

**SPORTING SHOOTERS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA  
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA) INC.**



# **RANGE OFFICER MANUAL**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Manual has been produced in order to standardise the training of Range Officers for the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (South Australia) Inc.

It is incumbent on us to maintain a high and consistent level of skill in our Range Officers to ensure that we provide a safe and enjoyable environment for shooting at our Ranges. The manner in which Range Officers conduct their Ranges will directly affect the image our Association projects to the users of our facilities and the enjoyment or otherwise of people who attend our Ranges.

In utilising this Manual and following the procedures and instructions contained herein, a consistent standard will be maintained and all Range Officers will give basic Range Commands in the same form and manner. This will result in shooters being able to attend at any Range in SA and be familiar with the procedures followed at that Range.

To facilitate the effective use of this Manual all Clubs should nominate a Firearms Safety Training Officer with appropriate experience as the Range Officer Trainer for that Club. By utilising this Manual and providing an initial pool of Range Officers trained by SSAA (SA) Inc, Clubs will then be able to meet their own future needs.

The purpose of this Manual is to give the basic knowledge necessary for a Range Officer to safely supervise a shoot in any discipline or with any type of firearm appropriate to his or her SSAA Club. It is stressed that this Manual is designed to train and qualify persons to act as Range Officers and is not designed or intended to teach persons in-depth details of the workings of firearms or the procedures for running individual events.

It is the function of the Range Officer to safely run ranges varying in use from recreational plinking to international championships. In the case of major events, a **Referee** and other support staff will be supplied by the discipline involved, to ensure that all technical aspects of the rules are properly followed. However, the Range Officer will need to be reasonably familiar with the appropriate courses of fire. In a number of disciplines the referee or equivalent person is required to leave the Firing Line / Shooting Area to check targets, etc, and this is not consistent with the duties of a Range Officer.

It is the responsibility of each Club to have a set of Range Rules applicable to their Range. These Rules should be based on those promulgated by SSAA (SA) Inc and include such additional local rules as may be necessary for the safe operation of that Range and compliance with the SAPOL Range Certificate. A copy of those Rules should be posted on each Range for the information of shooters and a copy **must** be available for the use and information of Range Officers.

## **CLUB ADMINISTRATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Whilst the scope of training and assessment is controlled by SSAA (SA) Inc the selection, training and assessment of applicants for accreditation and appointment as Range Officers is delegated to Clubs.

### **Selection**

Candidates should be selected on the basis of experience, behaviour and attitude.

It is unlikely that a shooter with less than three years experience will have accumulated sufficient knowledge or skills to make a competent RO.

They must have been observed to undertake their on-range activities in a safe, calm and friendly manner, displaying good interpersonal skills.

They must also display an active interest in safety as related to shooting and non-shooting activities on the Range, an acceptance of responsibility and willingness to learn.

### **Training**

The training of RO's is the responsibility of the Club and conducted by the nominated Firearm Safety Instructor for the Club.

To do justice to this training, the instructor will need to ensure that an appropriate range of firearms and training aids are available. On multi-discipline Ranges, this will necessarily mean having a number of types of rifles, shotguns and handguns available, as it is essential that RO's are able to at least unload, inspect and ensure all are clear and safe.

### **Assessment**

Theory assessment is by way of the satisfactory completion of the written questions. The trainer should mark the papers and revise all questions where satisfactory answers were not given.

Practical assessment is by way of the applicant performing RO duties for shooting typical of that conducted at the Club. Where possible, all or most of the applicable disciplines should be covered.

RO Registration forms and completed written tests must be forwarded to SSAA (SA) Inc for review and the issue of Accreditation Certificates.

### **Appointment**

The appointment of RO's is the responsibility of the Club and the Club Committee must be satisfied that each candidate is sufficiently skilled for the task(s) required. In view of the limited experience many shooters may have across all disciplines, the Club should consider conditional or provisional appointment, subject to assisting a more experienced RO so as to gain more experience.

### **Maintaining Skills**

RO appointments should be for a three-year period, and re-appointment should be conditional on attending refresher training and accreditation.

