, and the muzzle is never on the ground.
- Rifles will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing safely down range. If the action of a rifle closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the long gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.
- If the rifle is the last firearm used (rare- not suggested!), it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooters hand(s) at the unloading table.

\*This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made safe, and then restaged.

### **Rifles - Safe conditions of a rifle during a course of fire**

A rifle is considered SAFE to leave the shooters hands in the following condition ONLY:

- Empty
- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or spent round, action closed (restaged for further use)

A rifle is considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition ONLY:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended round, action closed

- Action open, round on carrier or in chamber

## **Safety Rules – Shotguns**

### **Shotguns – Staging & Handling Conventions**

The following are SASS conventions for handling and staging shotguns.

- Shotguns initially staged must be open and empty. If starting held in hand(s) a shotgun may be loaded before the clock, but only under the direction and supervision of the TO.
- Shotgun targets may be re-engaged until down, unless otherwise specified by the stage description.
- Shotgun Shells may be removed without penalty to return the firearm to a safe condition.
- Shotguns will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing safely down range. If the action closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.

### **Shotguns - Safe conditions of a shotgun during a course of fire**

A shotgun is considered SAFE to leave the shooters hands in the following condition ONLY:

- Empty

A shotgun is considered safe for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition ONLY:

- Action open, round in chamber or in carrier
- Hammer(s) fully down on empty chamber(s) or expended round(s), action closed

## **Safety Rules – ALL FIREARMS**

### **Firearm Safety & Handling Conventions**

- All staged guns shall have their barrels pointed safely down range.
- All long guns initially staged on a horizontal surface shall be staged lying flat where at least the rear of the trigger guard is on the staging area.
- All handguns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface must be staged with the entire handgun on the staging surface.
- All firearms will remain unloaded except while under direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.
- The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained in a safe direction (generally "up" and slightly down range) at all times.
- As long as the shooter has contact with the firearm, it is considered as still in their control.
- Any unloaded firearm dropped during a stage will result in a stage disqualification.
- Any loaded firearm dropped anywhere will result in a match disqualification.

\*A shooter should not be allowed to pick up up a dropped firearm. The Range Officer should recover the firearm, examine it, clear it (if necessary), return it to the shooter, and assess the appropriate penalty

## **Safety Rules for Ammunition**

The following are SASS Conventions for Ammunition

- Shooters may not start a stage with ammunition in hand(s) unless otherwise directed by stage design/description
- Any ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or ejected from any firearm may be retrieved and replaced, or, alternatively, be replaced from the shooters person or other area as allowed by stage description.
- Dropped rounds or rounds placed on a prop may be recovered and used.

\*In both cases above, the recovery of a dropped or safely placed round must be performed carefully as to not create a loss of muzzle control. Breaking the 170° safety rule carries a significant penalty – up to a Match Disqualification. ★

- Illegally acquired ammunition – any ammunition not carried to the stage and/or staged by the shooter in an approved manner.
- Failure to bring enough ammunition to the line to complete a stage is scored the same as misses for any un-fired rounds.
- Unfired, ejected rifle rounds may be replaced (reloaded) on the clock during a stage.
- Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss. \*Unless the round is under the hammer – *then the penalty is a Stage Disqualification*.
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun carries a Stage Disqualification penalty.
- A live round left in the magazine or on the carrier, as well as an empty round left in the chamber, magazine, or on the carrier of the firearm in which it was loaded, results in a Minor Safety Violation.

\*Malfunctioning firearms still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is *declared*, and the firearm is made safe.

## **Safety Rules – Uncontrolled Discharge**

SASS Conventions for an Uncontrolled Discharge

*Uncontrolled Discharge – the discharge of a firearm that was not controlled by the shooter – either by accidental discharge or by shooting a round in an unsafe manner (e.g., over the berm).*

- A round over the berm
  - \*Site specific match & range rules establish the penalty, up to and possibly including a Match Disqualification.
- Uncontrolled discharges have penalties:
  - o Within 5-10 feet from the shooter while on the stage: *Stage Disqualification*
  - o Less than 5 feet from the shooter while on the stage, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, any discharge off the firing line, or any discharge that is deemed unsafe: *Match Disqualification*

Note: Match Directors have the latitude to place props so shooters must negotiate them. In doing so, Match Directors may declare props as expendable (shootable) without penalty.

