

Introduction to Pistol Shooting

**Safe Shooting
Techniques
and the
Requirements for a
"B" Endorsement**



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1 Introduction

You are a new member of a pistol club. You may or may not be a shooter from another discipline, but we are going to assume you have no previous shooting experience. You will however have a firearms licence, or be in the process of acquiring one.

For this purpose you will receive some basic firearms safety training, which will be useful, but as a pistol club member you will need some extra training.

We hope you will undertake subsequent training and want to obtain further qualifications and expertise in the sport, but what you need as a base is contained here.

This manual has been prepared for you, as a new pistol shooter, to let you know what you can expect and what is expected of you in your first few months of membership of a pistol club. Included are:

- Information about attendances and your probationary period
- safety requirements for both on and off the range
- range etiquette
- range commands for both practice shooting and competition matches
- general information about the sport
- shooting tips
- additional information about all disciplines, not just ISSF

When you apply for your “B” endorsement for your firearms licence, your club will be required to state that you have a satisfactory level of competence and knowledge. The training programme for which this manual is a guide will provide you with this education and you will be expected to pass a short test on safety, range etiquette and the range commands

If you have any questions about anything in this manual, please ask an experienced shooter at your club to help you. It is better to ask a “silly” question than to make a silly mistake. Mistakes of any kind are best avoided on a pistol range!

In the meantime, we are glad to have you in the New Zealand Pistol Association, and we hope that you will enjoy your new sport/hobby!

2 Attendances

2.1 Range Book

You must **ALWAYS** sign the range book before entering the range on **each** day that you visit the range. You, and any visitor that you may bring, must sign the range book whether or not you actually participate in range activities. Most clubs will require that you as a member wear a badge or some other means of identification at all times on the club premises, and that visitors also wear visitors badges.

While this may seem a bit regimented, it will help you to become known to other club members, and to know who they are.

2.2 Signing-in is required by the Police.

However, please note that this signing-in alone is not directly related to attendance in terms of obtaining a "B" endorsement. Qualifying attendances require that you participate in club activity, not just attend the range.

2.3 Visits

Police requirements are that visitors may not attend a pistol club more than three times without applying for membership.

Once you join a club you will complete an NZPA FM1 form and your effective membership starts from the date of receipt of that form by the NZPA. You should make sure that an FM1 is completed and sent off as soon as you join a club. This will prevent unnecessary prolongation of your probationary period.

2.4 Qualifying Attendances

To be eligible to apply for your "B" (target pistol) endorsement you must attend your club at least 12 times in the 6 months before applying for your B. In order to count a day at the range, you must actively participate in the match, coaching, etc that is being conducted on that day.

You will also need to attend your Club 12 times a year thereafter to maintain your B endorsement.

3 B Endorsement and Licence

3.1 Firearms Licence

If you do not already have a firearms licence, you should take steps to get one as soon as possible. You must have a Firearms Licence prior to applying for your B endorsement. To apply for a licence, you should visit your local Police station and ask for the appropriate forms. You will be required to attend a lecture on firearms safety and to pass a test based on the material in the lecture.

As an alternative to the lecture, you may complete the Open Polytechnic *Firearms Safety and Appreciation Course*. This excellent course covers not only general safety and pistol shooting, but also rifle and shotgun shooting, and safe reloading practice. For anyone who is intending to shoot a calibre other than .22, reloading is a major cost saving. This course explains clearly how to undertake reloading safely. For more information, **Freephone** 0-800-650-200.

3.2 Probationary Membership

For at least the first six months of your membership of a pistol club you will be considered as a Probationary Member. During this time, you will be expected to attend and actively participate at least 12 times in the activities of your Club. Your probationary period serves a number of functions. It allows you time to:

- familiarise yourself with your club and the sport,
- learn SAFE pistol handling technique,
- attend training sessions on technique and on the various disciplines,

- decide what pistol disciplines interest you,
- save money for the appropriate equipment (and the "B" licence fee),
- meet many of the other members. They will be happy to show you (and possibly let you try) the various types of pistols that they use.

This period of probationary membership status must be, by Police requirement, not less than six months. If it is felt that more time is required for you to attain the necessary safety skills, the period may be extended at the discretion of the Committee of your Club. At the end of this time, and if you have met some requirements of attendance and experience you will be made a full member and may apply for a B endorsement to your firearms licence which you need before you can buy a pistol.

3.3 What your Club is likely to look for before supporting your application for "B" endorsement

Your Club Committee will be able to explain to you exactly what they are looking for and how you might go about fulfilling these requirements.

- Safety – your ability to demonstrate positive knowledge of safety requirements, and of safe handling of pistols and ammunition.
- Knowledge – your understanding of the rules that govern the range, shooting events and the club.
- Competency – that you are a competent pistol shot and have shown this by demonstrating adequate skills in club shooting activities. This can be defined as achieving a certain score in a specified match, but must also be testified by a club officer.
- Attitude – that you are a fit and proper person to own pistols in your own right.
- Enthusiasm – that you are an enthusiastic club member who participates in club activities and who fits in with other members.

In order to fulfil these requirements, you must participate in organised club shooting activities. Members of the Committee and/or qualified Range Officers must have the opportunity to observe you taking part in shooting activities, to assess your competence and safe handling. The training programme for which this manual is the basic material is intended to help provide you with the first three of these. You will have to provide the rest yourself.

3.4 What your Club is signing off when Committee validates an application for "B" endorsement

By validating your "B" endorsement application, the Club is stating to the NZPA and the Police that you have complied with the requirements laid down by the Police, the NZPA and the Club. By signing the form, the Club is certifying that these conditions have been fulfilled. The statement made to the NZPA binds the club to that application. This training is intended to assist the club committee to be sure that they are correct to sign off your application.

Validation of a candidate who does not meet the conditions laid down could jeopardise the continued existence of the club.

3.5 What the Police and NZPA require from a candidate for “B” endorsement

That the person:

- attends shooting meetings on a regular basis;
- demonstrates safe handling of pistols;
- has a working knowledge of the club, competition and safety rules, and of the relevant bits of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Police and the NZPA (a copy of this will be available from your club secretary);
- displays competence in club activities;
- actively participates in organised club activities a minimum of 12 times within the six month immediately before applying for a B;
- has attended a training session based on this manual and has demonstrated a knowledge of the contents sufficient to pass the appropriate test paper for the type of shooting they will be doing to start with.

The requirements for regular frequent attendances are intended to give members of your Club’s Committee sufficient opportunity to witness your development of safe pistol handling and shooting competence, as well as providing you with ample scope to demonstrate safe and responsible attitudes towards firearms. The period of twelve attendances also ensures that a trend in your ability is established, and that no single occurrence would bias your record.

4 SAFETY

Safety is the **most important** aspect of taking part in pistol shooting. You will hear about it regularly from a number of different people, particularly the Range Safety Officers. Please heed what they say — if **any** person acts in an unsafe manner, we are **all** at risk.

4.1 General Points

- Never point a pistol at any person, or handle the pistol in such a way as to appear to be pointing it at someone.
- You may only load the pistol on the range, at the firing point, under instruction.
- All new shooters, visitors, and children, must be kept under strict supervision while on the range.
- Anyone participating in pistol shooting must wear ear protection. For ISSF matches it is highly recommended to wear eye protection and it is mandatory for all other matches.
- Any visitor who does not hold a “B” licence may only shoot if they are being directly supervised by a “B” endorsed shooter. This is defined as being close enough to allow physical restraint in the event of dangerous behaviour.

4.2 Seven Basic Rules of Firearm Safety (Remember these from your MSC training for your A licence?)

1 TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS LOADED

- *Don't take it for granted – check it yourself.*
- *Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot*
- *If you don't know how to prove it is safe – leave it alone*
- *Don't touch anyone else's pistol without permission*

2 ALWAYS POINT FIREARMS IN A SAFE DIRECTION

- *Doesn't matter if it is unloaded – ALWAYS point a firearm in a safe direction (ie down range)*
- *Be aware of the safety envelope at your range and make sure that you stay within it.*

3 LOAD A FIREARM ONLY WHEN YOU ARE GIVEN THE INSTRUCTION TO DO SO BY A RANGE OFFICER

- *Don't load the magazine or the pistol until you are at the firing line and are under the supervision of a range officer.*
- *Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot*

4 IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

- *Make sure that you know exactly what you are shooting at.*

5 CHECK YOUR FIRING ZONE

- *Even at the most regulated pistol ranges, unexpected things can happen. Animals may walk in front of the target, people may stray into the safety zone. Make sure your firing zone is clear before you shoot.*

6 STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SAFELY

- *There are special legal requirements for the storage of pistols. Make sure that you are aware of these.*
- *Store your firearms and ammunition separately.*
- *Check that the gun is not loaded before you put it away in your safe.*

7 AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS WHEN HANDLING FIREARMS

- *Make sure that you do not take alcohol prior to or during shooting.*
- *Don't allow others to drink before or during shooting.*
- *Avoid shooting when you are tired or ill – this reduces your concentration*

4.3 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND RECOMMENDED CLOTHING

Anyone including spectators participating in shooting activities on a shooting range must wear hearing protection and should also wear eye protection.

4.3.1 Hearing Defenders/Protectors

It is mandatory to wear hearing protection on pistol ranges.

The noise level produced by pistol shooting is such that damage will be caused to the hearing if no protection is used. Even hearing a few shots, particularly from a Centrefire pistol, is sufficient to cause temporary loss of hearing and prolonged exposure without hearing protection to any calibre pistol firing in an enclosed space will result in permanent impairment of hearing.

Always wear earmuffs of good quality in the range when shooting is in progress, even when you yourself are not shooting. We recommend Grade 4 earmuffs. Earplugs alone (which classify as Grade 2) are just adequate for one shooter firing at a time in the open (e.g. on an Action range), but do not provide sufficient protection when other shooters are firing in adjacent shooting bays or nearby. If your hearing is especially sensitive you may wish to use earplugs as well as earmuffs.

4.3.2 Safety Glasses

The use of safety glasses or goggles is mandatory for muzzle-loading, silhouette fullbore shooting, and all Action shooting.

Glasses are also highly recommended as a safety precaution for all Centrefire events, when firing blowback semiautomatic pistols, or when reloading (i.e. just about all the time!). If you wear glasses all the time for sight improvement reasons, make sure that your spectacles have safety glass or safety plastic lenses. Tinted glasses may be worn to accommodate different light conditions.

4.3.3 Footwear

Special pistol shooting shoes do exist (made to comply with ISSF rules). For all disciplines, wear enclosed shoes with reasonably flat soles for example, running shoes. These provide good stability, and will protect you and others from your reaction if a hot shell case lands on your foot. For disciplines requiring movement, you need footwear which will provide grip as well.

4.3.4 Recommended clothing.

Wear clothing that is comfortable and which covers you reasonably well. There are few things more uncomfortable than having a hot case slide down inside your shirt. Avoid wearing tight or restrictive clothing. As well as being uncomfortable, it may prevent your assuming a correct shooting position.

Ideal clothing is a tracksuit and flat soled sports shoes, and this is the sort of thing worn by top shooters. Note that shoes coming above the ankle are not allowed for ISSF shooters any more.

NOTE: Camouflage clothing, or clothing carrying offensive slogans is not allowed on NZPA ranges.

4.4 Safety at home

4.4.1 SECURE LOCATION OF PISTOLS AND AMMUNITION

It is important to ensure that your pistols and equipment are kept in safe locations at all times. They are valuable, portable, and their loss would not only be a financial loss to you, but could be highly embarrassing both to you and to your club.

- **Make sure that your pistols are locked away in the security box or safe at all times when you are not cleaning them or doing dry-firing practice.**

If you are going out immediately after arriving home from the range, put your pistols away first.

