

NEW ZEALAND PISTOL ASSOCIATION Inc

NRA ACTION PISTOL RANGE OFFICERS TRAINING MANUAL





Introduction

The course, for which this manual is intended, is to fill the gap between the Club RO1, and the National Range Officer.

The purpose here is to provide, at club and competition level, people trained to act as Range Staff in an efficient, effective and consistent manner. All shooters should know they are being managed by Range Staff who will treat them fairly, firmly and in the same way whoever they are and wherever they go.

NRA Action Pistol is one of the most demanding handgun competitions available to the pistol shooting world.

Developed in 1979 by former LAPD police officer John Bianchi, the NRA Action Pistol shooting comprises of 17 individual events ranging from the Tyro to Combat and Speed Steel events. The coveted Bianchi Cup is held in Columbia Missouri every year and is regarded as the "Mecca" for all Action Pistol shooters. In 1985 the National

Rifle Association took control of the Bianchi Cup Tournament and has continued to award the National Action Match Champion each year.

SECTION I

Safety

THE QUESTION OF SAFETY.....SAFETY is our FIRST CONCERN.

PNZ requires that clubs using our Action Shooting programme make safety their first concern and develop an active safety programme. An accident is the result of the combination of an unsafe act and an unsafe condition.-e.g. an Accidental Discharge while pointing a pistol at someone. Prevent BOTH and you prevent any possibility of an accident.

Prevention comes in two phases:

1. Safety training that results in shooters with good gun control. I.e. preventing un-safe acts.
2. A range that is safe to shoot on.

Training

NRA Action Shooting is an active sport. It requires shooters to draw, engage a variety of targets from different positions, heights, distances and angles. To the uninformed this would seem dangerous. For the average 'hey I shoot guns' shooter it would be.

They have yet to receive the safety training needed to develop the safety consciousness and smooth well drilled gun handling techniques which put the PNZ Holster Trained shooter several light years ahead of them in gun safety.

NRA Action Shooting is a safe sport because we have an active and continuous safety programme that involves every shooter.

Our shooters accept personal responsibility for controlling their guns. Before they can enter a match they have demonstrated mastery of basic Action Shooting gun control skills by undertaking a holster Training Course, passing the practical test and maintaining their skills by practice.

One of the reasons to keep shooting regularly is to keep safety skills in shape as well as shooting skills. Shooting safely is not something “once learned, never forgotten”. Rather it is something learned by continual practice and kept up in the same way.

When on the line the shooters are under the direct supervision of one or more Range Officers. Are your clubs ROs trained and certified by PNZ? It makes a difference in the quality of their work. Remember, as the club hosting the match, you must provide a safe environment for the shooters. Range Officers and Holster Instructors provide ongoing safety monitoring!

Handling and Safety Violations

NRA Action Pistol recognise two levels of unsafe acts- Safety Violations and Disqualification Violations.

Safety Violations are considered less serious in that two have to be incurred before a DQ becomes the penalty- they include (but not limited to)

- Pointing an unloaded gun up range.
- Dropping an unloaded pistol. *
- Leaving the firing line with a loaded pistol.
- Picking up a dropped pistol.
(Unless under the supervision of an RO)
- Accidental Discharge while loading or unloading.

Disqualification (DQ) Violations include-

Pointing a loaded pistol up range. (Can you tell the difference?)
Dropping a loaded pistol. A shot in the holster or into the ground less than 1.8 mtr downrange. Consumption of alcohol or drugs.
Pointing a gun at yourself or anyone else. ROs should make themselves aware of these offences and be sure they know how to deal with them when they occur.

*It is now normal practice that **any** dropped gun is a DQ. This has come about because the holster jump test has been discontinued. Although still in the rule book it can be overruled by the Match Directors Bulletin.

Disqualification- How to deal with it.

While properly trained shooters with any sort of common sense and memory should act safely at all times, in the heat of competition, actions which would normally seem unthinkable can, and do, happen. Remember that if we prevent all dangerous actions we remove one of the two causes of an accident. We deal with dangerous acts by stopping the shooter, who commits one, as soon as possible and preventing them from continuing to shoot in the match. This control and sanction, even though it may be used only infrequently is:-

A MOST IMPORTANT DUTY OF AN RO. YOU SEE IT, YOU CALL IT.

All ROs are responsible for immediately calling any Safety Violations they see, on or off the firing line. Often only one RO will be in a position to see the violation.

Remember. Experienced gamesmen will not stop and confess to an AD, or any other violation.

