

Safety Observer Requirements and Duties

SFA Bowling Pin and Steel Matches

A Safety Observer shall stand within arm's reach behind each shooter to observe safety procedures, observe the firearm during the course of fire for malfunction, squib loads, etc, verify firearms are clear and holstered after firing, etc. Safety Observer **MUST** stand within arm's length from the shooter, ready to take any degree of physical action required to prevent the shooter from breaking the 180 degree rule or otherwise practicing unsafe gun handling. Safety Observer must watch the firearm during the course of fire – **NOT** the targets.

The Safety Observer shall:

- a) Ensure the shooter approaches the firing line with a holstered firearm or firearm secured in a case, rug, or other appropriate container, or IF approved by Match Director, ensure the shooter is approaching with muzzle up/down firearm and action open (if possible) condition;
- b) Ensure the shooter has as eye and ear protection;
- c) Observe for ANY unsafe activity;
- d) Ensure the shooter takes no action to draw firearm or to load until commanded by Range Master;
- e) When Range Master issues the command "Shooters Load," the Safety Observer shall observe the shooter's loading process, ensuring safe gun handling procedures are followed. The shooter may take a sight picture prior to holstering;
- f) After given the command to load, ensure anything dropped on the ground stays on the ground until that match is complete and declared safe/clear. Safety Observer shall prevent shooter from attempting to retrieve dropped items;
- g) Upon the signal to commence fire, **CLOSELY** observe the **FIREARM** for signs of a dangerous malfunction, squib load, etc, and be prepared to immediately stop the shooter from breaking the 180 degree rule; in the event the shooter practices ANY unsafe gun handling, the Safety Observer **MUST** stop the shooter by taking any degree of physical action required and issue verbal commands as necessary;
- h) When match is complete, observe as shooter unloads/clears firearm, visually inspect chamber to ensure devoid of live ammo and/or fired cartridges, ensure magazine is removed; observe as shooter pulls trigger and hammer strikes empty chamber safely downrange, and firearm is safely holstered or cased, prevent shooter from retrieving any items on the ground, and only then raise hand high to signal the Range Master that the shooter is clear/safe;
- i) After receiving the verbal "CLEAR" statement from the Range Master, allow shooter to retrieve brass/dropped items and vacate the firing line. No one leaves the firing line until "CLEAR" is sounded.

If the shooter has a jam or any other malfunction not safety related, the shooter shall be allowed to safely attempt to clear the malfunction and continue shooting. In the event the Safety Observer stops the shooter and it is determined a valid reason did not exist, the shooter will be allowed a re match. However, the Safety Observer shall not hesitate to stop a shooter at any point during the match for any perceived safety issues. The Safety Observer **MUST** be prepared to use verbal commands **AND** *any level of physical force required to prevent unsafe gun handling*.

The match site is designated a "COLD RANGE." No loaded firearms are allowed on the range except when on the firing line and when directed by the Range Master to load.

There shall be **NO** handling of firearms in the spectators or match area. Exception: Participants may transfer firearm directly to/from holsters/range bags. Should a participant need to handle, display or function fire a firearm, they shall go to the designated area.

It is everyone's duty to diligently enforce safety rules.

Addendum

(1) When a gun with a magazine safety is encountered, utilize the following procedure for unload and show clear.

- a. Shooter removes the magazine and hands it to the SO.**
- b. Slide back - SO observes an empty chamber.**
- c. SO empties the magazine, if necessary.**
- d. SO hands the empty magazine to shooter.**
- e. Shooter inserts magazine, pulls trigger, and removes magazine.**
- f. Gun is holstered or cased.**

(2) Procedure for "shooting the gun dry" in a rimfire match. Rifle tube magazines present gun handling issues. Point the gun safely down range. Shoot the last round out of the gun. Then, show clear and drop the hammer.

(3) Addendum to paragraph (h). When the competitor has finished shooting, he must lower his handgun and present it for inspection by the SO with the muzzle pointed safely down range, magazine removed, slide locked or held open, and chamber empty. Revolvers must be presented with the cylinder swung out and empty. After SO inspection, the competitor must: (a) Self-loaders – release the slide and pull the trigger (without touching the hammer, if any); (b) Revolvers – close the empty cylinder (without touching the hammer, if any). If the gun proves to be clear, the competitor must holster his handgun. (If the gun does not prove to be clear, the SO will repeat commands to ensure a cleared/safe handgun.) Once the competitor's hands are clear of the holstered handgun, the course of fire is deemed to have ended. After cleared, hammer down, and handgun is holstered, the competitor must not resume shooting.