## Section 1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RANGE OFFICER.

**No programmed shooting match may be conducted on a SSAA (SA) Range unless a qualified Range Officer is present and has control of the firing line.**

### ***Firearms Regulations 2017***

*70—Approval of grounds of recognised firearms clubs*

*(6) An approval under this regulation is subject to the following conditions:*

*(c) the recognised firearms club must ensure that the activities of the club that involve the use of a firearm are under the supervision of—*

*(i) in the case of a club that is a company that holds a category 1 (shooting club) licence—*

*(A) the company's principal or secondary nominee; or*

*(B) a member of the club authorised by the governing body of the club to supervise such activities; or*

*(ii) in any other case—a member of the controlling body of the club, or a member of the club authorised by the controlling body of the club to supervise such activities;*

**The Range Officer must be immediately identifiable to persons on the Range, preferably by wearing a Range Officer jacket, hat, armband or similar.**

The Range Officer has the full and final authority and responsibility for the safe and efficient conduct of shooting on the Range.

In relation to Safety matters the Range Officer has the power to expel any person or persons who do not obey all Range Rules or who jeopardise the safety of any person on the Range.

A report of the incident and the name and address of the offender (with membership number if applicable) must be forwarded to the Club Secretary and the State Secretary within seven (7) days. (See Section 4)

Any dispute with a decision or instruction of the Range Officer must be brought before the Committee of the Club for resolution.

The Range Officer must be familiar with the layout of the particular Range prior to commencing duty there.

On commencement of duty at a Range it is the responsibility of the Range Officer for the day to ensure the physical features of the Range are correct and ensure that it is safe to use. All flags and warning signs must be displayed and other visual and / or audible warning devices as required by the Range Rules be operative. This inspection should also extend to matters such as safe access to all parts of the range, the safety of range fittings and hardware and the safe handling of range equipment.

If the Range is fitted with flashing lights or audible signals for Cease Fires, check that they are functioning correctly and that they can be operated from a position where the Range Officer has a clear and unobstructed field of view of the firing line.

The Range Officer must ensure that only approved targets are used and that they are placed so that all projectiles from aimed shots will be captured by the backstop or intermediate mound.

This is a condition necessary for the continued SAPOL approval of the range.

**Regardless of the discipline being conducted the Range Officer must remain on the Firing Line at all times during the running of a shoot and when firearms are on the Line.** This is both a safety and a firearm security requirement.

The number of shooters to be under the control of a Range Officer on a particular Range shall be at the discretion of the Range Officer. This number may vary with the physical characteristics of the particular Range and the type and skill of shooters utilising the Range on that occasion. Major events may require the appointment of a number of assistant Range Officers.

The Range Officer is responsible for the calling of all Cease Fires and other instructions to shooters.

It may be acceptable for a Range Officer to also be the Referee, so long as the referee duties do not require the Range Officer to leave the Firing Line and the referee duties do not interfere with the Range Officer duties. For example in timed shoots the range Officer must be watching the shooters, **not** the timer.

The Range Officer is also responsible for the reporting of any Range incidents in accordance with the SSAA (SA) Inc Policy on Range Incidents.

In the event of an incident / accident on the firing line the Range Officer must **immediately** call a cease fire and render the situation as safe as possible for all concerned.

If an incident results in personal injury, appropriate first aid and/or medical assistance should be sought as soon as is possible.

The Range Officer, through his/her Club, must, within seven (7) days, forward to the State Secretary a written report of an incident, together with any corroborative evidence and / or names and addresses of any witnesses.

**It is the responsibility of the Range Officer, or delegated assistant, to personally check and clear the firearms of each shooter on the firing line prior to any person moving forward of the firing line or any person removing a firearm from the firing line.**

When calling a Cease Fire for any reason other than for persons to go forward of the Firing Line it is the Range Officer's discretion whether shooters must clear their firearms and move back from the Firing Line.

The Range Officer also has authority over the conduct of shooters off of the Firing Line and when not actually engaged in duties in relation to shooters on the Firing Line. Observation around the Range area in relation to the carriage of firearms, etc, should be conducted as and when practicable. Most Range Rules should refer any problems found on the Range to a Range Officer in the first instance. Range Officers should check that copies of the local Range Rules are clearly displayed around the Range and that they are conversant with these Rules.

### **KEY POINTS FOR SECTION ONE.**

**The Range Officer has total control on the Range in relation to matters of Safety.**

**The Range Officer must stay at and remain in control of the firing line at all times during a shoot and when firearms are present.**

**The Range Officer may caution any person they believe has contravened any Range Rule or breached safety in any way.**

**They also may expel any person from the Range if they believe such action is necessary in the circumstances.**

**Any disagreement with a decision of a Range Officer shall be taken up at a later date with the Senior Range Officer for that Club and if the matter cannot be resolved then it must be referred to the Committee of the Club for a decision. Any subsequent appeal must be in accordance with the Club Constitution and provide procedural fairness as required by the Rules of Natural Justice.**