They will continue without pause unless you stop them.

Then comes the look of innocence “Who me? No! Never!” When a shooter commits a dangerous act, as defined in the rules, they can be DQ’d by the MD. This means that they are not allowed to continue to shoot in the match and their score is deleted. When it is necessary to deliver a DQ emphasise that it is for the safety of everyone and the continued good record of our sport.

If you see a violation, call it immediately and STOP THE SHOOTER as soon as practically possible. Have them 'unload and show clear' before informing the shooter of the incident. Tell them you are informing the MD that they have committed a DQ offence.

Ask them to accompany you from the range and hand over the running of the range to your assistant, so as not to disrupt the other shooters. MAKE COMPLETE NOTES on the incident; assume the DQ will be protested. What did you see? Explain in detail. Remember your notes may be used by the shoot jury. NOTE THE TIME OF THE INCIDENT.

The shooter only has a certain time limit within to protest. List any other witnesses to the incident. Send a runner to inform the MD of the situation. Do not get into a discussion about the incident with the shooter. When the MD arrives inform them of the incident. It is the MDs job to DQ the shooter. If the shooter is going to protest have them sign the back of a target and write "protest". If they win their protest they will be allowed to continue or get a reshoot.

Equipment

A safe shooter needs safe equipment as well as safe methods. PNZ has standards for equipment based on the most stringent regulations used world-wide over all of the Action disciplines. While Equipment Control at major competitions will check guns and equipment to the established criteria, the RO should also be aware of what is, and is not allowed, or required, and be prepared to act if they think these rules are not being adhered to. In the case of an inexperienced shooter with safe but otherwise unsatisfactory equipment or method of use the RO should offer advice on changes they should make.

Pistols

Pistols must be serviceable and safe. The trigger must not extend outside the trigger guard. No trigger shoes allowed.

They must be able to meet the 'ready' position requirements for their division – these are:

Single Action Semi-auto. – Loaded, cocked with hammer back and thumb safety engaged.

Double Action Semi – Auto. – For Metallic Division – Loaded, Cocked, with hammer back if a thumb safety catch is fitted. If no safety catch is fitted it must be de-cocked i.e. Hammer down, using the de-cocker. Production Division – The rules require all first shots to be double action so the pistol is – Loaded – hammer safely lowered. If a de-cocker is fitted it must be used to lower the hammer.

Revolvers – Loaded with hammer down. All shots in Production must be double action. **Striker fired pistols.** Loaded and holstered. These have a trigger safety and it meets the demands of a normal safety

Holsters

Holsters must be Practical, Safe, Serviceable and Suited to the Pistol Used. Holsters must be worn in such a manner as not to violate safety considerations. The trigger of the pistol must be covered when in the holster. The Production Division requires a “carry” type holster. Production holsters must be designed to be drawn from the top only (no front break holsters). Holsters must cover the slide up to a minimum of ½” below the ejection port on a semi-auto and a minimum halfway down the cylinder on a revolver.

No cross draw or shoulder holsters are allowed. A PNZ rule regarding the use of holsters further state that the belt should be strong enough to carry all equipment and wide enough to stop holster swivel or any other movement. Magazine or speed loaders pouches may be worn on the holster belt and should be capable of retention. The gun belt must be suitably secure, threaded through belt loops or held in place via a Velcro double belt system. Belt keepers may also be used. If a retention device is used to pass a holster test it must be used throughout the match.

Safety Zones There are two types of safety zones, primary and secondary. All ranges used for NRA Action Pistol Shooting must have at least one Primary Safety Zone in which pistols may be taken from their carry cases and placed in holsters. Sighting and drawing practice can also be done there, and a safe **direction for this shall be indicated.** If any work on a pistol is to be undertaken it is to be done in a Primary Safety Zone. A Secondary Safety Zone may be located on each range for the holstering and un-holstering of pistols.

These are **THE ONLY PLACES ON THE RANGE, OTHER THAN ON THE FIRING LINE THAT PISTOLS MAY BE HANDLED. NO AMMUNITION IS TO BE HANDLED IN ANY SAFETY ZONE.**

SECTION II

How to work as a Range Officer.

WELCOME TO THE RANGE. As a Range Officer, you have become part of the small cadre of people who actually make Action Pistol Shooting happen. As a Range Officer, you are a key element in your club's safe operation. Your actions will help shape the future of the sport, and to the shooters on the line YOU represent the host club and PNZ. That is what we are concerned about

IMAGE....As an Action Pistol Range Officer you are invested with considerable responsibility and authority. How you handle the job shapes the image of our sport. Strive to ensure the impression that you make is a positive one. This "How to" is designed to provide you with a reference that fills in many of the details needed.