An “uncontrolled discharge” is also known as an “accidental discharge” or an “AD”. These terms are interchangeable and should be interpreted as one in the same in terms of occurrence.

## **Safety Rules – Leaving the Loading Table with a Rifle**

Conventions for Leaving the Loading Table with a Cocked Rifle:

In such instances, the shooter will be directed to point the rifle safely into the back berm, bring the hammer to full cock if it is in the half cock/safety position, then pull the trigger.

- If no round is fired, the shooter will be directed to finish staging their firearms in order to start the stage (No Call).
- If a round fires when the shooter pulls the trigger, the shooter will be assessed a Stage DQ and directed to proceed to the unloading table.

## **Safety Rules – Conventions for Participant Performance & Conduct**

The following list the SASS Conventions for conduct.

- The shooter must obey all range commands given by the RO/TO.
- Safe gun handling is the shooters responsibility.
- The shooter with firearm in hand shall never be allowed to move with a live round under a cocked hammer. *Movement* is defined the same as "travelling" in basketball. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. *Shuffling the feet to maintain balance or adjust the shooting stance is allowed as long as the shooter does not actually change location.*
- "Shooting on the Move" is expressly disallowed. See guidelines for the safe condition of firearms for movement.
- Once a shooter is committed to the stage (first round goes down range) the shooter must remain on the stage until it is completed, and the shooter has moved to the unloading area to clear all firearms.
- Firearm and ammunition staging is the sole responsibility of the shooter.
- Understanding the course of fire is the sole responsibility of the shooter.
- All participants must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used.
- All shooters are responsible for knowing the condition of their firearms, their safe operation, and the correct loading and unloading procedures.
- Eye Protection is mandatory.
- Hearing protection is highly recommended.
- Good Sportsmanship best defines "Spirit of the Game." Be a good sport. Have fun – this event is solely for the safe enjoyment of the participants.
- Interpersonal conflicts will not be tolerated.
- Any shooter, guest, or match official who uses foul language, is disrespectful, offensive, rude, or becomes belligerent or threatening in any manner will be disqualified from the event, and, at the Match Directors discretion, may be required to leave the property.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the shooting area for all persons; shooters, guests, range officers, and others until all shooting is over for the day and firearms have been stored. \*Site specific range rules must be taken into account. A violation of this rule results in a Match Disqualification penalty.
- No participant may ingest any substance that may affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. (This includes prescription and non-prescription drugs that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment). A violation of this rule results in a Match Disqualification penalty.

## **SASS Stage Conventions**

The following stage conventions (stage defaults) should be followed in all SASS matches- unless otherwise directed in the stage descriptions.

- All knockdown shotgun targets may be reengaged until down.
- All knockdown targets (shotgun, rifle, or revolver) must go down to count.
- Any knockdown target still standing once the shooter has engaged the next sequence of the stage will be counted as a miss.
- If no starting position is given, the shooter shall stand upright with revolvers holstered, hands at the sides not touching any firearm. (SASS default)
- Cowboy port-arms is defined as standing upright with the butt of the long gun at or below the waist of the shooter, the muzzle at or above the shoulder, and the long gun held with both hands.

## **UNIT 7: Range Commands**

Standard Range Commands are the most efficient way to run a shooting line and are used in almost every established shooting sport.

Standard Commands allow shooters from all over the world to understand range procedures – even if they do not speak English fluently.

Range Commands do not have to be recited word-for-word, but the closer the better. Adding a little fun and western flavor associated with our game allows for colorful individuality.

\*For example: “Is the shooter ready?” can also be “Is the cowboy/cowgirl ready?”

Safety, Efficiency, and HAVING FUN can all co-exist!

SPEAK UP when giving Range Commands!

### **Common Verbal Range Commands:**

“Do you understand the course of fire?” A customary initial query to the shooter by a Range Officer; either at the loading table or XP position prior to the stage. A negative response requires additional explanation of the course of fire. Answer any shooter’s questions in a clear and consistent manner. Remember, never make a shooter feel as though he/she is being rushed.

“Is the Shooter Ready” query OR “Shooter Ready” Depending on the established cadence and the initiation of the stage by the shooter, both of these commands are used in varying situations. This should be said just before the “Standby” command. Most of the time, a nod from the shooter indicates ready- when a starting line to indicate ready doesn’t exist (and sometimes even if it does).

“Standby” Should always be the last words spoken with a 1-3 second pause before the start of the timer signal (the beep).