**The Range Officer must check the physical layout of the Range and the Safety equipment prior to the commencement of shooting and familiarise themselves with the Range Rules.**

**The Range Officer must ensure that only approved targets are used and that they are placed so that all projectiles from aimed shots are captured by the backstop or intermediate mound.**

**The Range Officer must check and ensure all firearms are unloaded before they are removed from the firing line.**

**The Range Officer has precedence over any discipline referee on safety matters.**

**The Range Officer is responsible for safety and compliance with Range Rules on and off the Firing Line.**

## **Section 2. RANGE COMMANDS.**

It is a requirement that the main procedural Range Commands given on all SSAA (SA) Ranges are consistently given in the same format to ensure members and other shooters who visit SSAA Ranges are subject to consistent circumstances.

Generally, all ranges will operate on a safe time principle. This will involve the regular calling of Cease Fires to enable the targets to be changed. During these Cease Fires all firearms must be rendered safe by opening the actions and removing all magazines and ammunition. At all times the barrel must be pointing in a safe direction in accordance with the Range Rules.

During a Cease Fire for the changing of targets the shooters must move away from the firearms, preferably beyond a marked line behind the Firing Line, and firearms must not be handled.

On the return of all persons from down-range of the firing line a further command may be given to allow the removal of firearms and the rotation of shooting squads on or from the Firing Line.

A **Standard Course of Fire** will be conducted using the following Commands and Procedures.

Prior to the commencement of fire, the RO must explain any standard or local rules that may apply.

Where a competition is being run in a particular discipline, the Range Officer, or referee in the case of championships, will brief the competitors on the next course of fire prior to the Range Officer giving the appropriate directions for shooters to move to the firing line with their firearms and equipment.

Checks required by discipline rules may be made and the commands required for preparation, adopting the required shooting positions and loading then given.

The RO should then ask shooters **“Is anyone not ready?”** and proceed depending on any answer.

The Range Officer will then conduct a last visual check of the range and impact area to ensure it is clear of all people, and announce **in a loud clear voice**:

**“COMMENCE FIRE” (or such other command or signal as the discipline rules may prescribe)**

When a **normal** Cease Fire is to be called, announce **in a loud clear voice**:

**“CEASE FIRE” (or such other command or signal as the discipline rules may prescribe)**

The Range Officer will give the appropriate directions for shooters, such as:

**“Remove all magazines, open all actions and stand clear of firearms.”**

The actual words will depend upon the type(s) of firearms in use.

\* Local range rules may require the use of high visibility empty chamber indicators or similar.

The RO or delegate must check of all firearms at the Firing Line to ensure all firearms are unloaded and safe. If necessary a manual as well as visual check should be conducted.

The Range Officer or delegated assistant should call "**Clear**" after checking each firearm and being satisfied that it is in an unloaded and safe condition.

When satisfied that all firearms are in a safe condition and that all shooters are clear of the firearms and the range is safe, announce **in a loud clear voice**:

**"There will be no handling of firearms during the Cease Fire.**

**Range Clear. You may proceed onto the Range."**

\*Local range rules may provide for the use of warning lights, flags or other visual warnings as well.

It is good practice to remind shooters to change their targets and return as quickly as possible.

\*Local range rules may have specific requirements for the use of vehicles for this task.

Once all persons have returned from down range of the Firing Line and the Range is safe shooters can be given permission to remove their firearms and squads can be rotated.

Announce **in a loud clear voice**:

**"Range Clear.**

**You may move forward and remove your firearm from the Firing Line."**

**"Next detail may move forward." As may be applicable.**

\*Local range rules may vary the timing of removal of firearms from the firing line and calling the next detail, **so long as no firearms are handled when persons are forward of the firing line.**

In the event of an **emergency** during the conduct of an event or practice, such as a person entering the impact area, **immediately** call out **in a loud clear voice**:

**"STOP STOP STOP"**

Any audible and/or visual warning devices should also be activated.

During standard courses of fire it may be necessary for a time warning to be given prior to a cease-fire and this should be done by a designated timekeeper, or by the RO if an automated timing system allows him to do this without diverting his attention from the range.

During supervised practice sessions, the Range Officer should give a warning call prior to the Cease Fire command such as, "Cease Fire coming up. Last round, please."

All commands given by the Range Officer must be given in a loud clear voice. All persons on the firing line should be wearing ear protection so it is extremely important that commands are given in a manner that all shooters can hear and understand them. If a second (or more) Assistant Range Officer is being utilised then commands should be repeated by the assistant Range Officer(s) for the shooters for which they are responsible.