The security box must be secure and in an inconspicuous location. The box should not be visible to the casual glance. Boxes should be of steel plate of at least 6 mm and locked by security padlocks (i.e. hardened hasp and body), mounted so that leverage is not possible, or with high quality (5 lever minimum) built in locks. The lid or door should be flush seating and well fitting. Hinges should be concealed or the box designed so that cutting the hinges will not permit the lid to be removed. The box must be bolted to the floor using coach bolts with the nuts in the box.

While a box may cost a few hundred dollars, the police require that a minimum standard be met. Remember that you are protecting possibly several thousand dollars worth of investment.

- **Consider fitting a burglar alarm to the box and preferably to the house.**

There are alarm units available at a reasonable price, and this will provide protection to the rest of your property. Your insurance cover may require this.

- **Ammunition must be stored in a secure location separate to the pistols.**

- **Reloading components**

Storing flammable materials such as bulk powder for reloading, or bulk primers, in your dwelling place may invalidate your house insurance. You should check this, and in any case consider storing these materials in an outside location such as your garage or shed, in a damp-proof non-metallic box, with a "blow-off" (weak) side or lid.

4.4.2 Other Security

- **Do not show your pistols to or discuss them with people you do not know.**

- **Be wary of letting people who do not need to know have your street address.**

Make sure that your name and address are not displayed on a club notice-board. If you have pistols for sale either put only a phone number up or advertise only through the club armourer. Avoid any publicity in which you are shown with a pistol or in which your name and address is given

4.4.3 Getting to and from the range

- **When taking pistols to and from the range they must be kept unloaded in a locked box in the locked boot of your car.**

- Magazines may not be loaded when you are carrying them to and from the range.
- If you have a station wagon, cover up pistol boxes.
- **Soft pouches are not acceptable to the police as security in transit.**
- **Ammunition must be carried in a separate container.**
- **Note that you should carry your firearms licence with you, or you may be required to produce it at a police station.**
- **Do not leave pistols in an unattended car for any period of time if you can possibly avoid it.**
- **Pistols may not be carried in a holster unless they are locked in a box as well.**
- **Don't put your name and address on the outside of any box or container in which you transport your guns.**

4.5 Safety on the Range

This manual covers two broad styles of pistol shooting:-

- “Bench shooting” where pistols are placed on a bench or table when not being fired, in which a number of shooters are supervised by one RO and fire during the same time period at fixed targets. This includes ISSF and Black Powder matches and HMS is put into this group for the purposes of this manual.
- “Field shooting” where pistols are normally kept in a holster on the shooter’s belt when not being fired, and are drawn from this as part of the shooting sequence; one or only a small number of shooters are supervised by one RO, and fire at one time at targets which may not be straight ahead of them. This includes all Action matches.

While “field” shooting requires some extra safety precautions, and has greater Range Officer involvement, in this manual the contents are arranged with ISSF “bench” shooting first and variations for all other types shown after. “Field” shooting training after the initial information this manual provides will be covered in the Holster Training Course you will want to take if you become interested in Action Shooting. For non-holster trained people, as all new pistol shooters are, all “field” shooting that is allowed is done from the 45° position, and the majority of the information relating to “bench” shooting is relevant to such shooters.

The person providing the training will concentrate on the type of shooting which predominates at the club where the training is being given.

4.5.1 The Range Officer

Each range will be looked after by a Range Officer or “RO”. This person controls the shooting on the particular range, and his/her instructions must be obeyed immediately and without question. Range Staff are here for your safety — make sure you follow their instructions.

The Range Officer will usually be able to answer general questions about shooting and pistols, and will also be able to answer questions that you may have on the particular discipline that is being shot on a particular range. All shooting must be under the control of a Range Officer. It is preferable that this person does not shoot.

When only two or three shooters are present and having a non-shooting RO may not be practicable, one of the shooters must be in charge of the range. This person shall issue the instructions before shooting.

4.5.2 Safety envelope

On any range and at any firing point, there is a "Safety Envelope" outside which the pistol must never be pointed at any time during the match or practice. This includes when the pistol is being loaded, rested on a bench, placed into or drawn from a holster or unloaded. While actually engaging a target the pistol must be pointed downrange in a direction such that any accidental discharge will hit only the target backstop area or the ground in front of the targets.

Pistols must not be pointed at the roof or the sidewalls of the range structure, at the sky or at the shooter's feet.

When a pistol is open on the bench with its magazine [if any] out, it should be placed with its muzzle pointed down range.

Using the proper "Ready" position, in which the barrel of the pistol is at approximately 45 degrees below the horizontal line to the target and directly on a line between the shooter and the target area, will help to ensure that the shooter stays within the safety envelope.

See attached diagrams in the back of the booklet.

4.5.3 Range Etiquette – Safe Behaviour Bench Shooting (ISSF HMS and ML)

Most of these items are common to ISSF and ML, and there are a few extra things for ML as well.

- ◆ When you enter a range, you **must** make the RO aware of your presence on the Range, and ask if you may take part in whatever activity is going on **before** you do anything else. After this you may select a firing position, unpack your pistol, and prepare to start shooting. If you turn up during a match, or while other people are shooting, the RO will probably require you to wait for a break in the shooting (end of a series) before moving to a shooting bay. Note: If you are participating in an organised match, the RO will call shooters to the line for preparation time.
- ◆ Once you have the Range Officer's permission to set up, you may get a Club gun from the Armourer, or you take your own pistol out of your gunbox. You may also set up your scope, etc at this time.
- ◆ When first placing your pistol on the bench, and at any other time when not actually being used, it must be placed on the shooting bench, with the muzzle

pointed down range, the action open, and with any magazine removed and unloaded. Revolvers should have the cylinder open.

- ◆ All pistols must be unloaded, and be checked by the RO as empty, before anyone goes forward of the firing line.
- ◆ You must check with the Range Officer before going forward of the firing line to put up a target, to pick up spent brass or for any other reason
- ◆ You may not handle any pistol, or ammunition while any person is forward of the firing line — this includes removing your pistol from gunboxes prior to placing on a shooting bench.
- ◆ During a match shooters remaining in the range during scoring must stand back from the firing line, and not handle any equipment.
- ◆ You may not load, make ready or fire a pistol without the Range Officer's permission – given as a standard command (see later).
- ◆ Only one magazine may be loaded, and only when the command is given to load.
- ◆ Avoid placing your finger on the trigger until you are ready to fire at the target.
- ◆ Loaded pistols must be pointed downrange in a safe direction at all times. If you want to rest your arm, for instance to look through your scope, rest the barrel of the pistol on the front of the shooting bench with the muzzle pointed safely down range.
- ◆ When you have finished shooting a series, or when you want to have a break from shooting, you must unload your pistol, place it on the shooting bench with the muzzle down range, the action open, with any magazine removed and unloaded. The magazine should sit with the open end of the magazine pointed away from the targets, so that the RO can see clearly that there are no rounds in the magazine. A revolver should be placed so that the cylinder is extended and the empty chambers can be easily seen. You should then stand back from the bench.
- ◆ If you wish to fire a shot at any other time than during a series or course of fire, you must have the permission of the RO.
- ◆ If it is necessary to handle a pistol between series to make some adjustment or repair, the RO must be asked for permission to remove the pistol from the shooting bench or range after he/she has cleared the gun. It must not then be replaced on the shooting bench until permission is again given by the RO. Sights may be adjusted at the firing line, provided that all personnel are behind the firing line.
- ◆ Note that pistols are not to be worn in a holster on the range except under Action Match controlled conditions.

- ◆ You must have your pistol (and magazines) checked ('cleared') by the RO as being unloaded before they can be removed from the shooting bench and put away. This is a Police requirement.
- ◆ Pistols should never be left unattended. If you need to leave the range briefly, you must tell the RO that you want to leave and ask the RO to look after your pistol while you are gone. If you find someone else's pistol(s) left by mistake at the range, put them away, or call the club armourer to take them home.
- ◆ Your pistols must always be kept in a box or case with you, or locked away securely. Do not leave your pistols even in a locked box in one part of the range while you are somewhere else. If you are going to have lunch, either take your pistol with you in its box, or put it back in the locked car.
- ◆ You should keep such items as you are not using at any particular time locked in the boot of your car, or in a secure area at the range if one is provided. It is preferable to take into a range building only what equipment you are using in that place and to take it with you when you leave.
- ◆ If you are moving onto another range, you must have your pistol cleared, and carry it unloaded, in its box. If you must carry it unboxed then it should have the action obviously open.
- ◆ If you want to show someone a pistol, or before you hand them a pistol, make sure that it is unloaded, and prove this to the other person. This is done by
 - ◆ pointing the pistol in a safe direction, then
 - ◆ for a single shot - opening the action;
 - ◆ for a revolver - swinging out the cylinder;
 - ◆ for a semiauto - removing the magazine, opening the slide and locking it back,
 - ◆ THEN showing the other person that the pistol [and the magazine, if any] is empty.
- ◆ If someone is about to hand you a pistol, ask him or her to prove it to you. If you need to handle a pistol that has not been cleared by someone else, make sure that you clear it before you handle it further. The pistol should be left open while being handled, as far as possible.
- ◆ Never pull the trigger on another person's pistol without asking.
- ◆ If you have a misfire and need another person's (for example, the RO's) assistance, take your finger off the trigger, and keep the muzzle pointed down range (resting the barrel if you need to). Then signal for the other person's attention, by raising the non-shooting arm above shoulder level, so that it is a clearly visible signal. Keep the muzzle pointed safely down range at all times.
- ◆ Only the RO, or a Judge may touch any pistol without the owner's consent.
- ◆ Avoid disturbing other shooters by talking or making undue noise. Spectators should be encouraged, but must remain within the area designated for them, and not distract the shooters in any way, by talking or making other disturbances.

Special Safety Requirements for Muzzleloading

Dealing with Misfires

Precision: If a cap fails to fire the charge, hold pistol pointing downrange for 30 seconds and then repeat firing. If cap still fails to ignite, replace it carefully and try again. No time is allowed for rectifying ignition failures.

Rapidfire (PA only): If cap fails, hold pistol down range for at least five seconds, and recock for subsequent exposures. Call a misfire at the end of the series. A reshoot of all non-fired shots is allowed. The reshoot is done after the same series. Only one reshoot is allowed per series, and any misfires in the reshoot series are not reshot.

Loading

- ◆ Projectiles may be lead only.
- ◆ Powder must be in single charge containers, and may be black powder only. No bulk containers are allowed on the range.
- ◆ Mouths of revolver chambers to be sealed with grease after loading.
- ◆ Patches are not allowed for revolvers.
- ◆ Safety glasses are to be worn by all shooters.
- ◆ The safe loaded condition is with 5 chambers loaded (or one less than the maximum the pistol will take), and hammer down on the empty chamber.

ABSOLUTELY NO SMOKING ON THE RANGE BY ANYONE, AND NO NAKED FLAMES ANYWHERE.

HMS

Although this is not a fast match, some of the pistols can use very powerful loads. So the rules include some specific precautions to avoid any hazards arising from these sources. Some of these are common to other matches

- ◆ The muzzle of the pistol must point downrange at all time.
- ◆ Pistols only to be handled after command “**LOAD**” is given.
- ◆ The pistol must not point at any part of the shooter’s anatomy or at another shooter.
- ◆ In the Freestyle position, it is possible to get near to dangerous directions for the muzzle. While firing, no part of the shooter’s body must be in the “Danger Zone”, an all-round cone of 45° from the muzzle of the pistol
- ◆ The muzzle of the pistol must not be allowed to recoil beyond the vertical
- ◆ Ammunition must be safe, and able to be extracted by the internal extractor of the pistol

4.5.4 Range Etiquette – Safe Behaviour Field Shooting

Many of the safety and etiquette requirements for “field” shooting are basically the same as for “bench” shooting. The items about placing guns on the bench are not relevant but much of the other items are, particularly for non-holster trained shooters. However, each match does have its own specific rules for safe behaviour.

Action Shooting

Action shooting as a class includes the use of Centrefire pistols with powerful loads, fired usually quite quickly. The RO to shooter ratio is high to reflect this, and there are a number of safety and pistol handling items that are specific to Action Matches. Detailed instruction is provided in the Holster training course, so the information in this manual consists of more general items which will allow new shooters to behave safely on any range.