“Muzzle up, please move to the Unloading Table” Should be stated at the end of a shooting sequence/stage to guide the shooter. Often the competitor stops thinking. (Adrenaline!)

“Range Clear” This command is given only after the shooter has completed their run, the revolvers are holstered, the long guns are picked up and pointed in a safe direction with the actions open, and the shooter is on the way to the unloading area. It is now safe to gather brass and prepare for the next shooter in line.

“Down Range” Is announced prior to anyone proceeding down range for any reason- including to reset or repair targets. When a “Down Range” command is announced- all participants at both the loading and unloading areas should cease firearm loading/unloading. Best practice is to raise hands in the air as a visual confirmation that no firearm is being handled while someone is downrange.

“Unload and Show Clear” The command given by the unloading officer when a shooter comes to the unloading area/table. (Applies to all guns taken to the firing line)

“Gun Clear” Is appropriate Unloading Officer response as each firearm is successfully inspected at the unloading table/area.

“Action Open” The command given by the TO to the shooter at the conclusion of a stage when a competitor has discarded a long gun with the action closed. The TO must witness the shooter opening the action and showing the firearm as empty/clear.

“Muzzle!” This command quickly and efficiently warns the shooter their muzzle is getting close to the 170° limit and should be pointed in a safe direction (back down range).

“Cease Fire!” or “STOP!” The command called out by the TO or any witnessing Range Officer/Match Official at any time an unsafe condition develops. The shooter must stop shooting and stop moving immediately.

\*Willful failure to comply with a Cease Fire or Stop command given by, and while under the control of the TO will result in a Match Disqualification.

### **Range Commands – The Flag System**

On ranges where multiple stages are run in parallel using a common firing line with no separating side berms, *Visual cues* aid in the quick communication of Range Safety statuses between shooting posses.

Flags are often used in conjunction with a horn or whistle to increase notification awareness.



Once the “Yellow Flag” command has been given, each stage affected will allow any shooter already engaged in that stage to complete the course of fire. As shooting finishes on each

stage, all in-use guns are laid down at the loading and/or unloading areas, and the competitors “stand back.”

Once the firearms are secure, each stage will signal compliance by raising its own yellow flag. When all affected stages are displaying their yellow flag, the initiating RO can advance down range. When the down range work is completed, an “ALL CLEAR” command will be given, the Yellow flags withdrawn, and normal range operations can resume. ★



### Red Flag

“RED FLAG” means “CEASE FIRE!”

All shooting must IMMEDIATELY stop, all firearms must be laid down or otherwise made safe. Once the Cease Fire condition is resolved, an “ALL CLEAR” command is given, the Red Flags are withdrawn, and normal range operations are resumed.

\*Any shooter stopped while shooting a stage is given a reshoot.

## **UNIT 8: Match Positions & Roles**

All match positions covered in this lesson are considered Range Officers.

Each position serves a critical function to the fair, efficient, and SAFE execution of a match.

**Match Director** is in charge of the overall match and is required to ensure qualified officials are in place in all competition areas. The match director is typically the stage writer/designer of the match.

**Range Master** is in charge of and oversees all stages and ensures qualified officials are in place in all stages. He reviews all stages and ensures they are designed and constructed to operate in a safe manner for both competitors and officials.

**Match RO** acts as an intermediary between the Posse Marshals and the Range Master in resolving issues regarding application of rules/penalties.

**Posse Marshal** Is in charge of a posse and is required to ensure all positions are manned to run the posse safely and efficiently through each course of fire. The Posse Marshal ensures all rules and regulations are being followed, and must understand all stages, conduct a walk-through, and answer all questions before each stage. The Posse Marshall will appoint at least one Deputy Posse Marshal to assist if one is not assigned.

**DEPUTY Posse Marshal** acts on behalf of the Posse Marshal when the Marshal is shooting or otherwise unavailable. The Marshal & Deputy should be separated in the shooting order for adequate Posse coverage. It is highly recommended that anyone serving in a Posse Marshal or Deputy Posse Marshal capacity be trained in this RO-I Course.

**Timer Operator (TO)** is the Range Officer in charge of the stage and the firing line as long as he/she is running the timer.

The TO's primary objective is to SAFELY ASSIST the Shooter through the course of fire.

The TO operates the timer... and so much more!