When more than one Range Officer is required on the Firing Line then, when the firearms are checked by the Assistant Range Officers they must report to the Range Officer that all firearms checked by them are clear.

The manner in which the Range Officer conducts the Firing Line will have a great effect on the enjoyment or otherwise for the people using our Ranges. At all times the Range Officer should be polite and courteous. When action must be taken regarding a breach of rules the Range Officer should be firm and fair in dealing with the offender. A reasoned, firm approach is much better than shouting at the person at fault and if the error is due to lack of knowledge or experience, then remedial action may only necessitate some advice on the proper conduct to prevent future incidents.



## KEY POINTS FOR SECTION TWO.

**Main procedural range commands must be consistent across all ranges.**

**All commands must be given in such a manner that all shooters on the Firing Line can hear and understand them.**

**All firearms must be checked by a Range Officer or designated assistant, and where necessary a manual check should be conducted to ensure the firearm is unloaded and in a safe condition.**

**Emergency Cease Fire Procedure.**

**When running a major discipline competition Cease Fires are run in conjunction with the discipline referee and the rules for that discipline.**

### **Section 3. CHARACTERISTICS AND CLEARING OF FIREARMS.**

Range Officers are required to be capable of checking firearms on the Firing Line and other areas of the Range to ensure they are in a safe condition and clear of ammunition. In order to properly carry out this function they must have a basic knowledge of the types of actions available and how they operate and can be cleared.

However, variations in the design of actions, magazines, safety catches and firing mechanisms make some firearm designs more prone to accidents if handled carelessly or without adequate knowledge of their mechanical functions. These differences in design also make it more difficult for the Range Officer to check the firearms for safety and to clear the firearms on the Firing Line.

#### **BASIC FUNCTIONS OF CARTRIDGE FIREARMS.**

There are **seven basic functions** of a cartridge firearm and these basic functions can be applied to all of the different action types available.

<b>FEEDS:</b>	Inserts a live round or cartridge into the chamber.
<b>COCKS:</b>	Compresses the firing pin main spring and engages the firing pin to the trigger mechanism.
<b>LOCKS:</b>	Locks the bolt tight to the breech ready to fire when the trigger is squeezed.
<b>FIRES:</b>	Discharges (or shoots) one round.
<b>UNLOCKS:</b>	Unlocks the bolt from the breach face.
<b>EXTRACTS:</b>	Removes the case (fired or unfired) from the chamber.
<b>EJECTS:</b>	Throws the case clear of the firearm.

The following lists are of different design features commonly found in modern firearms, in order of ease of safe operation and ability to be simply cleared.

#### **BREAK ACTION - SINGLE SHOT.**

Once fired this action is safe until reloaded. It can be easily checked and carried safely. It has the added advantage of being able to be seen to be safe from a distance. This action should be carried 'broken' at all times on the Range when not at the Firing Line prepared to commence shooting.

### **BOLT OR LEVER ACTION - SINGLE SHOT.**

Once fired this action is safe until reloaded, which requires the manual placing of a cartridge in the breach. These actions should be carried on the Range with the actions 'open' and in the case of a bolt action the bolt should be removed if possible. Lever action firearms do not have removable bolts so it is good practice for a coloured empty chamber indicator to be placed in the open action to show the firearm is safe.

### **BOLT, PUMP (SLIDE) OR LEVER ACTION REPEATING.**

Once fired these firearms only require the action to be cycled to chamber another round from a number of rounds stored in a magazine. It is easy for the shooter to cycle the action and then forget they have done so. More modern actions of these types have become quite well enclosed and this creates two problems. Firstly, it becomes more difficult to check if the firearm is loaded. This can involve attempting to look into dark internal areas to ensure that the magazine is empty. In some cases it is almost impossible to check that the magazine is empty without stripping the firearm. Secondly, whilst they may be better protected from rain or dirt, they are harder to clean and any stuck rounds are more difficult to clear.

These actions are harder for the Range Officer to deal with. Some of these actions cock on opening and some cock on closing. For this reason, among others, it is important that if the bolt can be removed then this should be done. If not then the action should be locked open where possible or held open by means of a coloured peg where not possible manually. They should always be carried with the action open and bolt removed where possible.

### **BREAK ACTION - MULTI SHOT.**

Once fired these actions still have another round loaded ready to fire without any working of the action.

These are a very common action amongst shotguns, but are also available in rifles and rifle and gun combinations. They only require, especially in the case of single trigger firearms, the trigger to be pulled to fire a second shot.