- ◆ Eye and ear protection of shooters and spectators is mandatory.
- ◆ Note firstly that shooters who are not Holster Trained are subject to some restrictions
 - ◆ They must hold the pistol in the 45° Ready position to start
 - ◆ They may only shoot from a fixed position (ie no movement)
- ◆ After arrival at the range, pistols must be transferred from the carrying box to holster or to a carry pouch if this is how the shooter prefers to carry the pistol when not shooting. There will also be times when it is necessary to clean or repair a pistol at the range, or when you wish to show someone else the pistol for some reason. These activities may only take place in a Safety Zone.
- ◆ All ranges will have at least one Safety Zone. This is the only area other than the firing point in which pistols may be handled. You must specifically not take a pistol from its box and holster it at your car.
- ◆ The Primary Safety Zone (which must be provided) is an area with benches on which pistol boxes may be placed while removing the pistols for holstering.
- ◆ Note that on an Action range, all pistols are considered to be in a permanently cleared condition, as they should have been cleared before being holstered, and always after being used. Nevertheless, it is still sensible to assume any gun is loaded until proved otherwise. Note that pistols are not allowed to be carried around a range with a magazine in, loaded or not.
- ◆ International rules, which New Zealand follows, do allow taking ammunition into a Safety Zone, but it must not be handled. Thus it is OK to wear magazines, loaded or not, but magazines must not be placed in the pistol, and it is better to avoid handling them at all.
- ◆ While not actually shooting or at a firing point a pistol must either be kept in a closed bag or box, or in a holster worn on the person, and not handled except in a Safety Zone. We recommend that pistols should be bagged when shooters have to wait between stages, or while not expecting to shoot soon. If the pistol is kept in a bag or box, it can only be transferred to the holster in a Safety Zone or at the firing point with permission from the Range Officer
- ◆ A New Zealand requirement is that holsters must only be worn on the strong side, and the holster must cover the trigger. The gun butt must not be below the belt; hold-down ties are not allowed for IPSC, Service or NRA. The holster must be “serviceable and safe” and must retain the pistol during movement, and during a retention test if applied. Other than this, discipline requirements apply.
- ◆ Magazines may be loaded at any time, and may be worn on the holster belt, or carried in a bag, or pocket (except in a Safety Zone). A shooter should arrive at the Firing Point with enough ammunition for the whole stage. All magazines needed should be loaded and easily available. IPSC require that during the course of fire, a shooter must carry on the person all the magazines and equipment needed for the course of fire.
- ◆ At each range there will be at least one Range Officer, and he/she is in charge of all the shooters at that range, and responsible for their safe behaviour while shooting. Once a shooter has been called to the Firing Point, he/she will follow the Range Officers instructions and commands for undertaking the course of fire.

Cowboy Action Shooting

In addition to the safety items covered under Action Shooting, there are some specific extra points for CAS.

- ◆ Only holster qualified shooters may draw from the holster.
- ◆ The only handguns used are single-action revolvers.
- ◆ The safe loaded condition is with 5 rounds loaded, and hammer down on the empty chamber.
- ◆ The shooting hand should not be used to cock a revolver unless the course of fire requires it, or the shooter is physically impaired so as to make it necessary. In either case the RO will closely supervise this aspect of the shooting. “Fanning” is prohibited under all circumstances.
- ◆ In three gun stages, used guns must be cleared before moving on.
- ◆ Two revolvers may be used in one stage.
- ◆ The second revolver may be carried in a cross-draw holster, but strict safety precautions apply to the use of such holsters.
- ◆ Long guns are stored in racks, and carried action open and muzzle towards the sky.
- ◆ Ammunition for revolvers and lever-action rifles must be loaded with lead projectiles and have a minimum velocity of 650 and maximum of 1000 fps for revolvers and 1400 fps for lever action rifles. Single shot rifles have no maximum.
- ◆ Shotguns may only be loaded with two rounds.

An important Safety Item for all Disciplines – The dud or squib load

This is not put last because it's least!

In practically all matches this means a round of ammunition (or load for muzzleloaders) in which the projectile does not leave the barrel of the pistol. This is usually (but not always) because of incorrect amount of powder (or none) and is usually associated with a hand-loaded centre-fire round, but it can occur with a muzzle-loaded charge, or even with rimfire .22 ammo.

In itself this is merely annoying, and can cause major and expensive time delays while fixing it. The dangerous bit is that if you fire another round into the blocked barrel, it is possible for the gun to break up, sending bits of metal in several unplanned directions. In a well made gun with fairly low-powered ammunition, it is more likely to bulge the barrel, which, if less dangerous, still ruins the gun.

So, it is important to be aware of this possibility, and if you suspect a “soft” load, i.e. one in which there is less recoil than usual, (or you can't see the shot have any downrange effect), **STOP**. Range Officers are prepared for this, and in all matches it is required that you stop if this happens; if you don't the alert RO will stop you if he thinks this is what's happened. If he is wrong you get a reshoot.

What to do if it happens.

Once you have discovered this problem, then what you have to do is to get the projectile out, and this will always involve the RO's permission (and possibly help).

So the first thing to do is to stop, hold the pistol at 45°, and hold up your other hand to alert the RO you have a problem (see 5.4 Malfunctions). The RO will supervise your clearing the gun, or do it for you if you are uncertain or a learner.

You unload the pistol, open the breech and using a rod, push the projectile either forwards or backwards out of the barrel (depending on what sort of pistol). With revolvers it is possible that the projectile is half in the barrel and half in the chamber, in which case you have to ram it back into the case. Do this only under RO supervision, because any other unfired rounds are still in the cylinder – be extra careful about direction and not pointing at anyone or anything. A muzzleloading single shot pistol cannot generally be opened at the breech and so a ball part-way up

the barrel must either be extracted with a special screw, or fired out with a small amount of powder added through the flash-hole (a practised job).

5 Shooting

5.1 Things to take to the range

- Earmuffs
- Glasses
- Spotting Scope
- Notebook and pen
- Firearms Licence
- Membership Card/badge
- Gun and ammo and something to carry used cases
- Tools
- Sunglasses and sunblock
- Water or drink if there are none there
- Cellphone
- Basic first-aid kit for yourself

5.2 Range Commands

Range commands are used by the Range Officer to inform the shooters as to the actions they may take. By international convention range commands have become simple, and use as few words as possible. However, each range command, although expressed in few words, is essentially an instruction to carry out what may be a complicated procedure, which has to be followed exactly.

It is very important that you understand exactly what is meant by each range command.

5.2.1 Range Commands for ISSF Matches (Informal)

When you first begin to shoot, you will probably start with shooting at a static “precision” target. While general practice shooting is going on, the Range Officer will use very basic commands rather than full match commands to indicate when you may and may not shoot. These will be something like:

“Unpack Pistols”

This is to remind you not to take your pistol out of the box in which you brought it until you have permission to do so. When you hear this command you may take your pistol from its carry box to the firing point.

“Range is Clear — you may go forward to put your target up”

Pretty self-explanatory, but it means that no-one will be able to touch their pistols, etc, while you are forward of the firing line. It is RULE ONE of range safety that once this command has been given and shooters or range staff are forward of the line doing things to targets, NO-ONE who remains at the line goes anywhere near their pistols. It is good practice for the RO to stay behind during target repairs to make sure that no-one does go towards or handle their guns.

Once the Range Officer has made sure that all shooters are back behind the firing line, he/she will call:

“Range in Use — shooters to the line — you are free to shoot in your own time”

At this point, you may enter your shooting bay. You may get your pistol out of your gunbox, organise your shooting bay and set up your spotting scope. You may also load and fire your pistol in your own time.

“Stop — pistols down, actions open, shooters back from the line”

At the end of a series, or after a period of time, the RO will call this. If you have not finished shooting, you must **immediately** stop shooting. You then empty your pistol (including the magazine and the round which might be currently in the breech), and place the gun on the shooting bench, action open, muzzle pointed safely down range and magazine (if any) empty. Leave the magazine with the top towards you so the RO can see that it is empty.

(Don't fire “a last shot”!)

“Range is Clear — forward, mark and patch”

At this point, you can go forward, have a look at your target, take down your scores, group position, group size, etc, and put patches on your target.

If you have finished shooting for the day, you can remove your target and put it away at this time.

“STOP!”

Stop shooting **IMMEDIATELY!!!** This urgent command is normally used only when something unexpected has happened. However, you must stop shooting immediately, lower the pistol, and then wait for further instructions. This command may be used by anyone — including **you** — if something unexpected has occurred. If you see someone (or something) about to wander onto the Range — you may be the only one who can see them — so yell out!! This is not a moment to be shy!

5.2.2 Range Commands for ISSF Matches (Formal and per International Rules and Usage)

These are the commands you will hear and be expected to know if you go to ISSF competitions in New Zealand and overseas. They are shorter than the informal commands in 5.2.1, (in fact generally one word) because they may be used for non-English speakers. However, they convey the same information. You should make the effort to learn these commands as soon as possible.

“Preparation Time”

This is the time period before the first order to load. Until this command is given, pistols may not be removed from their boxes and placed on the bench. Once this order is given, you may go to a shooting station, and set up your equipment, etc. In all matches dry firing may take place.

Preparation time is 10 minutes for all precision events and 3 minutes for Rapidfire events.

“Load”

Once this order is given, you may:

- a) load one round into the breech of a single shot pistol;
- b) load five rounds into the cylinder of a revolver;

- c) load a magazine with five rounds (or other specified number) and insert into a semiautomatic pistol; and close the breech or cylinder or cycle the slide, cock the pistol and assume the Ready position [see definitions]

After Preparation Time is finished you may only make sight adjustments between "Load" and "Stop".

"Are You Ready?"

The Range Officer calls "**Are you ready?**" a reasonable time after the command to load. If you are not ready, call "**Not Ready**" clearly. If you are ready, you do not have to say anything.

If no shooter calls "**Not Ready**", the R/O will start the timing mechanism after three seconds.

If any shooter does call "**Not Ready**" the R/O repeats "**Not Ready**" so that the other shooters know what is happening and waits 15 seconds. He/she then calls "**Attention**" and immediately starts the timing mechanism and the series.

"Stop"

At the end of each shooting series the Range Officer gives the command "**Stop**". This means to **STOP FIRING**. Even if you have not fired all the shots in the series, you must still stop. The command "**Stop**" may be given on its own at a time other than the end of a series, and it then means to cease firing immediately and stand with the pistol pointing down the range in the ready position until the next command is given.

"Unload"

You must remove any unfired ammunition from the pistol. Once you have unloaded, put the pistol on the bench with the action open and the muzzle pointing downrange. The magazine of a semi-auto must also be unloaded, and left on the bench for inspection.

At the end of each series, or at the end of the match, the R/O will check all pistols to make sure that they are unloaded. This is called "**clearing**".

- a) For a single shot, open the action and leave it open.
- b) For a revolver, swing out the cylinder to show that it is empty.
- c) For a semiautomatic pistol, pull back the slide until it is engaged by the hold-open mechanism, and then remove the magazine. If the pistol has no hold open mechanism, the magazine must be removed first and the slide pulled back and kept open by insertion of an obstacle, e.g. an empty cartridge case. The magazine must also be shown to be unloaded.
- d) In each case the pistol must be left on the bench, with the muzzle pointing downrange, in such a position that the Range Officer can see that it is empty.

"Range is clear"

When the R/O has cleared the pistols at the end of a series, he/she will announce that the range is clear and that range staff may go forward. No-one is to go forward of the firing line before this command has been given.

“Remove pistol”

At the end of the match, and after your pistol has been cleared by the Range Officer, you will be told to remove your pistols from the bench. All guns must be removed from the benches and boxed before targets are finally scored.