- The TO should be aware of the skill level of the competitors. Be attentive to new shooters, helping and coaching them through the course of fire, as needed. Always be ready to control the newer shooter.
- The TO also gives seasoned shooters a little more room since they tend to move fast. Don't let them run over you because you're crowding them.
- While the TO should do his/her best to not start a competitor in a faulted position or location, the ultimate responsibility of starting position lies with the shooter. A shooter who starts in a faulted position will be assessed a Procedural penalty.
- The TO watches the shooter – and the shooters guns- for unsafe acts, correct target engagement, and stage procedures.
- The TO should count shots fired, if possible.
- The TO should stay within arm's length of the shooter at all times through the course of fire.

### **Timer Operator (TO) Duties**

*The Timer Operator is IN CHARGE of the Firing Line.*

- The TO identifies and assigns 3 Spotters.
- The TO does not spot or count misses – but can provide insight if there is a question due to the vantage point of the TO to the shooter.
- The TO immediately announces the stage time to the shooter at the completion of the stage.
- The TO polls the 3 spotters to determine the number of misses and can consider their input regarding any penalties, as well as any personal observations during the stage.
- The TO does not have the authority to overrule the spotters regarding misses but can question spotters as to the location of misses. (The TO is often in the best position to see the direction of the muzzle, which is helpful in determining edge hits.
- The TO calls those numbers to the Score keeper and Competitor in a loud, clear voice.
- Final assessment of penalties (not misses) is made by the TO.

### **Timer Operator – Running the Firing Line**

Standard TO Cadence/Firing Line Order is as follows:

1. TO assigns 3 spotters
2. TO ensures the firing line is ready for the next shooter; targets are reset, etc.
3. The TO calls the next Shooter to the line – Assess the Shooter
4. The TO watches, guiding if necessary, the gun staging process
5. The TO ensures the shooter is starting in the correct position
6. Upon the ready indication by the Shooter, the TO says: "Shooter ready.....Standby.....beep"
7. At the conclusion of the stage, the TO immediately calls out the time to the shooter
8. The TO directs the Shooter to the unloading area. Upon the shooter's departure from the line (with all firearms), the TO declares the "All clear," indicating the line is safe to reset targets, pick brass, etc.
9. The TO polls the Spotters regarding misses
10. The TO announces the time and any misses/penalties to the Score Keeper and the shooter
11. The TO ensures the firing line is ready for the next shooter; targets are reset, etc... AND THE CYCLE CONTINUES

## **Expeditor (XP) Officer**

The Expeditor (XP) Officer facilitates and speeds up the progress of the shooters in line for the firing line.

In large matches, the XPO is in charge of making sure the posse stays on time and on task during their assigned time on each stage.

The XPO asks the shooter if they understand the stage or have any questions and escorts the shooter to the stage as it is being cleared.

Not all matches will benefit from an XPO, but most of the time lost in a match is in getting the next shooter to the line and staging their firearms. Used correctly, the XPO can shave up to 30 seconds per shooter in contestant transitioning.

*Duties of the XP Officer:*

- The XPO's primary concern is the next shooter to be called to the firing line by the TO-known as the "on-deck" shooter.
- The XPO does not count misses, reset targets, score, run the timer, or pick brass.
- The XPO can assist in assigning target re-setters and brass pickers as directed by the match.
- The XPO ensures the on-deck shooter understands the course of fire and proceeds promptly to the line to stage firearms and ammunition as efficiently as possible.
- When an XPO is in place during a match, a XP/On-deck location/position is added to the bay. This position is typically positioned between the loading area and the firing line. The on-deck position should consist of a low table to accommodate the long guns of the on-deck shooter.
- It is a good idea to have a copy of the shooting scenario at the on-deck position.
- The XPO transition cycle:
  - At the 1st shot of the shooter on the line, the XPO calls the next shooter from the loading table to the on-deck position.
  - The XPO asks the on-deck shooter: 1) Do you understand the course of fire? 2) Do you have any questions?
  - The XPO can assess the shooter to ensure they have everything they need to complete the stage.
  - The XPO should not engage in unnecessary conversation with the shooter- allow for mental preparation.
  - Once the TO indicates the firing line is ready for the next shooter, the XPO directs the on-deck shooter to the firing line to stage firearms and make ready; transitioning charge of the shooter to the TO.

## **Spotters**

- Spotters have the responsibility to count shots and misses and to verify the targets were engaged in the correct order for the required number of shots. ★
- Spotters assist the TO by watching for violations when the competitor retrieves staged firearms and draws revolvers since it is impossible for the TO to have an unobstructed view of both sides of the competitor's body.