### **SEMI-AUTOMATIC OR SELF-LOADING ACTION.**

Once fired this action automatically reloads ready to fire the next shot until the magazine is empty. This is the most difficult firearm for the Range Officer to deal with. Due to their means of operation the action is enclosed and difficult to check to be clear of ammunition. The difficulty with these firearms is compounded by the fact that some self-loading firearms are cocked and ready to fire with the action open (e.g. Gevarm) whilst most are cocked and ready to fire with the action closed. Range Officers must note the type of mechanism on firearms on their range and have them carried and handled accordingly. In general they should be carried with the actions open and if not able to be manually locked open then held open with a coloured peg.

### **MUZZLELOADING ARMS.**

These may only be definitively proven unloaded by measuring the internal length of the barrel with the ramrod to ensure no charge or projectile is present.

### **MAGAZINES.**

There are three main types of magazines utilised by modern firearms. They are listed below in order of preference for safe handling.

BOX, REMOVABLE	As the magazine can be removed from the firearm this type allows for much easier unloading and checking of the safety of the firearm.
BOX, FIXED	This type can be fairly easily checked but is harder to unload, especially if it is a fixed-base type, which may require the cartridges to be cycled through the action.
TUBULAR	This type of magazine is hard to unload and very often requires the cartridges to be cycled through the action. It is often very difficult to verify that they are unloaded - the cartridge follower must be sighted, as they are prone to hanging up a cartridge through either damage or fouling. This cartridge can later be bumped free allowing the firearm to be inadvertently loaded. When clearing firearms on the Firing Line it is often necessary to work the action a number

of times in an effort to ensure the firearm is unloaded. If it is not possible to sight the cartridge follower, the firearm must be considered to be in an unsafe condition.

As can be seen from the information already given, the utmost care must be taken when Range Officers check and clear firearms on the Range. For this reason it is stressed that both a **visual** and **manual** check may be needed if the Range Officer is to be satisfied that each firearm is unloaded and safe.

Look first then feel with a finger to be sure. In this way each time you check a firearm you are actually double checking it. Some actions are difficult to check visually so by also conducting a manual check by feeling inside the action the check is more thorough and reduces the likelihood of mistakes.

In the case of a firearm action type not familiar to the Range Officer, the shooter should be required to prove the firearm is safe and to leave it in such a manner as it can be seen to be safe.

### **AMMUNITION.**

It is important that Range Officers are aware that there are a number of cartridges available, which will chamber and fire in the incorrect rifle. This can cause results ranging from split case necks and gas leaks to totally demolished firearms and extensive injuries to any person in the immediate area.

The following is a list of some, which may be incorrectly chambered.

#### **Original Chamber.**

6mm & .244 Rem.  
.270 Winchester  
8mm Mauser (8 x 57)  
.257 Roberts  
.25-06

#### **Will also accept.**

.250 Savage.  
7mm Mauser (7 x 57).  
35 Remington.  
.22-250 Remington  
.308 Winchester

The mixing of different gauges of shotgun ammunition can also have catastrophic results as some of the smaller gauges can slip down into the forcing cones of a 12 gauge and cause both extensive damage and serious injury if the shotgun is fired in that condition.

It is important to note that many old shotguns still in circulation were not manufactured to use modern smokeless powders. Some have old 'Damascus' type barrels, which will not stand up to modern cartridges. If, as Range Officer, you are doubtful as to whether an old shotgun is suitable for use on the Range then insist on a Certificate from a competent person, trading as a Gunsmith (e.g. holding Firearms Licence Category 11 or 12(xi), stating that the firearm is suitable for use with modern cartridges before allowing its use on the Range.

### **STATES OF READINESS**

**Unloaded** (no cartridges in chamber, action or magazine, preferably with bolt and magazine removed)

**Loaded** (one or more cartridges in magazine but with the action open and chamber empty) – only load when you are in your shooting area

**Ready to Fire** (action closed and cocked with a live cartridge in the chamber **FIREARM MUST BE HELD & MUZZLE POINTED SAFELY** when in Ready state

\* Safety catch does not change the State

### **SAFETY CATCHES.**

Safety Catches are at best a supplement to safe handling. They are mechanical devices and as such are prone to wear and failure. A firearm can only be considered safe when it is unloaded and the action is open. As Range Officers, every firearm must be treated as if it does not have a safety catch and, in fact, a number of competition firearms do not possess a safety catch. The application of the safety catch does not change the state of readiness of a firearm to fire.

**EXCEPTION:** In the case of handgun matches where loaded handguns are drawn from a holster in order to engage targets, safety catches (where fitted) and/or other precautions are applied to the holstered handguns.