Act like a Professional.

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE. Action Shooting is a sport which challenges you to develop self-control. You need to integrate body and mind when you are shooting. You also need it as an RO when you are interacting with a shooter.

To be a successful RO you need to develop a professional attitude conveyed by your body language and handling of the shooter that.

You are CALM...Because you know the rules, you know the job and the match being shot.

You are COURTEOUS...Each shooter from beginner to Hi Master is treated in the same calm and courteous manner. Despite any emotional outbursts on their part.

You are in COMMAND...When people of various skills are moving around with loaded pistols, someone has to be in command. We expect the shooter to be in control of their pistol and themselves. You are in control of the match, the shooter and the action.

You are THINKING AHEAD...You are thinking SAFETY, alert and ready to head off any potential safety problems BEFORE they occur. You read the shooter and the situation. Each shooter presents a unique SAFETY QUESTION. Each shooter presents a set of clues: grade, gear, body language and verbal interactions. You read and interpret these clues in deciding how to handle the situation.

You are KNOWLEDGEABLE ...About the rules, the course of fire, about firearms; about your job.

You are OBJECTIVE...There is never a hint of favouritism concerning your actions. Each shooter is treated with the same courteous impartiality.

YOUR JOB...You are responsible for seeing that the course of fire is run fairly and consistently. In order to do that, your instructions must be **CLEAR, TO THE POINT AND THE SAME FOR EACH SQUAD OF SHOOTERS.**

YOUR GOALS ARE... PROFESSIONALISM – SAFETY – OBJECTIVITY –
SAFETY – CONSISTENCY – SAFETY – KNOWLEDGE – SAFETY –
CONFIDENCE – SAFETY.

The Rules and the RO.

Have your copy of the rule book with you on the range. (This is the copy, with marginal notes and index tabs that you read and study in the bathroom) You are not expected to memorise the book, but you are expected to be **familiar with it – which means you can rapidly find the rules you were looking for.**

For NRA Action Pistol, PNZ uses the book of the previous year. Clubs may use earlier versions with any current changes noted. The book that is being used for the match must be specified in the Match Directors Bulletin.

YOU ARE NOT INFALLIBLE... Just over worked and unpaid. Your work goes easier if you do not pretend to be infallible. You WILL make mistakes and oversights. Try not to make the same one twice; fresh mistakes mean you are learning. Do not hesitate to defer to the more experienced judgements of the CRO or Match Director.

INTIMIDATION... Works both ways. You don't want to intimidate the shooter. Your job is to help them understand the course of fire and shoot it safely. But don't let the pushy "experts" sway you either. Treat all shooters the same.

Range and Safety Inspection.

When setting up, before the start of the match, check to be sure the range is working as it should and is safe. Is there spare target clips and hooks? Are the plate resetting properly and not falling of their own accord? Are all the mover trolleys running at the same speed? Are there sufficient mats for prone stages? These are some of the things that can cause hold ups, grounds for protests and a head ache for ROs. Fixed before shooting starts they can be overcome. The equipment of the shooter will have been checked at registration and have a sticker attached. As the shooters arrive on range to shoot this should be checked, and if required in match regulations, rounds taken for chronographing.

The RO Team

The ideal team is three people. The senior is the Chief Range Officer (CRO) the other two are Range Officers (RO). The CRO runs the shooter and gives the range commands. They have overall responsibility for running the range. One RO runs the timer or target control and watches the shooters for safety infringements. The other is a relief and is used when the ROs rotate during the day to keep them fresh. It is also common practice for the previous squad of shooters to act as observers to spot procedural errors, fall of shot, late shots and change targets. Their duties are listed at the rear of this manual.

Range Commands

USE PROPER RANGE COMMANDS

Range commands are an effectively shorthand for a series of instructions covering a series of actions. It is essential to be correct and consistent with these. Use only the currently acceptable form, not local or personal variants.

These are:-

SHOOTERS TO THE LINE. Check to make sure shooters are in their correct position. **RANGE IS IN USE.**

DO YOU ACCEPT YOUR TARGETS?

Shooters normally only answer if there is a problem with their targets i.e. Not straight.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE COURSE OF FIRE?