- Spotters are obligated to stop a shooter from attempting an unsafe action if the TO is not in position to see it or react quickly enough.
- Determine misses by both visual and audible means, when possible.
- Should always be in a position to see all the targets in the course of fire. At least one spotter should be positioned on each side of the competitor.
- There should always be 3 spotters. The majority (2 out of 3) breaks the tie in regard to misses.
- Spotters should be easily identifiable by holding a baton, wearing a bandana, etc.
- The TO is not relied upon to count shots and misses.
- Spotters declare any misses and procedural at the conclusion of the stage
- Spotters never spot for a family member.
- Always give the shooter the benefit of any doubt.
  - If you know it's a HIT.....  
IT'S a HIT!
  - If you think it's a HIT..... ★  
IT'S a HIT!
  - If you think it's a MISS....  
IT's a HIT!
  - If you know it's a MISS....  
IT's a MISS!

### Score Keeper

It is good practice for the Score Keeper to repeat the times and penalties back to the TO in a loud, clear voice for confirmation.

- The Score Keeper records the times and penalties appropriately for each contestant on the provided score sheets for each stage.
- The Score Keeper should total the times and penalties to calculate the shooter's score – if the scoring instructions dictate.
- The Score Keeper can also be a Spotter.
- A Score Keeper must never record the score of a family member.
- The shooter should be made aware of any misses or penalties as they are leaving the line. Especially since once they leave the line and unload, miss penalties should not be questioned.

### Sample Common Score Sheets

SHOOTER NAME	RAW TIME	MISSES	PENALTY	TOTAL TIME
<i>Fast Shooter</i>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>1/5</b>		<b>24.3</b>
<i>Sassy Shooter</i>	<b>37.6</b>		<b>1 P/10</b>	<b>47.6</b>
<i>Wild Shooter</i>				
<i>Sweet Shooter</i>				

SHOOTER NAME	RAW TIME	MISS	PROCEDURALS /MSV	SDQ	MDQ	BONUS	TOTAL TIME
<i>Fast Shooter</i>	19.3	1					24.3
<i>Sassy Shooter</i>	37.6		1				47.6

## Scoring Methods

Cowboy Action Shooting™ approved scoring methods:

- Total time
  - o Most used method in matches
  - o Required scoring method for Regional, Divisional, National, and World Championship matches
- Stage point scoring
  - o Used for some WBAS matches at the club level
- Rank Point scoring
  - o Rewards the most consistent shooter
  - o Can be used at the club level only

## Loading Table Officer

The loading table officer is responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are loaded with only the correct number of rounds required in a course of fire, to verify that no round is ever under the firing pin of any firearm, and that all loaded firearms' hammers are fully down on an empty chamber. ★

\*At the loading table, Shooters are allowed to make corrections as necessary without penalty. The loading officer observes and enforces safe muzzle direction during the course of loading, as well as movement to and from the loading area.

- Discharging a round at the loading table results in a Match DQ penalty assessment.
- The loading table is a good place for the Loading Officer to observe the shooters equipment, especially firearms- inspecting for illegal modifications.
- Corrections should be made at the loading table, if possible.
- It is good practice for the Loading Officer to ask the shooter if he/she understands the stage.
- Explanations at the Loading area/table help to avoid these questions being addressed at the line by the TO and can help to prevent delays.
- A stage/scenario description posted on the loading table assists shooters in making a final review of the scenario prior to advancing to the firing line.
- The Loading Officer should avoid unnecessary conversation with the next shooter in line- allowing the shooter to mentally prepare for the course of fire.

## Unloading Table Officer

Unloading Table Officers are responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are UNLOADED after the completion of the shooting stage.

- Competitors shall unload each of their firearms in a manner that the Unloading Officer can visually check & confirm that each firearm is empty.

- Rifles and Shotguns are to be cycled to verify their magazines are empty.
- The Unloading Table Officer should observe the magazine follower if possible.
- All firearms taken to the firing line must be checked and "shown clear"- whether or not they were used in the course of fire.

### **Loading and Unloading Table Conventions**

All firearms will remain unloaded except while under the direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.

- Any competitor's failure to adhere to loading & unloading procedures will result in a Stage Disqualification.
- Leaving the unloading table without clearing all firearms will result in the penalty being assessed on the stage where the infraction was committed.
- Competitors shall not leave the designated loading area with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding to the stage as the next competitor to begin the stage.