5.2.3 Range Commands for Muzzleloading Matches

In addition to the above which are applicable to all ISSF and ML matches, there are some extra commands for Muzzle-loading matches:

“Load and Fire” This command is given to start the PA 25 metre match precision sections, the PA 50 metre match, and the International matches, as these are usually not shot on turning targets. It means:

- a) to load powder and ball,
- b) to cap or prime, and
- c) to fire the requisite number of shots.

Special Commands for PA 25m Rapidfire stage

- a) Load** - This command means to load powder and ball, grease chambers, place pistol on the bench and stand back.
- b) Cap pistols** - This command means to place percussion caps on the nipples, place the pistol on half cock on the bench and stand back.
- c) Assume the ready Position** - This means to pick up pistol, place on full cock and take up the 45 degree position.
- d) Are you ready?** - This is the preliminary to starting the series, as in other timed series.

“Stop” For muzzle-loading pistols, the command to stop cannot sensibly be accompanied by the command to unload. **“Stop”** is given at the end of the series or at any other time when shooting is required to cease. If any shots remain to be fired at the end of a series, the shooter holds the pistol at 45 degrees and holds his other arm up. He will then fire off the remaining shots in a safe direction only on the instruction of the Range Officer.

Clearing Muzzle-loading pistols cannot be proved clear by opening the action but must still be cleared before range personnel can go forward. A revolver is cleared by the shooter demonstrating to the Range Officer first that there are no caps on any nipple, and then that there are no balls in any chamber.

A single shot pistol is cleared by showing that there is no cap or priming mixture present, and by inserting a ramrod or cleaning rod down the barrel to show that there is no load present.

5.2.4 Range Commands for HMS matches

All HMS matches use the same Range Commands and these are:-

"Shooters to the Line" means that all groups of shooters in a detail will advance to the shooting line(s) with their equipment, and be ready for the next command;

"Load" means to load the pistols and make ready to fire. Pistols may not be touched until this command is given. The RO waits for 30 seconds after giving this command and then;

"Fire" means that the shooters have two minutes to fire five shots, one at each of their bank of targets;

"Cease Fire, Make your Gun Safe" means that even if you have not fired all the shots in the series, you must still stop. You must remove any unfired ammunition from the pistol, and hold it with the action open and the muzzle pointing downrange, until the RO has checked that it is safe.

"Range is Clear – reset targets" means that the guns have been cleared and it is safe to go forward to put up targets.

5.2.5 Range Commands for Action matches (including CAS)

All Action Matches now use common basic commands (with minor variations), and these are:-

"Range in use". This warns all present that the range has been declared safe for shooting, which will start shortly.

"Load and Make Ready": This means to load the pistol, make it ready to fire and place in the holster. The shooter then adopts the Ready Position applicable to the match. For a non holster-trained shooter this is always the 45° Ready position. The ready conditions for the pistols used are:

- Double action Revolver – hammer down on loaded chamber
- Single action Revolver – hammer down on unloaded chamber
- Single action semi-automatic pistol – loaded, hammer cocked, safety engaged
- Double action semi-automatic pistol – loaded, hammer down or decocked

Ready position: This is the position which the shooter must adopt before the stage can start. For IPSC matches it is commonly standing with the hands relaxed at the sides. For all other matches, with rare exceptions, it is to stand with both hands raised above shoulder level. Adoption of, and remaining in, the ready position is a signal from the shooter to the Range Officer that he/she is ready to start.

"Are You Ready?": When the Range Officer sees the shooter(s) adopt the ready position he/she asks **"Are you ready?"**. If the shooter does not call **"Not Ready"** quickly, the RO will prepare to start.

"Standby": This is the command given by the Range Officer to tell the shooter that the timing cycle will start within a few seconds. The Range Officer will start the timer within 5 seconds, and this will give a sound signal to show the time has started.

"Unload and Show Clear". In a fixed time match the timer will give a stop signal. In all matches when the shooter has finished shooting the RO gives this command. The command means to unload and demonstrate that the pistol is empty. The procedure is covered under Holster Training.

“Gun Clear, Hammer Down, Holster”. When the Range Officer is satisfied that the pistol contains no ammunition, this command instructs the shooter to test fire the gun, and holster it. A semi-auto pistol must have the hammer dropped as if it were to be fired. This means to point the pistol towards the backstop and to allow the hammer to fall by pulling the trigger in the normal way. For a revolver, the cylinder is closed and the gun holstered, with the hammer down. It is not necessary for a revolver to have the hammer dropped.

“ Range is clear” When he/she has cleared the shooter’s pistol and it has been replaced in the holster, the Range Officer announces that the range is clear and that range staff may go forward.

This is the standard IPSC command for the end of the series and should be used for all disciplines and matches, as an unambiguous statement that the Range is in a safe condition for people to go forward of the firing point.. No-one is to go forward of the firing line before this command has been given. After this command the shooter may inspect targets, collect brass, and leave the range.

In CAS competitions, Loading and Unloading tables may be used to expedite the proceedings and if so firearms may be loaded and unloaded **under RO supervision** at a safe location near to but other than the actual firing line.

5.3 HOW TO SCORE YOUR TARGET.

Even for non-scoring matches or practice, you need to know how your shots will be scored and how the scorer will deal with a marginal shot (ie when the score value is not immediately clear). And of course for most practices you will do your own scoring and so need to know how it is done.

In most instances the location of a shot is quite clear and in nearly all matches a shot is given the score of the highest value scoring zone it is in or touches. When a shot is very close to the line marking the edge of a zone, however, it can be difficult to decide if it is touching the zone or not.

There are several aids that the scorer may use to determine the value of a hit on your target.

The first is **common sense** and giving you the benefit of the doubt.

The second is a **clear plastic overlay** with the scoring lines and bullet holes engraved on it. This helps to reconstruct the original scoring line, which may have been damaged by a messy hole, or several holes near each other.

A second opinion from another member of the scoring party is very useful and is why scoring should be done by more than one person.

Finally if the matter is still in question, a **Jury member** will be asked to use a **plug gauge**. This is a precision made cylinder of the same diameter as the bullet, with a tapered point. The target is removed and laid flat, and the plug gauge is inserted in the hole. The selfcentring action will show the true outside diameter of the bullet, and it will be clear whether or not it would have touched the scoring ring. Because this damages the hole, it can only be done once, and requires experience to use it properly. This is why only trained people should use a plug gauge. (Note this is not normally used in Action match scoring).

Try to see these processes in action so that you can understand them.

You will sometimes find that shots which you were sure touched the line when you looked through your spotting scope, are declared as missing the line by the scoring party. Bear in mind before challenging this that the scope does generate an optical illusion and more importantly that the scorers are there to do their job properly. They have no interest in your score or making it lower than it is. Once you have done some scoring yourself, you will be more sympathetic to the difficulties that scorers face in making fair decisions. Of course if all your shots are in the centre of the target, there will be no problems!

Be aware of skid shots

If the shot hits a turning target as it is turning away at the end of a timed series, it may make a non-circular hole. This may range in size from an oval to a line virtually cutting the target in half. The length of the hole determines whether it is scored as hit or a miss. A hole longer than 7mm for smallbore or 11mm for Fullbore (ISSF) is scored as a miss. In the case of doubt a skid gauge is used - this is a sheet of clear plastic with three lines engraved on it, spaced apart by the distances shown above.

International Black Powder.

A shot must have its centre more than **half way** over the scoring line to count as the higher score. This can take some experience to gauge accurately.

5.4 Malfunctions – or - This pistol won't shoot!

A malfunction is the failure of the pistol to fire a cartridge when the trigger is pulled. It may be caused by the failure of the ammunition to fire, a jammed case or forgetting to cock the pistol.

In ISSF matches and PA ML you will normally be given the opportunity to have a reshoot, with the lower of two scores being used. In International ML, HMS and Action matches no reshoots are allowed, and you just carry on if you can and take whatever score you can get.

5.4.1 During practice

If your pistol fails to fire, keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, lower your arm to the 45° position and raise your non-shooting arm to attract the attention of the RO. This person will help you determine what caused the malfunction.

Once you are familiar with common malfunctions, during practice, you may wish to check the pistol yourself. Make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction at all times.

5.4.2 During a match

If you have a malfunction in an organised ISSF or PA ML match, in general, you should lower your arm to the Ready position as above, remove your finger from the trigger, and raise your non-shooting arm above shoulder height to attract the attention of the RO. Do not otherwise touch the pistol until the RO gives you permission to do so. If you touch the pistol, a reshoot of the malfunction will be disallowed. The Range Officer will help to determine what caused the malfunction and will decide what class it was, and how to deal with it.

There are a number of reasons why a malfunction may happen, but for ISSF shooting they are grouped into two types, allowable and non-allowable and the classification governs the way the reshoot is conducted.

- An allowable malfunction is caused by some factor outside the control of the shooter i.e. pistol breakdown, ammunition failure, case jammed.
- A non-allowable malfunction is defined as one which is caused by the shooter e.g. not letting go of the trigger, loading insufficient number of rounds.

In most ISSF events, if you have a malfunction, you are allowed to reshoot the series in which it occurred. In general, you will fire another series on the same target (which is not scored or patched/replaced) immediately after the series in which the malfunction occurred. In general, you will be credited with the score of the lowest shots on the target(s). For an allowable malfunction, you will get the lowest five shots; for a non-allowable malfunction you effectively lose the malfunction shot, and only get credited with the four lowest shots.

A special case of a malfunction is a “maxim” in which a semiautomatic pistol fires more than one shot at one pull of the trigger. This is considered an allowable malfunction the first time it happens and a reshoot is allowed and scored as for any other allowable malfunction. Typically the “maximized” shot or shots is much higher than the rest and can easily be distinguished. In scoring the reshoot, the “maximized” shot(s) are not included and the shots from which the lowest five are taken are the “normal” shots only.

More than one “maxim” will probably result in the Range Officer requiring that the pistol be removed as a safety hazard. This penalty applies to all disciplines.

5.4.3 In International ML matches no malfunctions are allowed – you fix it in the time or lose whatever shots you have not fired. In Action matches you are supposed to fix the problem and continue even if this means a very slow time. If you have to stop for pistol failure you can lose all score for that series.

5.4.4 In all Action Matches, no allowance is made for malfunctions. In a fixed time series, if you can't fix the problem within the time, then you lose the score you were not able to shoot. In an IPSC stage where the time is open-ended, you are expected to fix the problem, and then carry on, and just take a large time for that stage! An exception is where there is a suspected bullet stuck in the barrel. The Range Officer can demand that a shooter stops. If there is a bullet stuck in the barrel, the shooter loses the stage. If there is not, he gets a reshoot.

6 Brief outline of all matches and their rules

There are a number of different disciplines of pistol shooting in which you can become involved over time. Competitions in these matches are held at Club level, "Islands", Nationals, Internationals and World Championship. Only ISSF shooting is practised at the Olympic and Commonwealth Games.

We cover briefly here all the main matches shot by NZPA.

This manual only has an overview of the matches, and you will need a rulebook and more detailed training as you take up any of them. The purpose of this section is just to give you enough of an idea of what is involved to enable you to start, or to watch others shooting without wondering what they are doing.

6.1 ISSF EVENTS:

There are five major matches that are shot under the rules of the International Sport Shooting Federation (ISSF). These disciplines are shot standing, unsupported, with the gun held in one hand. The disciplines are:

- **50 metre Pistol (ex Free Pistol)**
- **Air Pistol**
- **Standard Pistol**
- **Centrefire / 25 metre Pistol (ex Sport Pistol)**
- **Rapidfire**

Some of these matches have variants for Women and/or Juniors.

Most beginners shoot some of the ISSF matches after their initial training, to gain confidence in gun handling and to practice their new shooting skills in a variety of ways. These matches reinforce the basic techniques required for all good shooting.