### KEY POINTS FOR SECTION THREE.

**Range Officers (or delegate) are responsible for PERSONALLY checking each firearm on the Firing Line is unloaded and safe before removal from the line or persons moving forward.**

**Seven Basic Functions of Firearms.**

**Differences between the different types of actions.**

**Differences between different types of magazines.**

**Be aware that mixtures of ammunition can be dangerous.**

**Safety Catches are not to be relied on.**

**Actions must be open at all times off the Firing Line.**

**When clearing firearms both a VISUAL and MANUAL check may be required, depending on the firearm type. The Range Officer must ensure that each firearm is clear.**

## **Section 4. RESPONSE TO RANGE INCIDENTS.**

This matter has already been discussed in Section One - Responsibilities of the Range Officer. However this area involves certain administrative procedures to be followed in accordance with the **SSAA (SA) Inc Policy on Range Incidents**. That policy is detailed below.

See Section 1 for the Firearms Regulations supervision requirements.

1. All firing Ranges are to be under the control of a Qualified Range Officer whilst in use, unless other arrangements are made in the following situations.
  - (a) Where the Range is utilised by individuals for unsupervised practice where permitted.
  - (b) Where local range rules allow alternative arrangements.
  - (b) Where Ranges are used by other bodies for shooting sports.  
(i.e. Other Clubs and / or Police - Commercial users.)
2. In the event of an incident / accident on the Firing Line the Range Officer will immediately call a cease fire using the command **“STOP STOP STOP”** and render such situation as safe as is possible for all concerned.
3. If such an incident results in personal injury, the injured person or persons shall be made comfortable and stabilised (within constraints of the environment), making use of the First Aid Kit and any facilities available on the range.
4. Medical assistance, and where applicable, ambulance evacuation must be sought as soon as possible.
5. A report to Police will normally be necessary for any incident involving an injury resulting from a firearm discharge and a report to “Workplace Services” will be necessary in the case of injury to an employee of the Association. The scene of the accident should not be disturbed until any investigation has been completed.

6. The Range Officer and Club Officials must conduct an investigation of the incident, interview and get written statements from all witnesses, secure any physical evidence and prepare a written report in a form suitable for submission to the Association's insurers.
7. The Club should notify the State Secretary by telephone within 24 hours and must forward the report to the State Secretary within seven days. The State Secretary will notify the Association's insurers in the first instance.
8. (a) Where a breach of safety has been committed by a shooter, the Range Officer may caution or expel the person from the range.
- (b) In the case of an expulsion, a report of the incident and the name and address of the individual (Membership number if applicable) must be forwarded to the Club Executive within seven days.
9. The Range Officer shall be the final arbiter of safety whilst in charge of the Firing Line.

Statutory Reporting Requirements - **Firearms Regulations 2017**

70—Approval of grounds of recognised firearms clubs

(6) *An approval under this regulation is subject to the following conditions:*

*(e) if the safety of persons is adversely affected or threatened by an incident involving the use of a firearm that occurs on the grounds of the recognised firearms club, or in the course of an activity of the club, the club must—*

- (i) notify the Registrar of the occurrence and the surrounding circumstances as soon as reasonably practicable; and*
- (ii) provide a written report to the Registrar within 7 days of the occurrence that contains such information in relation to the matter that the Registrar requires.*

94—Clubs and commercial range and paint-ball operators to report unsafe situations associated with firearms

*(1) If the controlling body of a recognised firearms club has reasonable cause to suspect in relation to a member of the club that the member is suffering from a physical or mental illness, condition or disorder, or that other circumstances exist, such that there is a threat to the member's own safety or the safety of another associated with the member's possession or use of a firearm, the club must, as soon as practicable after the suspicion is formed, make a report to the Registrar including—*

- (a) the name and address of the person the subject of the suspicion; and*
- (b) the suspected threat to safety and circumstances giving rise to the threat (including the nature of any physical or mental illness, condition or disorder contributing to the threat).*

As can be seen from the Range Incident Policy there are a number of occasions where the Range Officer may have to make out a report detailing the circumstances surrounding incidents on the Range and their responses to these incidents. For this reason it is good practice to at all times whilst acting as a Range Officer carry a small note book and pen so as to be able to take notes of any incidents whilst they are still fresh in your memory. This will also be invaluable in obtaining details of any witnesses. It is important that the notes are made at the time, as this ensures that they should be admissible as evidence in the case of legal action.

In cases where a minor breach of the Range Rules is detected or minor safety breaches and the Range Officer believes it is due to lack of knowledge or experience, a quiet explanation of the correct procedure will usually correct the situation.