Percussion Revolver Shooters:

- Maintain safe muzzle direction during loading
- Fire or clear all caps before leaving the unloading area
- DO NOT seat percussion caps using the gun's hammer
- Cap only at the loading area or on the firing line

**REMEMBER:**

The primary responsibility always rests with the competitor. Shooters should always know the condition of their firearms and should never depend upon the Loading and Unloading Officers to ensure their firearms are correctly loaded or unloaded.

- The Loading & Unloading Officers are an added measure of safety.
- The competitor may never blame the Loading officer for an incorrectly loaded firearm – or an Unloading officer for a firearm not unloaded.

\*At no time will this claim be grounds for dismissal of penalties.

*\*\*\*Failure to adhere to loading/unloading procedure", resulting in a Stage Disqualification penalty, is assessed at the following point: Once control of the firearm(s) is relinquished; be it in a rack on the stage or at the shooter's gun cart. (i.e. leaves the shooters hand(s), having bypassed the loading/unloading table.*

### **Berm Marshal (aka: Stage Driver or Stage Marshal)**

The role of Berm Marshal has mostly been eliminated in matches. The Posse Marshal walk-thru process and the role of the Posse Marshal has eliminated the need for Berm Marshals.

While the role has been mostly eliminated, some Match Directors MAY still enlist the role of Berm Marshal into their matches. Berm Marshals are charged with ensuring the stages are uniformly engaged by every posse and can assist in getting any behind schedule posses back on schedule.

The primary responsibility of a Berm Marshal is to ensure consistency between posses and to keep posses running on time.

The Berm Marshal does not have the duty to watch every move of the shooter- but does have the duty to make sure each shooter completes the stage according to the directions and that all shooters- that every posse- shoots the scenario/stage the same way.

The Berm Marshal:

- Constantly monitors the posse schedule to ensure the stage is running on time, and records the start and finish times of each posse

- "Takes Ownership" of their assigned stage
- Verifies arriving posses are in the right place at the right time
- Greets the incoming posse, reads the stage description and scenario to each posse, answering any questions about the stage and stating any clarifications consistently
- Distributes the appropriate stage supplies to each posse: spotting sticks, score sheets, etc.
- Ensures CONSISTENCY from posse to posse

## UNIT 9: Outlawed (Illegal) Items & Holster Standards

The current version of the SASS Shooters Handbook contains a complete listing of Outlawed items. The use or presence of an outlawed item is a Stage Disqualification.

Examples:

- Modern Shooting gloves
- Short sleeved shirts (Male competitors only)
- Designer jeans
- Ball caps
- Tennis, running, jogging, aerobic, or other modern athletic shoes
- Apparel displaying manufacturer, sponsors, or team logos.

### Illegal Firearm Modifications

The current version of the SASS Shooters Handbook (SHB) contains a complete listing of all LEGAL modifications made to firearms. Any modification not listed in the SHB is ILLEGAL.

A Stage Disqualification penalty is issued for each stage in which a non-SASS legal firearm is used. (Two SDQ's = a MDQ!)

### Holster Conventions

All handguns must be carried in a safe holster capable of retaining the firearm throughout a normal range of motion.

Two revolvers may not be worn on the same side of the body.

Main match holsters must be located one on each side of the belly button, with the holsters separated by at least the width of two fists at the belt.

*\*A full listing of all Holster requirements, rules, and standards are outlined in the SASS Shooters Handbook.*

### Holster Standards

Holsters must NOT depart from the vertical by more than 30° when worn.



ILLEGAL



LEGAL

## Cross Draw & Shoulder Holsters

Cross Draw Holsters and Shoulder Holsters require extra care on the part of the competitor to ensure:

- No holster may depart from the 30° when worn
- When drawing a revolver the user must twist their body (if necessary) to ensure the muzzle never breaks the 170° rule.

## UNIT 10: Penalty Assessments

There are 5 types of penalties. In this unit, we will discuss each of them individually.

Types of Penalties:

- 5-second penalties
- 10-second penalties
- Stage Disqualification
- Match Disqualification
- Failure to Engage/Spirit of the game

### 5-Second Penalties

\*MISSES are 5-second Penalties\*

Revolver, Rifle, and Shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type of firearm. A *MISS* is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type of firearm.