6.1.1 Courses of fire for ISSF Events:

50 metre Pistol

- Pistol used: Any .22 calibre Rimfire (not magnum)
- Target: ISSF 25/50 metre Precision
- Range: 50 metres
- Number of shots: 60
- Number of shots per target: 5 (self changing) or 10
- Time: 2 hours
- Sighters: Unlimited
- Preparation time: 10 minutes

10 metre Air Pistol

- Pistol used: Any .177" (4.5mm) air or gas pistol
- Target: ISSF Air Pistol
- Range: 10 metres
- Number of shots: Men and Junior Men - 60
Women and Junior Women - 40
- Number of shots per target: 1
- Time: Men and Junior Men - 1 hour 45 minutes
Women and Junior Women - 1 hour 15 minutes

- Sighters: Unlimited
- Preparation time: 10 minutes

Standard Pistol

- Pistol used: .22 lr semiautomatic
- Target: ISSF Precision
- Range: 25 metres
- Number of shots: 60
- Number of shots per target: 5
- Time: 150, 20, and 10 seconds per 5 shots
- Sighters: 5 in 150 seconds
- Preparation time: 5 minutes

Centre Fire / 25 metre Pistol

- Pistol used:
Centrefire - Centrefire semiautomatic or revolver
cal .30 (7.65 mm) - .357 (9.65 mm) OR
25 metre Pistol - semiautomatic or revolver cal .22 lr
Men shoot Centrefire; Women, and Junior Men and Women
shoot 25 metre Pistol (but note that in NZ men can shoot this
too)
- Number of stages: 2 - Precision and Rapidfire
- Target: ISSF Precision; ISSF International Rapidfire
- Range: 25 metres
- Number of shots: 30 per stage
- Number of shots per target: 5
- Time: Precision - 5 minutes per 5 shots
Rapidfire – Target faces 3 secs, turns away for 7 secs
- Sighters: 5 per stage
- Preparation time: 5 minutes Precision; 3 minutes Rapidfire

25 metre Rapid Fire Pistol

- Pistol used: .22 semiautomatic (lr or short)
- Number of stages: 2 identical half-courses
- Target: 5 x ISSF International Rapidfire
- Range: 25 metres
- Number of shots: 60
- Number of shots per target per series: 1 (*Note this match is different to all other ISSF matches in that the shooter fires one shot at each of five targets, not five shots at one target*)
- Time: 8, 6, and 4 seconds for 5 shots
- Sighters: 5 per half course in 8 secs
- Preparation time: 3 minutes

6.2 Black Powder

There are a number of matches using pistols specifically designed for black powder propellant. Cap and Ball revolvers, muzzle loading single shot pistols, both flintlock and percussion, are used in these matches. Most of the pistols and revolvers used are modern reproductions of original patterns, but some are purpose built.

Pistol Australia 50 metre Precision Match

- Pistol used: Any percussion pistol or revolver
- Projectile: Any lead
- Target: NRA 50 yard
- Range: 50 metres
- Number of shots: 40
- Number of shots per target: 10
- Time: 30 minutes per 10 shots
- Sighters: 5 in 15 minutes
- Preparation time: 10 minutes

Pistol Australia 25 metre Aggregate or Revolver match

- Pistol used: Any percussion revolver, (grip restrictions)
- Projectiles: Round ball or conical (picket) slug
- Number of stages: 2 - Precision and Rapidfire
- Target: ISSF Precision/International Rapidfire
- Range: 25 metres
- Number of shots: 40 (20 Precision, 20 Rapidfire)
- Number of shots per target: 5
- Time: Precision - 12 minutes per 5 shots
Rapidfire – Target faces 3 secs, turns away for 7 secs
- Sighters: 5 per stage
- Preparation time: 10 minutes

International or MLAIC Match

- Pistol used: One of five classes
- Projectiles: Original type in matches 1-3, any in matches 4 & 5
- Target: ISSF Precision
- Range: 25 metres
- Number of shots: 13 (Of which the best ten are counted)
- Number of targets: 2
- Number of shots per target: 6 on one 7 on the other
- Time: 30 minutes
- Sighters: None
- Preparation time: 10 minutes

The only difference between the MLAIC matches is the type of pistol used viz.

Match 1 - (Cominazzo) is for flintlock pistols which are originals or exact replicas with smoothbore of more than .433 inches.(11 mm)

Match 2 - (Kuchenreuter) is for single shot percussion pistols which are originals or exact replicas with rifled barrels.

Match 3 - (Colt or Mariette) is for percussion revolvers which are originals (Colt) or exact replicas (Mariette).

Match 4 – Is for single shot pistols, flintlock or percussion, which are not exact replicas or do not fit into class 1 or 2.

Match 5 – Is for percussion revolvers which are not exact replicas or do not fit into class 3.

6.3 HMS matches

The basic match consists of shooting at steel targets in the shape of animals or birds at four distances. A series consists of five shots, one at each of five targets. The targets are standing up on a steel (or wooden) rail, and in order to score a hit on a target, you have to knock it over, or at least off the rail. Just hitting it is not enough.

The distances are either 25, 50, 75 and 100 metres or 50, 100, 150 and 200 metres. The targets are mounted in the following order : Chickens closest, then Pigs, then Turkeys, then Rams.

The match is shot with a variety of pistols from .22 rimfires to rifle calibrated fullbore single shot pistols. These may be production (unmodified guns) or unlimited class (as modified as you like), and with open or telescopic sights. The match can be shot standing, or freestyle position.

The various combinations of pistol type, modifications, sight types, shooting position and distances make for an interesting range of matches, even though as for International Muzzle Loading, the basic match is the same for all of these combinations.

List of matches

Big Bore is shot with fullbore pistols at the full size targets at the 50 to 200 metre distances.

.22 calibre is shot with rimfire pistols at 3/8th size targets at the 25 to 100 metre distances.

Field Pistol is shot with fullbore pistols (but restricted to straightwall pistol calibres) at half size targets at the 25 to 100 metre distances.

All matches are graded.

There are three world bodies who run matches of this type – IHMSA (International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Assn); NRA of US and IMSSU (International Metallic Silhouette Shooting Union), and we shoot all these matches but primarily IHMSA.

Pistols

Any pistol or revolver that is a standard catalogue item is allowed in the PRODUCTION category, subject to the following restrictions.

- Maximum barrel length is 10 3/4"
- Maximum weight unloaded with magazine is 4 lbs
- Maximum overall length is 18"

No telescopic or optical sights are allowed except in the Field Pistol any sight event.

Any non-production or Production pistol may be used in the UNLIMITED category, subject to the following restrictions.

- Maximum barrel length 15"
- Maximum sight radius 15"
- Maximum weight unloaded with magazine 4 1/2 lbs
- Maximum overall length 25"
- No telescopic or optical sights allowed.

All targets must be fired at in sequence from left to right and any targets fired at out of sequence are scored as misses. A hit is scored by knocking the target over, and includes hits by ricochets that hit the intended target. A target that turns on its base when hit but does not fall over will be scored as a miss.

Two shooting positions are allowed.

Standing: - The pistol may be supported with one or both hands. No part of either arm from the shoulder to the wrist may touch any other part of the body, or be artificially supported in any way.

Freestyle - Any SAFE position without artificial support. No part of the pistol shall touch the ground, boot, shoe or other artificial support, but may rest against leg, over knees etc. Note the need for blast shield or gloves.

IHMSA Field Pistol is shot from the standing position only.

IHMSA Big Bore and IHMSA .22 may be shot in the following categories.

- a) Production - Any Production Handgun
- b) Revolver - Any Production Revolver
- c) Standing - Any Production Handgun
- d) Unlimited - Any handgun which complies with the general specifications

6.4 Action Matches

There are four main groups of Action matches and they are covered here in the order in which they were introduced to NZ.

6.4.1 Service Match

The course of fire is quite complicated and involves 90 shots, fired in styles from prone precision at 50 yards to 12 shots in 15 seconds rapid-fire standing, unsighted, at 7 yards.

This match can be shot by non-holster qualified shooters from the 45° Ready position.

Targets

The target is the 1986 UIT Rapid-fire, and each shooter has four facing him. This is a rectangular target, is all black with white scoring lines, and has oblong scoring zones from 10 to 6.

Pistols

The original two classes of pistol were

Service Pistol Unrestricted, which is any centre-fire pistol from .30 to .45, shot from the 45° "Ready" position with ammunition of any velocity and type;

Service Pistol, which requires that the pistol must be able to chamber round-nosed or semi-wadcutter projectiles in calibres .38 to .45 and is shot from the holster.

We also shoot some other classes to allow for other pistols that people may own to shoot for other disciplines.

6.4.2 NRA Action Pistol - (Bianchi Cup)

NRA - the National Rifle Association of America, controls many shooting matches. Amongst these are two groups of action matches - PPC (similar to Service Match), and Action Pistol. This match can be shot by non-holster qualified shooters from the 45° Ready position.

Matches

The Action Pistol programme contains a range of matches which involve shooting at card and steel targets at distances from 10 to 50 yards and using different shooting positions.

All the events require the pistol to be drawn from the holster. No more than six shots need to be fired in any one sequence, and as most of the matches require accuracy rather than extreme speed, they are well suited to revolver shooting. All matches, with the exception of the Speed Plates (a shoot-off match), use fixed times for each sequence and there is no advantage to going any faster.

There are many matches in the whole programme but there are four main events which are shot at major competitions. These are quite different and illustrate the range of the NRA Action Pistol programme.

In the Barricade Event the shooter fires alternately from each side of a barricade. The Practical Event involves shooting at a pair of targets with first one round per target, then two rounds per target, then three rounds per target.

The Moving Target Event, as the name suggests, is fired at a target which travels from side to side over 60 feet in 6 seconds. The Falling Plate Event uses six steel plates 8 inches in diameter.

All these matches are shot at increasing distances in increasing times.

Pistols

Action Pistol can be shot with a revolver or semiautomatic pistol, although the latter is now more popular. Revolvers are heavy barrelled, and probably compensated. Either type will use an optical sight with a red-dot or cross-hairs. This may be adjustable to allow for lead on the Moving Target. The pistol will be fitted with a special sight mount or barrel shroud to allow a firm grip on the barricade. Extended butt plates on revolvers or magazines allow for resting on the ground in the prone position. A suitable pistol can thus be quite expensive, and is not particularly suitable for any other Action shooting.

You are required to use ammunition with a minimum power level called Power Floor which is calculated from projectile weight multiplied by the velocity.

Targets

Two main types of target are used in NRA Action. The NRA D -1 target (or "tombstone") has four scoring zones - A worth ten points; B worth eight, and the rest outside of the B-zone is C worth five points. There is a central X-ring worth ten points and used for tie-breaking. The steel plates used for Falling Plate are the same size as the A-ring, and so score only 10s (and rate as Xs).

6.4.3 Speed - (Steel Challenge)

Because of the fact that the emphasis of this match is speed, we do not encourage complete beginners to try it.

Matches

These matches involve firing at steel plates of different sizes and shapes arranged in set patterns. The aim is to hit all the plates in the correct sequence in the fastest possible time. Each course is shot five times, the lowest four times being aggregated as the time for the course. A competition consists of a number of courses, and the winner is the shooter with the lowest total time.

A selection of these courses are shot annually as the "Steel Challenge" and this is the effective World Championships. Current world champion level is all 140 shots in well under one minute!

New Zealand has adopted the same matches as our National Speed Championships. It is relatively easy to develop variations, and the New Zealand Pistol Association Speed Shooting Rules list some 35 events.

Steel matches are shot from the holster, but no power level minimum is specified.

Targets

Only two type of steel plates are currently used; 12" diameter round plates and 18" x 24" rectangles. These are fixed to the top of wooden or steel posts in such a way that they are free to move and thus "ring" when hit. They are painted white for each shooter, and so hits can be identified by the Range Officer. In the US fall-over plates have recently been adopted, but we have not followed suit.

Pistols

This is definitely a discipline for semi-autos! Many shooters use the same pistol as they use for Practical shooting (see below) but the ultimate is a specially lightened single-stack with very light ammunition, and springs to suit, fitted with a huge red-dot optical sight.