Other incidents that may require intervention and reports by the RO are inappropriate behaviour by or between people on the range property. These may involve the use of extreme bad language, insults, threats or violence. Unacceptable behaviour should not be tolerated.

It is important that Range Officers carry out their duties in a friendly manner and that commands and instructions are given clearly. You are an ambassador for the SSAA and your actions will reflect on the Club and the Association.

One of the most difficult and dangerous situations that a Range Officer may have to deal with is a **stuck live round** in a firearm.

*SSAA Policy on stuck live rounds as set at the National Conference in March, 1995, is as follows:*

*In the event of a shooter experiencing a jammed live round (stuck live case), the firearm is to be made safe by removal of the bolt if applicable, or by some other method if the firearm is not a bolt action. The Range Officer is to ensure that the firearm is immediately removed to a safe place. Where applicable, the bolt is to remain out of the firearm whilst the stuck case is in the chamber. It is recommended that the firearm be taken to the nearest gunsmith as soon as possible. Under no circumstances is the removal of the case to be attempted or undertaken on Range property.*

**This Policy must be complied with on all SSAA(SA)Inc and Club Ranges.**

If a live round becomes stuck in a firearm chamber, the worst thing you can do is to try to bump it out with a cleaning rod, a length of wire, or a similar implement.

This practice can cause the cartridge to ignite. The projectile will then impale itself on the rod at some risk of injury to the holder. Fragments of brass, powder particles and hot gas will be forced from the open breech. The case head in particular can become a lethal projectile. Since the mid 1980s at least two people have died after being struck by one.

Obviously we need to know two things: How to eliminate the common causes of stuck cartridges and what to do if presented with one on the Firing Line.

Avoid the use of cartridges loaded by other people or for different firearms.

Watch for shooters using excessive force to chamber rounds. If it is difficult to chamber then it could be difficult to extract, and a stuck cartridge could result.

If the extractor breaks or the rim pulls away leaving a live round jammed in the chamber, treat in accordance with the Stuck Live Round Rule.

**Note:** The Code of Practice for the Security, Storage and Transport of Firearms, Ammunition and Related Items—Schedule 1, Section 27(3) provides a lawful excuse for the transport of a firearm with a stuck live round chambered. This exemption could only be relied upon if the firearm is made as safe as possible and is being transported to a person competent to remove the stuck live round.

**Note:** No similar SSAA National Rule exists as yet for the situation of loaded muzzleloader, which fails to discharge with the original or subsequent firing of cap or flint/match priming.

In the interim, the RO must ensure that the firearm is kept pointed in a safe direction until the possibility of a hang fire has passed and then consider whatever unloading proposal the shooter requests. This may involve pulling the projectile or the use of gas pressure.

#### **KEY POINTS FOR SECTION FOUR**

**All firing Ranges should be under the control of a qualified Range Officer.**

**SSAA (SA) Inc Policy on Range Incidents.**

**SSAA Inc Policy for dealing with a stuck live round.**

## **Section 5. VARIATIONS FOR RIFLE, SHOTGUN AND HANDGUN.**

### **RIFLE.**

The information in this Manual is based on rifle shooting as that is a common form of shooting conducted on SSAA ranges.

The particular disciplines shot will not effect the accuracy or relevance of the information contained herein as to the duties of the Range Officer. In events run in disciplines where the shooters move position rather than the targets being set at varying distances (such as Big Game Rifle events) then the Firing Line becomes the position at which the shooters are firing for the particular stage of the event. The safety rules do not change and the role of the Range Officer is identical regardless of the point from where the shooters are firing.

The Range Officer will have to be even more vigilant, particularly when moving back from close ranges to further ranges. However, if the basic rules outlined in this Manual are followed, then the firearms, when carried between firing positions will have been cleared and carried in a safe and proper manner.

When disciplines involve shooting from the prone position Range Officers should take into account the difficulty of taking up a proper prone position when calling for Cease Fires, which involve the moving away from firearms. At no stage, however, shall persons be allowed to move down range whilst shooters or other persons are handling firearms.

### **SHOTGUN.**

Shotgun events conducted on SSAA ranges frequently involve the shooter moving between shooting stations during the course of an event. In events such as Trap Shooting, shooters move between stands after each shot fired.

Range Officers must ensure that guns are unloaded prior to turning from the shooting platform and not loaded until the shooter is standing on the next shooting platform and facing down range. (Note: ACTA Rules vary on this point and are not be used on SSAA Ranges.)