Includes:

- Each missed target
- Each unfired round
- Inadvertently left rounds in a revolver are misses (unless there is an unfired round under the hammer – then it is a stage DQ).
- Each target hit with an incorrect firearm, either intentionally or by mistake.
- Each target hit with “illegally acquired” ammunition.

\*DOUBLE JEOPARDY: A MISS CANNOT CAUSE A PROCEDURAL\*

An action (or inaction) that is considered a “MISS” penalty isn’t always just because the shooter “Missed” a target.

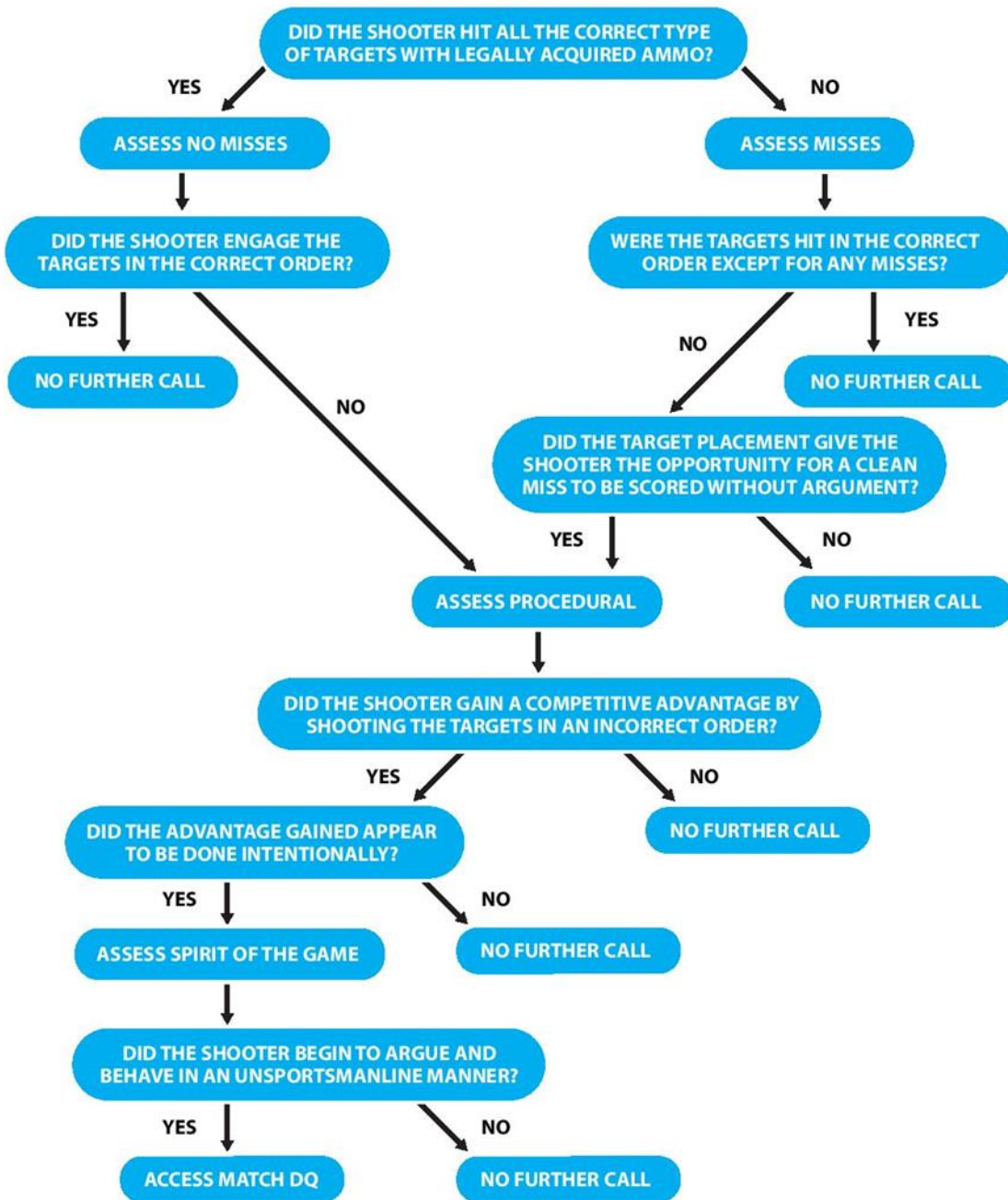
It is difficult to understand calling a target that was actually hit as a miss- but, if the shooter hit the target with the incorrect firearm, it is considered a miss penalty.