6.4.4 Practical Shooting

Service Match and NRA Action are primarily accuracy matches, with a minor power requirement and no bonus for speed. Speed shooting is all to do with speed and nothing else. Practical shooting developed by IPSC (the International Practical Shooting Confederation) combines these two factors, and adds power, giving equal value to Accuracy, Power and Speed - "*Diligencia, Vis, Celeritas*" - DVC, the IPSC motto. Non holster qualified shooters are allowed to shoot IPSC matches which do not involve movement during the course of fire, and will shoot from the 45° Ready position.

Matches

As befits the title of Practical, matches are not shot to fixed and predetermined rules and courses of fire but to a special programme of series (called "stages"). A competition will consist of a number of individual stages put together by

the organisers in a sequence unique to that venue, and this particular format will probably never be used again

There are three basic types of stage. **Standards** are often to fixed times, and at an array of targets which is difficult enough to require careful shooting. **Speed** shoots usually have a small number of targets, and are probably fired from one position. **Field** courses may involve large numbers of targets, and many rounds of ammunition, and shooting from many different firing positions. Targets of card or steel can be arranged in an endless variety of ways.

Scoring is done by dividing the target score by the time. Thus a shooter can choose to go very fast and risk low score, or get a high score in a slow time. This is another degree of freedom for the shooter and balances two of the three elements of IPSC, Speed and Accuracy.

The third element, Power, is called Power Factor and is measured as before by projectile weight multiplied by velocity but there are two levels. Minor (a typical 9mm load) at 125 is similar to that used in NRA and Service, but Major (a typical .45 acp load) at 170 (or 160 in Open Division) requires heavier loads to achieve, and in general will make shooters go a little more slowly. Minor is penalised by a lower score for each hit.

Targets

IPSC card targets have four scoring zones - A, B, C, and D. An A-zone is worth 5 points for both power levels, and the other zones less.

Heavy steel targets called "Pepper Poppers" are also used. These are generally worth 10 points if knocked over, and require a good direct hit to achieve this. For both types of target, a different coloured target may be placed partially covering it, and declared a "no-shoot". A hit on this is worth a penalty of double the maximum on the target!

Pistols

A typical Open Class IPSC gun is a high-capacity, heavy barrelled, red-dot sighted, compensated semi-auto, probably in .38 Super. This will be capable of handling loads in excess of anything published in the loading manuals. In 2000 new classes or divisions have been added which allow for less highly developed pistols, for production pistols and for revolvers.

6.4.5 Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS)

CAS is a multifaceted shooting sport in which contestants compete in several one to four gun stages (courses of fire) during which they engage reactive steel and cardboard targets.

Scoring is based on accuracy and speed. Period costume along with the adoption of cowboy aliases coupled with the recreation of Old West gunfights are the ingredients that draw many new recruits to the discipline each month.

CAS originated in America in 1984 with the formation of the Single Action Shooting Society (SASS). SASS was formed so like minded enthusiasts could meet and compete against one another with their favourite single action firearms. SASS now has 30,000 plus members including many in New Zealand. The World Championship

of CAS is the END OF TRAIL held in California each April and last year had over six hundred competitors.

Period dress is essential with many shooters going to great lengths to develop costumes and bring their character to life. Most new shooters start off with just a hat and jeans, then move on from there. Your choice of alias will dictate the type of character you wish to create. This can be a real person who existed in the 19th century, a Hollywood character or someone you think should have existed.

Firearms used must be single action revolvers, lever action rifles, and side by side double barreled, pre-1899 pump, or lever action shotguns. Cowboys may use either black or smokeless powder. There are different classes for each.

CAS matches are made up of multiple stages or courses of fire, each stage may require the use of two pistols, rifle, and shotgun as well as a knife or axe throw added in for good measure. Or a stage may include any combination of the above, or maybe only one pistol.

Targets are mostly reactive steel or standard IPSC type cardboard targets for close up scenarios. Targets should ideally be at least 200 mm square. Distances should be from arms length to 10 to 15 metres for pistol, 8 to 15 metres for shotgun and anywhere from 15 to 50 metres for the rifle.

Scoring is based on raw time plus five seconds for each missed target and ten seconds for each stage procedural or minor safety violation. The stage winner is the shooter with the lowest total time and the rest of the posse (see below) is ranked from there to the longest total time.

Each shooters individual stage rankings are all added together to give each shooter a total number of rank points. The overall winner is the shooter with the lowest total rank points.

Shooters are split into posses (squads or groups of 10 to 20 people) for larger matches. These posses move from range to range shooting the various stages. Each member of the posse rotates during the stage from supervising the shooter loading at the loading table, to shooting the stage, then unloading at the unloading table, picking up brass, scoring or spotting for the scorers.

As the sport of CAS has evolved, the members have developed an attitude towards their participation called "The Spirit of the Game". Competing in "The Spirit of the Game" means you fully participate in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is or is not stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call "The Spirit of the Game" nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don't have it, Cowboy Action Shooting is not your game.

The following are a few of the basic safety rules relating to Cowboy Action Shooting.

- 1: Treat and respect every firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
- 2: All firearms must be unloaded except while you are under the direct supervision of a range officer on the firing line or in the loading area.
- 3: All loading and unloading will only be conducted in the designated areas.

Note: Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading, and that they have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area.

4: Six-guns are always loaded with only five rounds, the hammer lowered and left resting on the empty chamber before being holstered or staged.

5: Long guns will have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when being carried to and from the designated loading and unloading areas for each range. Chambers and magazines must be empty and actions open for all firearms being transported in gun carts.

6: Long guns will have their actions left open and the magazines/barrels empty at the conclusion of each shooting string (i.e., whenever the gun leaves the shooter's hands during or at the end of a stage).

7: Rifles may be "staged" down range from the shooter with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer down, and chamber empty.

8: Shotguns are always "staged" open with magazine and chambers empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage is begun with the shotgun in the shooter's hands. It is permissible for mule-eared shotguns to be "cocked" at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooter's hands.

9: Handguns are returned to the holster with the hammer down on a spent case at the conclusion of the gun's immediate use, unless the shooter has been specifically directed otherwise. For example, when changing from handgun to rifle in a two gun stage, the handgun will be holstered before the rifle is picked up.

10: When changing location during a stage, all firearms being carried must either have the hammer down on an empty chamber or spent case, or have the action open.

7 Shooting Tips

Basics

Pistol shooting, or the art of getting a good shot every time, can be broken down into the simple statement:

Align the sights correctly, on the correct part of the target, and allow the shot to break without altering that alignment!

Simple, but not necessarily easy!

There are a number of basic techniques that go into making this alignment happen, and they are part of any kind of pistol shooting. Your coach will be able to go through these with you, but as a guide, there is a summary below.

7.1 Stance

Your stance has a lot to do with how well you shoot. Human beings are not actually well designed for pistol shooting, so we need to make an effort to produce a good stable shooting platform.

For shooting one handed in a standing position, a good stance to start with is with your feet about shoulder width apart, the toes turned slightly out, and with all of you turned at about 45° to a line coming directly at you from the target.

In general for one-handed shooting (ISSF and ML and sometimes in Action matches) your leading foot will be the same as the hand with which you are holding the pistol; ie right foot if you are right-handed; left foot if you are left-handed.

You may need to adjust this to suit yourself (and your stance will probably need to change slightly over the course of a day). To do this, try this simple test:

Set yourself up in the “starting” stance. Close your eyes. Lift your shooting arm (and gun if you can) toward the target. Open your eyes and check where you are pointing. Are you pointing at the centre of your target? The centre of someone else’s?? If you need to change your stance, move the BACK foot around, by a very small amount, until your arm is pointed directly at the centreline. Then repeat the procedure. Keep doing the test until your arm comes smoothly up the centreline of the target!

It is a good idea to check your stance for each series you shoot.

For shooting two handed in Action matches there are two basic positions – the “Weaver Stance” and the “Isoceles Stance”. In the first the non-shooting foot is forward; the shooting arm is straight out and braced by the bent non-shooting arm. In the latter stance, you stand with feet apart, on a line parallel with the targets, both arms in a similar position, bracing each other.

The main purpose of either is to make sure you have a steady platform for the pistol.

7.2 Grip

A good consistent grip is essential to firing accurate shots. Your grip will determine how the sights are presented to your eye and how good your sight alignment will be, which along with good stance, allows you to get *that* part of the statement above sorted out.

Holding the gun by the barrel in your non-shooting hand, fit the gun into the web of your shooting hand. Wrap your fingers around the grip and allow your trigger finger to sit in the trigger guard. Your thumb should be relaxed, either just touching the grip, or sitting slightly away from it. Your fingertips should be loose - if the tips of your fingers are white - you are holding the gun too tightly!!

You should hold onto the pistol firmly and evenly, with the pressure being applied between the web of the hand/base of the thumb area, and the joints of the second and third fingers. This is called a “fore and aft” grip.

To **test** your grip ; take up your normal stance, fit the gun into your hand, lower your arm to the 45° degree position, and then raise the gun up to the target. You should

see the front sight neatly bracketed by the rear sight. If the front sight is to the right or left of where it should be, adjust the gun in your grip, using your non-shooting hand, and do the test again. Keep doing this until you get a consistent sight alignment (see below).

For a two handed hold; punch the shooting hand into the other hand and check your sight position as above.

If the front sight is too high or too low, you will need to adjust the angle of your wrist!

7.3 Sight Alignment

For almost all pistols you will ever come across, the front and rear sights should be aligned so that the sight blades are all level across the top and the front sight is bracketed by the rear sight with equal amounts of light on either side, like this:



This will make sure that your shots are centred in your aiming area.

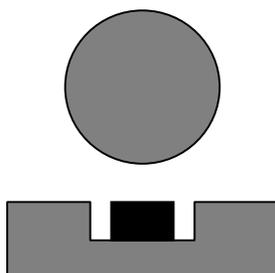
7.4 Sight Picture

This includes “what you see” when you are looking at the sights and the target. There are three things to look at – the rear sight, the front sight and the target. When you are young you may be able to see all three clearly at once. As you get older this becomes increasingly difficult, and you will get to the point where you can only focus on one thing at once. Don’t worry – as long as you can focus on the front sight, that is what matters. If you can’t do that, you should think about getting glasses that let you do so.

The front sight is the most important feature of your sight picture, and therefore it should appear very clearly in your vision. The white bits between the rear sight and the front sight blades (what **isn’t** there!) are also important.

The target is least important of all — your stance should make sure that you are “on target”. However, you need to make sure that you are aiming at the right part of the target. It is recommended that you use an area (rather than a point) to aim at, and that this area should be centred about half way between the bottom of the black area on the target, and the bottom of the target. (If your sights are too close to the black area of the target [this is commonly called “six o’clock hold”], an optical illusion may make it difficult to see the sights clearly.) As it is physically impossible for any person to hold a pistol absolutely still, you must accept that there will be some movement. [Don’t try to concentrate on a point, let the sights move within the area of aim.]

The target and the rear sight should both be out of focus, and thus be rather fuzzy. The whole thing should look like this:



“Master Eye” Most people have one eye which appears dominant, commonly called the “Master Eye”. In fact this is a mental effect not an optical one. This eye governs the alignment of objects with your eyes. For most purposes it doesn’t matter which it is, and most people don’t know which is their master eye. As soon as you do directional things with your eyes, like shooting, it is important. Most people find that they need to use their master eye to shoot with, even if it means using the eye different to the strong hand. A simple test will determine which eye is which for you. Punch a hole of 10-15mm in a piece of paper. Look at a moderately distant object in the room with both eyes open, through the hole. Then shut or cover each eye in turn. The eye for which the object is still visible is your dominant eye. If you are right-handed and left-eyed, as quite a few people are, you should use your left eye for sighting with (unless you shoot with both eyes open), but still hold the pistol with your right hand. Vice versa if you are right-eyed and left-handed of course! This is definitely better than forcing yourself to use the wrong hand or the wrong eye. (Which you do *have* to do when shooting a rifle). You may find that the dominant eye is the one which you can keep open on its own anyway. An alternative is to keep both eyes open but “blank out” the non-master by applying patches (or “invisible” adhesive tape) to the shooting glasses.