If a shooter asks for the course of fire to be read out you will do it for all shooters in the detail at every string. This avoids any protests.

YOU MAY TAKE A SIGHT PICTURE. The Match Directors Bulletin will say when sight pictures can be taken. Normally at a change of position or change of targets.

LOAD AND MAKE READY. The shooter loads and holsters their pistol. When they assume the start position call.

READY?

The shooter may nod, answer or just stand there. A useful practice is for the shooter to place their hands in the ready position to indicate acceptance of this command. If the shooter is not ready then they must call "Not Ready". Otherwise, after a short pause, continue with the start commands. Make a last safety check downrange. Is everything clear? Everything OK?

Tell the shooter:-

STANDBY!

Follow this with the start signal (audible, turning targets, etc.) within one to four seconds.

When the time is completed at the end of the Match, indicated either by sound, or turning targets the command:-

CEASE FIRING. UNLOAD AND SHOW CLEAR.

Note that shooters may not fire another shot after this command is given. To do so incurs penalties. The shooter should follow the unloading and clearing procedure covered in the PNZ Holster Training course, not an alternative. Next inspect the firearm and tell them:-

GUN CLEAR! HAMMER DOWN! HOLSTER OR BAG!

When all shooters on the range have been cleared by the ROs or observers then the CRO gives the command

RANGE IS CLEAR! YOU MAY GO FORWARD, CHANGE TARGETS AND PICK UP BRASS.

The observers will change targets and help pick up brass. The shooter is not usually allowed to touch their targets until they are marked and the score sheet signed.

Procedures for common incidents.

Falling Plates

Shooter shoots all six plates but the last plate does not fall because it is locked by the timer. Score is 50-5x as the plate must fall to be scored.

Shooter shoots all six plates but the last plate is overtime. Although all plates fell the sixth plate does not count as it is late. Score 50-5x.

Seven shots fired within time and six plates fall. Score is 60-6x minus
10 points-1x = 50-5x.

During the course of fire a plate falls of its own accord:-

1/. The shooter fires a shot were the plate should have been and claims it. The plate is counted as a miss as the shooter has accepted the target by firing at it but did not knock down the plate.

2/. The shooter stops when they notice the plate is missing. The shooter can claim a reshoot **of that string only**. It can be reshoot immediately or at the end of the match. It is the shooters choice.

Mover

The shooter has a target fall off the frame as the target comes out. The target is re-attached and the string continues. The target falls off after shots have been fired *in that string*. The target is taken down and the shooter reshoots *all the strings* at that distance.

Practical and Barricade

Shooter puts a shot on another shooters target. Refer 14.7 and 14.10

Late shots should be picked up by the ROs or observer and marked so on the back of the target at target change. Note the distance and initial the target. Shots out of sequence can be lost shots or a procedural penalty. Shots fired less than the number required are counted as a miss. More shots fired that required are procedural errors and a ten point penalty will be charged and the extra shot will be deducted.

A ten point penalty is also incurred for a premature start.

These are only a few of the many things that crop up in a match. You can see by these few that to have observers as well as ROs is a big advantage.

How to Clear a Dropped Loaded Pistol.

Under NO circumstances should the competitor be allowed to pick up a loaded pistol that has been dropped.

If the muzzle is pointing down range the RO should pick the pistol up, placing their thumb between the hammer and slide or frame if it is cocked. The RO then clears the pistol personally. If you are unfamiliar with the pistol, ask the competitor to explain how to do it.

If the muzzle is pointing up range the RO should first clear the firing point and spectator area of all persons. Sandbags should then be placed in front of the muzzle of the pistol before attempting to pick up the pistol and cleared as previously described.

Observer Duties

All competitors will be required to observe the following detail after they have completed that event. For a smooth and fast running Nationals, we require your cooperation.

Listed below are a few areas that an observer should pay particular attention to. If you note anything that is unusual, bring it to the Range Officer's attention at the end of the string.

Observers should:

- Put up the next competitor's targets
- Concentrate on "your competitor" only
- Ensure that the correct number of shots have been fired
- Ensure that targets are correctly engaged
- Ensure that the competitor complies with the course of fire
- Advise the Range Officer of any rule or safety violation.
- Ensure competitor stays within designated firing areas
- Note clearly any misses, late shots or miss-fires on the front of the target
- Ensure targets are placed on frames in the correct order and position.

Observers will:

- Ensure firearms are clear at the completion of the detail
- Supervise the holstering or "bagging" of the firearm
- Signal to the Range Officer when clear.



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