



New Shooter Orientation

Rule one: *Safety - first, last, and foremost.*

Rule two: *Have FUN!*

Always keep your muzzles pointed in a safe direction. That means when you are off the shooting line your pistols stay holstered and your long guns stay muzzle up with the action in an open position.

When you go to the **loading table**, keep your pistols and long guns pointed down range toward the back berm while you load them. Shotguns stay empty until you pick them up on line of fire. Holster your loaded pistols and load your rifle with the required number of rounds for that stage. When moving from the loading table to the firing line, keep your loaded rifle and your shotgun muzzle up. Your pistols will be loaded with five rounds so that the hammer is on an empty chamber when you travel from the loading table to the shooting line. If you need to leave the loading table for any reason, put your loaded handguns on the loading table first – muzzles pointed down range.

The **timer operator will call your name** when it is time for you to head to the line. (*Note: Only the timer operator can call a shooter to the line.*) While moving from the loading table to the line, keep long gun muzzles up and stage your long guns as directed by the stage instructions. ***VERY IMPORTANT-*** *If you drop a loaded gun, you are through for the day. If the dropped gun is empty, it is a stage DQ, but it'll still ruin your day, so be careful!*

When you come to the shooting line, the timer operator will ask if you understand the course of fire on the stage. **NOW IS THE TIME TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT SURE OF THE STAGE INSTRUCTIONS.** Don't be shy about asking questions or expressing your concerns as this is expected from new shooters.

The timer operator will then ask “Is the shooter is ready?” You signify by saying you are ready or not ready. When you are ready to shoot the stage, the timer operator will say “stand by”. After a second or two, the timer will beep. That’s when you draw your first gun and start shooting. Remember, the **timer operator** is there to **safely assist you through the course of fire** and will be there **ready to help along the way**.

At this time, it would be wise to meditate on the wisdom of Judge Roy Bean - “*You can’t miss fast enough to win.*” Or as Wilford Brimley put it in Crossfire Trail, “*If you slow down a mite, you will get a more harmonious outcome*”. So THINK! A miss costs you five seconds, and a procedural penalty is ten seconds. Take it slow and easy in the beginning, building good muscle memory, and the speed will follow.

When you draw your first pistol and point it down range to engage your targets, it must be raised 45 degrees before you cock the hammer. Get a good sight picture and then SQUEEZE the trigger. Again, pistols are loaded with five rounds each so that when the loaded firearm is holstered there is not a live round under the hammer.

At this point, we’ll demonstrate the correct procedure for drawing a pistol from a cross draw holster in order to avoid breaking the 170-degree plane. Move your foot so that the cross-draw pistol is pointed down range BEFORE it is drawn.

(Note to R.O. - Check new shooters at this time for proper angle on holsters – no greater than 30 degrees.)

You may encounter what we call a “squib load”. You squeeze the trigger and the gun goes pop - instead of bang! **STOP SHOOTING IMMEDIATELY!** You had a round without adequate powder to move the bullet out the barrel. There’s most likely a bullet in the barrel now and if you shoot again, the gun could explode in your face. The timer operator might hear a squib, even if you do not. If the timer operator grabs your arm and says STOP or CEASE FIRE, stop shooting immediately!!! Carefully place the gun down with the muzzle pointing down range (preferred method) or hand it off. If this was your last round, it’s a miss. If it was your second round, its four misses. Either way, it beats a face full of scrap iron.

Getting back to the stage, now it’s time to **shoot your rifle**. Pick it up from the rack while keeping the muzzle pointed down range in a safe direction. Place the butt on your shoulder and then work the action. Engage the targets as directed and leave the action open when you have completed the total rifle engagement. Return the rifle to the rack and pick up the **shotgun**. Keep the muzzle pointed down range and load two rounds. Engage targets. *(In cowboy action shooting, we only load two rounds at a time.)*

Now it's time to **go to the unloading table**. Pick up your long guns and walk to the unloading table, keeping the muzzles up and in a safe direction. Place the long guns on the unloading table pointing in a safe direction (*down range*) and work the actions for the cowboy at the unloading table. Let him see inside the double-barrel shotgun so he can see that it is empty. Now pull out the pistols and unload them showing the empty cylinders to the unloading officer. Holster your empty pistols and carry the long arms back to the gun cart. Keep the muzzles up. Make sure the actions are always open.

Sometimes we must reload rifles and pistols on the stage. Make sure you don't break the 170-degree line when handling the guns. Also, you will want to make sure that you have extra rounds on your person for those purposes. (*Note to R.O.- demonstrate 170-degree at the stage again.*)

If you shoot a double-barreled shotgun, watch the barrel carefully when you open it to remove your empty shells. If you shoot a Schoefield pistol, don't let the barrel droop! Roll the gun over when you break it and keep that muzzle down range.

When you're moving along the line, always go in front of the timer operator, scorekeeper, spotters and other shooters.

***REMEMBER: WE ARE ALL HERE TO RECAPTURE OUR COWBOY
FANTASY WHILE ENJOYING THIS SHOOTING SPORT.***

***RULE #1: SAFTY – FIRST, LAST, AND FOREMOST
RULE #2: HAVE FUN!!!***

Note: As you progress in the sport, you will want to familiarize yourself with the SASS Shooter Handbook and the RO I and RO II material which can be downloaded on the SASS website.