7.5 Trigger Control

The next basic technique to master is control of the trigger. This is one of the major factors in whether you are able to “allow the shot to break” without messing up the perfectly good alignment that you have worked so hard to develop!

There are two parts to this:

- You need to have the right part of your finger on the trigger
- You need to be able to move the trigger **straight** back into the area of support (in your grip!)

In order to test whether your finger is on the right part of the trigger, take up your grip, hold the pistol out in your normal shooting position, watch your sights and carefully bring your finger back until it just touches the trigger surface. If the **front sight** moves one way or the other, your finger isn’t in the right place. If the front sight stays put, everything is great!

This is where things differ for left and right-handers. For **right handed people** — the front sight moves to the left, you do not have enough finger on the trigger. Move your finger through the trigger guard a bit, and try again! If the front sight moves to the right, you have too much finger on the trigger, and need to pull your finger back a bit.

For **left-handed people**, it is exactly the opposite. If the sight moves to the left, you have too much finger on the trigger. If it moves right, then you need to put your finger a bit farther into the trigger guard.

Remember to control your trigger after each shot, too. When you are practising, or shooting individual precision shots, keep the pressure on the trigger even after the shot has gone and as you “follow through” (see below). As you lower your arm to the

45°, release the trigger. **Don't take your finger completely off the trigger** though — otherwise you will lose the position that you have just carefully set up!!

7.6 Breathing

Breath control is also important. Your breathing basically moves all the bones and muscles in the top half of your body each time you breath. This does not make it any easier to hold the sight picture or control your trigger. The recommended way of dealing with breathing is to continue breathing normally as you prepare for the shot (like doing all the “tests” outlined above). As you lift your arm to take aim, breathe in (in your usual way). When your arm is pointing at the target, let out a small amount of air, then hold your breath until the shot is fired!!

7.7 Follow through

Once you have fired the shot, let the pistol settle back into your grip from its recoil position. If your grip is steady, the position of the sights in the follow through will give you a pretty good idea of where the sights were when you triggered the shot. Look at the sights and see where they are! Then lower your arm and release the pressure on the trigger!! Be prepared to realign the sights for the next shot if they are not pretty well on the target.

Please note: There are really excellent reasons (generally from human physiology or from physics) for all of the above. If you want to know more, or to discuss other ideas, talk to your coach.

7.8 Additional Tips

Like any other sport, the skills that you need to be a good shot, in whatever discipline, must be learnt thoroughly and then practised. The amount of practice that you need to do depends on your ultimate goal. If you wish to shoot for relaxation, then your only practice may be your trips to the range. If, however, you decide that you wish to be a serious competitor, then your practice commitment will reflect this, not only in your time at the range, but through “dry firing” at home or even working out at the gym.

Shooting is rather unusual in that, unless you have a physical limitation, the level that you achieve is limited only by your drive to succeed. If you set a goal to shoot at the Olympics - you can! - *as long as* you are prepared to put in the time. The only thing that can hold you back is your own willingness to put in the *effort* required.

- Keep a notebook, and note down anything that you have learned during your coaching or practice sessions, any questions that you want to ask, and a record of how your shooting is progressing. At first, you might only want to note down the **size** of each 5-shot group (like “a group the size of the 6 ring”) and the group’s position on the target. Once your group is consistently centred on the middle of the target, then note down your score
- Every month or so, shoot a group of 20 shots, without checking the target or looking through your scope. When you have fired all of the shots, check the target. Ignore the 3 shots that are farthest from the centre of group. Check the group of the other 17 shots, and take a note of it in your shooting notebook. This

is your “current” group.

- Now and then, set yourself up in your stance, bring your arm and the gun up onto the correct area of the target, and then close your eyes. Count to 20, and then open your eyes again. Where is the gun pointing? How are the sights aligned?

Hint: It helps to “visualise” what you expect to see when you open your eyes again!

- Don’t be surprised if your group size or your score sometimes slips back a bit. It is quite normal for new shooters to increase their ability for a while, then for things to go backwards, then start getting better again. At first, there is so much to learn that concentration on one thing may disturb your concentration on other things — causing shots to go astray. Once you get used to what you are doing, things will come back into line.
- Any time that you “plateau” — that is when you don’t appear to be getting better — go back to concentrating on “The Basics”...Chances are that you have skipped something.
- Celebrate your successes!! As a generalisation, we don’t really allow ourselves to take credit for something we have done well. About the most we will ever admit to is “That wasn’t too bad...”. Well, now is the time to give yourself a break. If you shoot well, tell yourself “That was great!”. Enjoy the feeling when it goes just right — then remember what it felt like to shoot the shot, and do it again!

8 Definitions

Like any other sport, we use a fair amount of jargon. Some of the more basic terms are defined below. If you hear any other words or phrases that you are not precisely sure of, please ask a Club member to explain.

Muzzle	The business end of any firearm (the end of the barrel from which the bullet exits)
Front sight	The sight element above the muzzle
Rear Sight	The sight element nearest your hand (and eye)
Cartridge	A loaded “round” of ammunition
Projectile/Bullet	The bit that flies to the target
Ready position	The position from which all timed events must start. The shooter stands in line with the target holding the pistol pointing downwards at an angle no greater than 45° from the vertical. The shooter must adopt this position when the Range Officer calls "Are you ready?" and remain in it until the targets turn.
Power factor	The momentum of the bullet – measured by weight times speed and used to determine your class in some Action matches.
Gauge	A device to assist in assessing the value of a shot hole.
Skid	An oblong hole in a target caused by the bullet hitting it at an angle. In most matches, there is a maximum width allowed for this before it is scored as a miss.

Malfunction When the pistol does not fire after one pull of the trigger.
Reshoot This is allowed after a malfunction in ISSF and PA ML matches

Shooting Organisations mentioned here (or of which you will hear elsewhere):

ISSF International Sport Shooting Federation (until 1998 called UIT). International body controlling world-wide all the Olympic shooting matches, and other matches associated with its name. The most internationally recognised and senior international shooting body. Based in West Germany and founded in 1907.

PA Pistol Australia. Controlling body for international pistol shooting in Australia. NZPA has quite a close relationship with this body and has adopted it's Muzzle-loading and Service Pistol matches.

MLAIC Muzzle Loaders Associations International Committee. An international body founded in 1971 to run international muzzle-loading rifle, pistol and shotgun competitions to rationalised rules. We have incorporated their pistol matches into our muzzle-loading programme. Based in France.

NRA The National Rifle Association refers to that of the USA (founded in 1872) which promotes many different shooting disciplines. In New Zealand we use the HMS and Action Pistol matches.

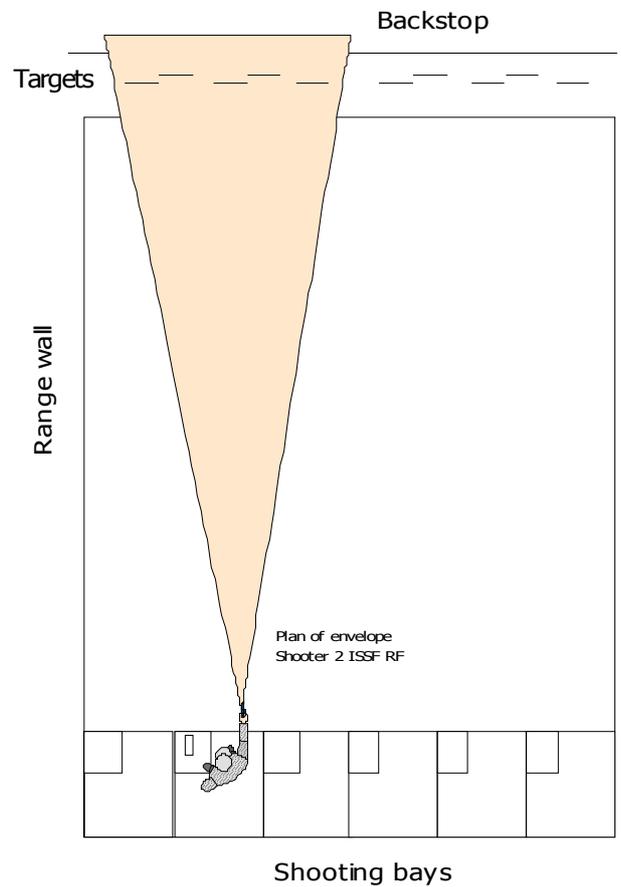
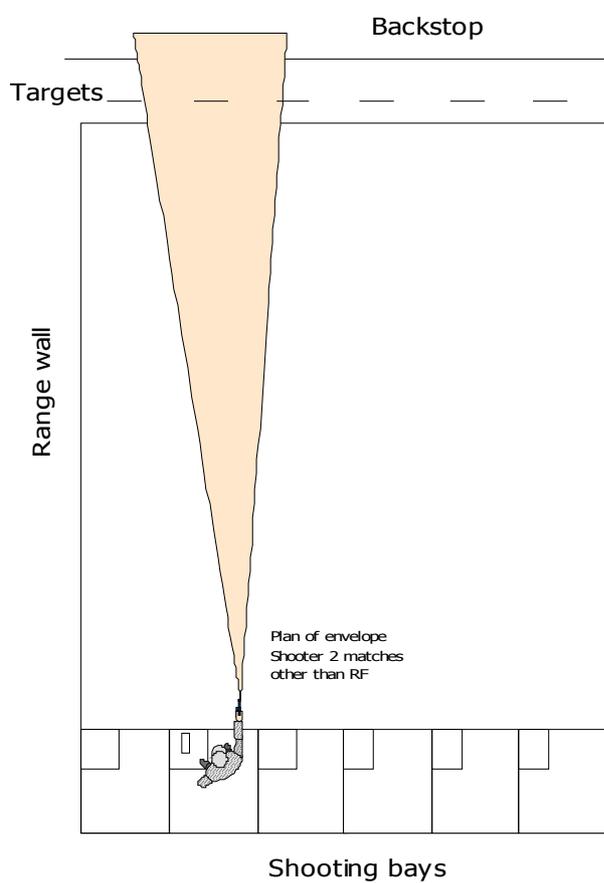
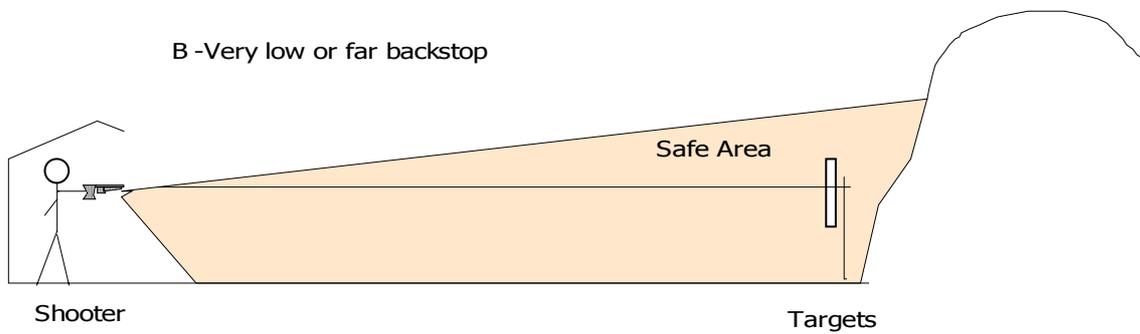
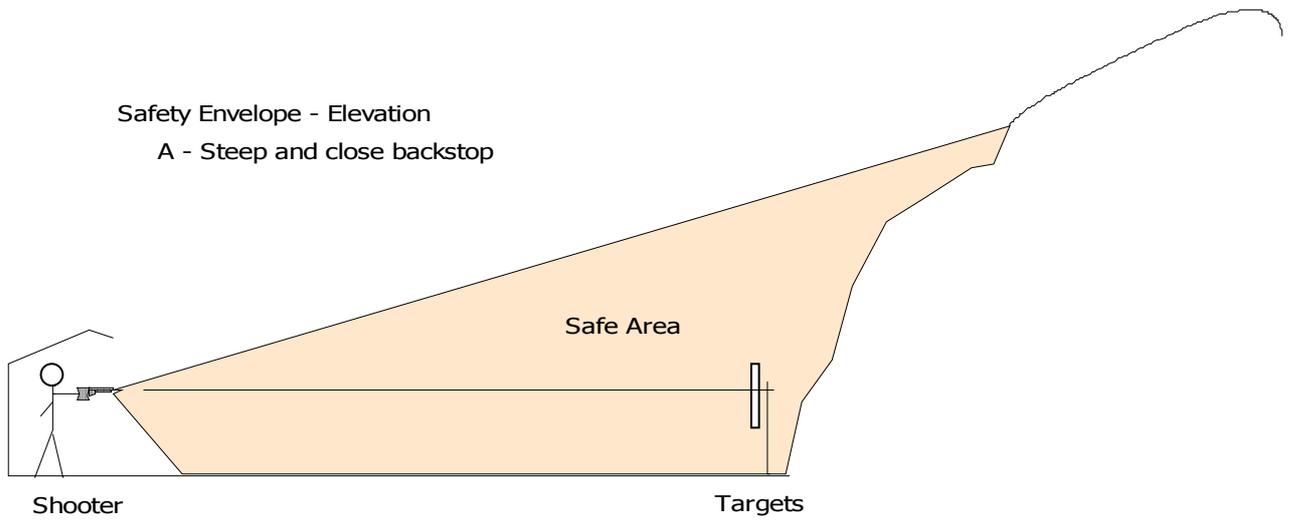
IPSC The International Practical Shooting Confederation is the international body which promotes and controls Practical shooting of pistols, shotguns and rifles, and in New Zealand we follow its principles and we are a member (a Region) of IPSC. It was set up in 1976. The New Zealand affiliate is called PSI – Practical Shooting Institute.