It is a breach of firearm safety rules to point a firearm at any person and the practice of resting shotgun muzzles on the shooters foot is not permissible on any SSAA (SA) Inc or Club Range.

There is also the added responsibility of ensuring that any persons operating the 'traps' are at all times in a safe position and protected from falling shot.

In some events where clay targets pass over the heads of the shooters the shooting station should be constructed in such a manner that the shooter cannot swing his gun past the 12.00 position or around to any position which could endanger trappers, other shooters or spectators.

In such events the Range Officer must also ensure that the spectators and other shooters are not in an area where they can be injured by pieces of broken clay targets.

### **HANDGUN.**

There are few differences in the safety procedures for handgun shooting from rifle shooting. However, the shorter length of handguns in comparison with long arms significantly increases the danger of the handgun being pointed in an inappropriate direction. Therefore, Range Officers must be extremely vigilant when conducting shoots involving handguns.

Another area which must be closely monitored by the Range Officer is the 'Ready Position' used in hand gun shooting. This should be 45 degrees out in front of the shooter. If the handgun is allowed to be brought any nearer the vertical then there is a danger to the feet and legs of the shooter.

The ground surface must also be considered and the rest position must have the firearm pointing towards a ground surface, which is not likely to cause a ricochet. Many shooting platforms have concrete bases and as such the shooter must be positioned so that the rest position has the handgun pointing forward of this concrete base.

Relatively common occurrences with semi-auto handguns are malfunctions around failing to cycle properly through the extraction, ejection and chambering a new round actions. RO's must observe carefully for these failures and ensure that shooters clear jams etc safely.

The SSAA Rules for Pistol Shooting also stipulate that only those Range Officers who are qualified for Holster Competitions can be used as Range Officers in any competition involving the shooters drawing from a holster.

### **KEY POINTS FOR SECTION FIVE.**

**Events involving moving the Firing Line instead of the targets require extra care particularly when moving to longer ranges.**

**In shotgun events where the shooters move between stands the Range Officer (or delegate) must ensure guns are not loaded prior to the shooter being on the stand and must be unloaded prior to the shooter leaving the stand.**

**Resting shotgun muzzle on the shooters foot is a basic safety breach and must not be permitted.**

**The safety of spectators and others behind the shooters must be considered in relation to fallout from broken clay targets.**

**Range Officers must be careful of the 'ready' position in relation to handgun shooting as to the correct angle and the shooting platform surface.**

**Range Officers must be holster qualified to run handgun events involving the use of holsters.**



## Section 6. INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

The Manual itself is set out with the information to be given to the classes followed by a precis for the Instructor of what **must** be known by the class at the completion of each Section.

At the completion of the Theory section, candidates will be tested on their knowledge. After successful completion of the Theory component each person will be required to run a Firing Line under the observation of an accredited Range Officer prior to being accredited as a Range Officer.

The persons selected for training as Range Officers must have previous experience with firearms and have demonstrated an ability to safely handle firearms on the Range. When selecting persons for training the Club should look to persons who have a temperament suitable to the duties they will have to carry out on the Range.

The successful use of this Manual is based on the premise that each Instructor will follow the contents and ensure at the end of each Section that the Key Points for that Section have been imparted to the students. To ensure the consistency of commands it is imperative that consistent commands are used and that their use is monitored so as to avoid local changes becoming common practice.

The information in the Manual has been designed to be covered in a four hour period. This would include time for demonstration of different action types if the instructors have access to firearms of these types for use in the training. Where possible, copies of the Manual should be made available to applicants in advance of the date of actual lecture time as there is a large amount of information to be absorbed prior to the Theory Examination.

The Theory Examination will be administered by the Instructor at the completion of the lecture time. This must be done in one sitting and with no prompt material available to those being tested. **At the completion of the Test the papers will be marked by the Instructor and then forwarded to the State Association for recording and checking.** In this way a consistent level of results will be maintained.

On successful completion of the Theory Examination the prospective Range Officers will then be required to attend at their local Range and will be required to run a Standard Course of Fire under the supervision of an accredited Range Officer. This may be arranged immediately after the theory section if facilities are available.

A report will then be sent to the State body on the attached pro-forma.

The State Association will provide credentials for all candidates successfully completing the training, will maintain a register of accredited Range Officers, will periodically check the level of ability of Range Officers throughout SA and will deal with any problems or queries in relation to the Instruction and Accreditation of Range Officers.

Clubs should ensure Range Officers maintain their skills and competence by providing refresher training courses each three years and forwarding documentation to State Association for recording.