Examples:

If a shooter engages 5 rifle targets with a pistol = 5 misses = 25 second penalty total

If a shooter engages 2 rifle targets with a pistol and then corrects and engages the last 3 rounds on the correct pistol targets = 2 misses = 10 second penalty total

# Miss Flow Chart





### 10-second Penalties – Procedural Penalties & Other

Procedural Penalties (P) are any unintentional procedural error caused by “brain fade”, confusion, ignorance, or mistakes. Procedural errors carry a 10 second penalty and cannot exceed one for any given stage. Each of these penalties is stand alone and not to be added one on top of the other. \*DOUBLE JEOPARDY: A MISS CANNOT CAUSE A PROCEDURAL.

- Failure to attempt to fire a firearm
- Failure to attempt a prop or stage maneuver
- Shooting targets in any order other than as required by stage description
- Engaging the stage (firearms, targets, or maneuvers) in an order other than as required by stage description
- Firing any firearm from a position or location other than as required by the stage description
- Use of “illegally acquired” ammunition
- Not returning revolvers to leather – unless otherwise specified
- First offense, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.

### 10-second Penalties – Minor Safety Violation (MSV)

Actions that result in a MSV Penalty include:

- Leaving empty or live rounds in magazine or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded
- Open, empty long guns that slip and fall but do not break the 170° safety rule or sweep anyone
- Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45° down range

### **Stage Disqualification (SDQ) Penalty**

Stage Disqualification (Stage DQ or SDQ): the competitors time and performance on the course of fire is disqualified as a result of the violating action by the shooter.

*For a SDQ penalty when using total time scoring, the shooter receives a score/time of maximum penalty time (five seconds for each target to be engaged on the stage) plus 30 seconds.*

- Shooting on the move
- Any dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line (from the loading table to the unloading table)
- Long guns that slip, fall, and break the 170°
- Violation of the 170°/failure to manage appropriate muzzle control
- Any discharge striking anything 5 to 10 feet from the shooter (except props declared as expendable by Match officials)
- Returning a revolver to leather with the hammer not fully down on spent round or empty chamber
- A cocked revolver leaving the shooters hand (as soon as it leaves the shooters hand)
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun (as soon as it leaves the shooters hand)
- Second offense, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.

- Changing location with a live round under a cocked hammer or firearm with the hammer down on a live round.
- Changing location with a long gun with the action closed and hammer cocked.
- Unsafe firearm handling
- Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line
- Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm
- Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round
- Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm
- Failure to adhere to loading/unloading procedures
- Leaving the line once the stage has begun for any reason
- Dry firing at the loading or unloading tables
- Decocking a revolver, rifle, or hammered shotgun to avoid a penalty without positive indication to do so from the TO.
- Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared (loaded) firearms after completing a stage within the same day (assessed on the previously completed stage)

### **Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game**

(30 second Penalty)

- Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage.
- Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor/minimum velocity. The penalty is applied for each stage a competitor is checked and their ammunition is found not to meet the power factor or minimum velocity.
- Willfully refusing to make an attempt to complete any non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions (e.g., rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite).

\*The accumulation of 2 Spirit of the Game/Failure to Engage penalties result in a Match Disqualification.

### **Match Disqualification (MDQ) Penalty**

A MDQ means the shooter puts his/her firearms away and is done shooting for the duration of the match.

- Two accumulated SDQ penalties or Two Spirit of the Game Assessments
- Belligerent attitude or unsportsmanlike conduct
- Willful failure to comply with a "Cease Fire" or "Stop" command given by, and while under the positive control of, the TO
- Shooting under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs, or any substance or medication that may impair the shooters physical or mental abilities
- Shooting illegal ammunition
- Dropping a loaded firearm
- Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than 5 feet from the shooter
- Any discharge at the loading or unloading areas
- Any discharge that is deemed unsafe
- Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm
- Third offense, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- Interpersonal conflicts

## **COURSE BREAK TIME**

### **Review & Assessment**

#### Course Review

Review discussion

Questions and Answers

#### Assessment

Congratulations, Course Complete! Thank You for taking the SASS RO I Course.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Compiled & Edited for the Single Action Shooting Society®  
By The Range Operations Committee  
& the SASS Board of Directors

The rules and disciplines outlined in this course will not impose any undue hardship or additional financial burden on any SASS affiliated club. This document may be copied by any SASS Affiliated Club for use in the SASS Range Operations training program.

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