IHMSA The International Handgun Metallic Silhouette Association. The major international body for HMS shooting, although primarily based in the USA.

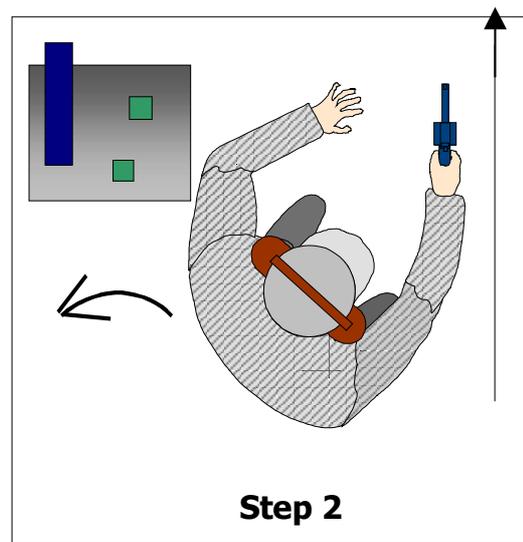
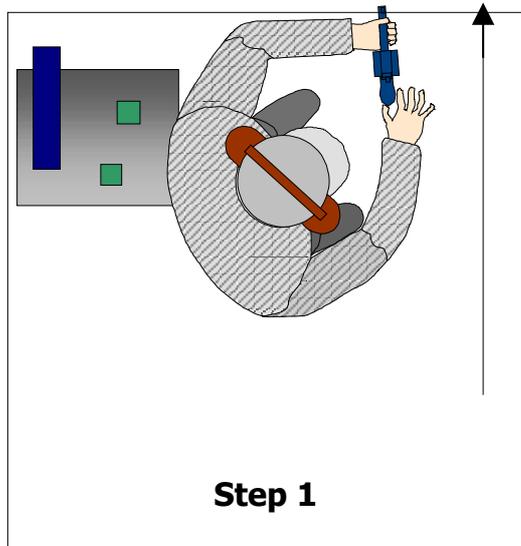
IMSSU The International Metallic Silhouette Shooting Union is a smaller but more international HMS body based in Paris.

NZPA The New Zealand Pistol Association – the national association to which you now belong. Established in 1969 it controls all the international pistol matches shot in New Zealand, and the vast majority of New Zealand pistol shooters belong to this association.

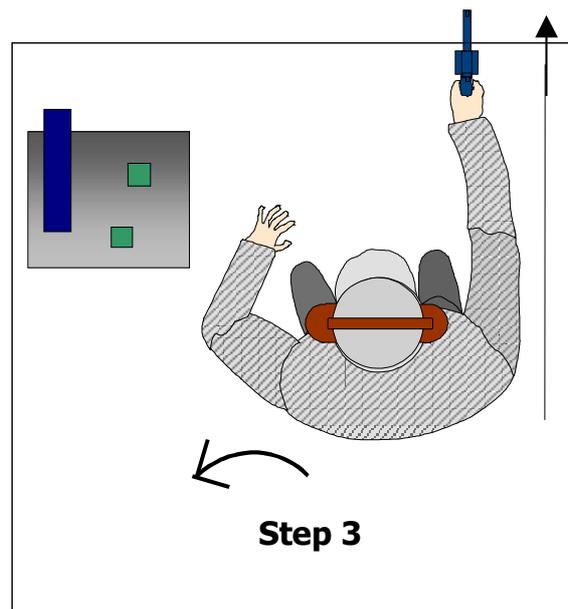
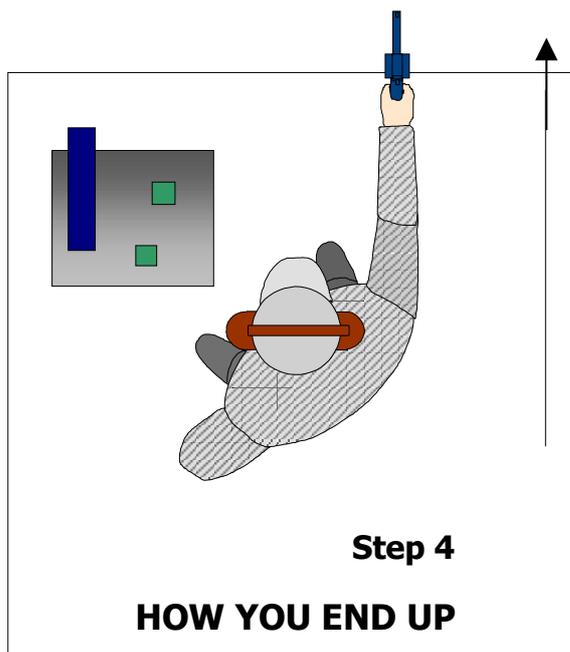
NZSF The New Zealand Shooting Federation is the ISSF affiliate for New Zealand and is formed of all the shooting associations which follow ISSF shooting including NZPA. It runs the National Shooting Complex at Auckland (Ardmore).



NZPA Basic Safety Training Programme



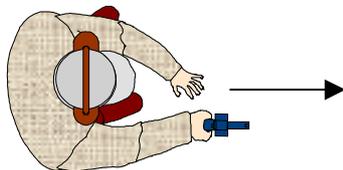
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THE SAFE WAY TO TAKE HOLD OF YOUR PISTOL



Revolver – setting hammer



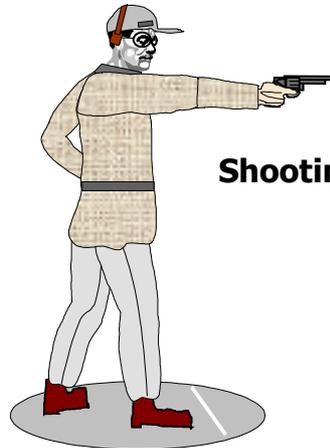
Upper body rotated
- arms lowered

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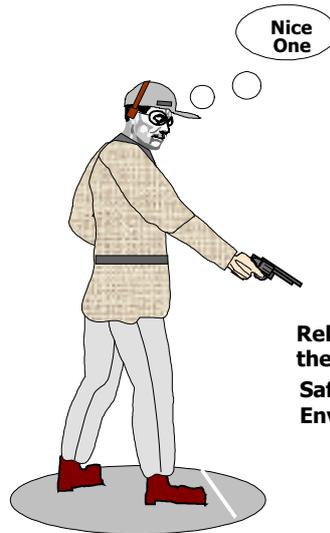


SEMI-AUTO - DROPPING THE SLIDE

**HOW TO COCK A PISTOL
- POINTING SAFELY**



Shooting

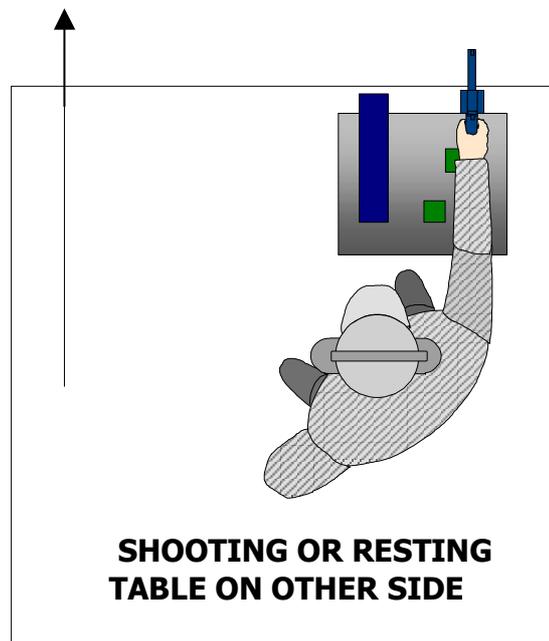
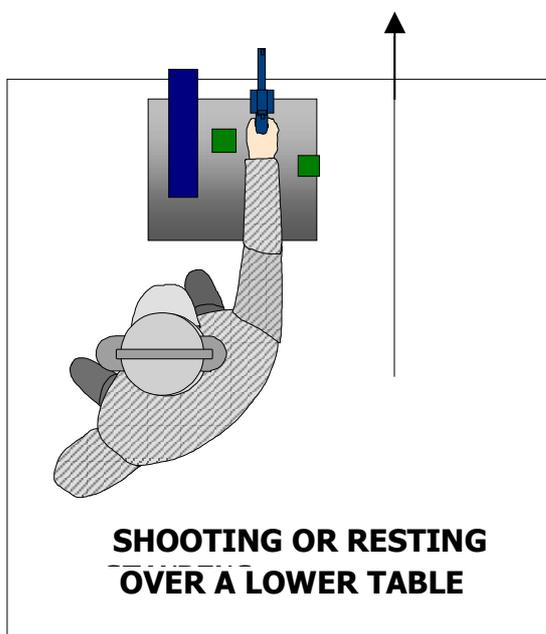


Nice One

**Relaxed in the
Safety
Envelope**

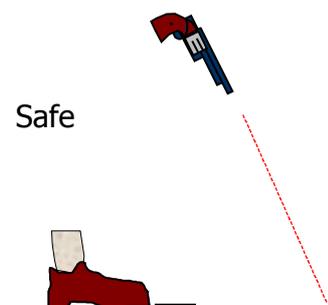
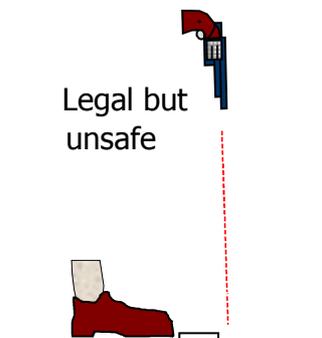
**HOW TO FINISH THE SHOT
- POINTING SAFELY**

NZPA Basic Safety Training Programme



HOW TO REST YOUR PISTOL BETWEEN SHOTS POINTING SAFELY DOWNRANGE AT THE GROUND FACING THE TARGETS

sjh 9/2/98



SAFETY FOR THE FEET

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