

North Texas Shooters Association

Safety Rules

Revised 9/2010

The North Texas Shooters Association (NTSA) conforms to the basic firearms safety rules published by the National Rifle Association (NRA), as follows:

- **ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.**
This is the primary rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending on different circumstances.
- **ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.**
When holding a gun, rest your finger on the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Until you are actually ready to fire, do not touch the trigger.
- **ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.**
Whenever you pick up a gun, immediately engage the safety device if possible, and, if the gun has a magazine, remove it before opening the action and looking into the chamber(s) which should be clear of ammunition. If you do not know how to open the action or inspect the chamber(s), leave the gun alone and get help from someone who does.
- **Know your target and what is beyond.**
Be absolutely sure you have identified your target beyond any doubt. Equally important, be aware of the area beyond your target. This means observing your prospective area of fire before you shoot. Never fire in a direction in which there are people or any other potential for mishap. Think first. Shoot second.
- **Know how to use the gun safely.**
Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Know its basic parts, how to safely open and close the action and remove any ammunition from the gun or magazine. Remember, a gun's mechanical safety device is never foolproof. Nothing can ever replace safe gun handling.
- **Be sure the gun is safe to operate.**
Just like other tools, guns need regular maintenance to remain operable. Regular cleaning and proper storage are a part of the gun's general upkeep. If there is any question concerning a gun's ability to function, a knowledgeable gunsmith should look at it.
- **Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.**
Only BBs, pellets, cartridges or shells designed for a particular gun can be fired safely in that gun. Most guns have the ammunition type stamped on the barrel. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on the box and sometimes stamped on the cartridge. Do not shoot the gun unless you know you have the proper ammunition.
- **Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate.**
Guns are loud and the noise can cause hearing damage. They can also emit debris and hot gas that could cause eye injury. For these reasons, shooting glasses and hearing protectors should be worn by shooters and spectators.
- **Never use alcohol or over-the-counter, prescription or other drugs before or while shooting.**
Alcohol, as well as any other substance likely to impair normal mental or physical bodily functions, must not be used before or while handling or shooting guns.
- **Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.**
Many factors must be considered when deciding where and how to store guns. A person's particular situation will be a major part of the consideration. Dozens of gun storage devices, as well as locking devices that attach directly to the gun, are available. However, mechanical locking devices, like the mechanical safeties built into guns, can fail and should not be used as a substitute for safe gun handling and the observance of all gun safety rules.
- **Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.**

- **Cleaning**

Regular cleaning is important in order for your gun to operate correctly and safely. Taking proper care of it will also maintain its value and extend its life. Your gun should be cleaned every time that it is used. A gun brought out of prolonged storage should also be cleaned before shooting. Accumulated moisture and dirt, or solidified grease and oil, can prevent the gun from operating properly. Before cleaning your gun, **make absolutely sure that it is unloaded**. The gun's action should be open during the cleaning process. Also, be sure that no ammunition is present in the cleaning area.

NTSA Safety Rules

General Safety Rules – In addition to the NRA basic firearm rules listed above, the following rules apply to the NTSA facilities.

- Firearms safety is the responsibility of each member.
- Any member that observes anything that is unsafe should immediately say “STOP”. The unsafe situation should be discussed with the person(s) involved, and/or reported to the Range Manager.
- Eye and ear protection should be worn at all times on NTSA ranges. Eye protection is required on the rifle and pistol ranges when out from under the metal covers.
- A hat with a brim facing forward is required at all times on the NTSA pistol and rifle ranges, especially when out from under the metal covers, and should be worn on all NTSA ranges.
- No firearms shall be handled when loaded and with the actions closed unless the shooter is on the firing line and ready to shoot.
- The firing line is the place on the range where firearms can be safely discharged, such as behind the concrete or wooden benches on the pistol and rifle ranges, and on the prone shooting platform. However, the firing line can be forward of the benches under certain circumstances such as sanctioned matches or when a shooter has permission to shoot in front of the benches on Pistol Bay 1 or the 50-yard intermediate range.
- All shooters on the rifle and pistol ranges should keep their muzzles pointed towards the berms.
- All rifle and pistol shooters shall ensure that all rounds fired impact into the berm.
- Shooters should know their background and not fire if there is an unsafe condition.
- Do not place any targets directly on the ground. They must be elevated a minimum of 12 inches and be placed within five yards of the base of the berm so rounds impact into the berm and do not skip off of the ground.
- On the pistol and rifle ranges, the orange flags shall be displayed when moving forward of the benches. In addition, on the rifle range, ensure that the red flashing safety lights are on when moving down range.
- Be aware of the possibility that shooters may be down range placing or removing targets or picking up brass.
- During a cease fire where shooters are going to be moving down range, at the minimum, open the action on the firearm, remove the magazine and engage the safety if so equipped, and secure the firearm. If the rifle is a bolt action, the shooter should remove the bolt. As a courtesy, shooters should also step away from the firing line when other shooters are down range. Do not load ammunition into the firearm while shooters are down range.
- Members are responsible for their own conduct, their children’s conduct, and the conduct of their guests while on NTSA Ranges. Children and guests must be supervised at all times on the range they are shooting.
- National Firearms Act (NFA)/Title II firearms including short barreled rifles (SBR’s) and suppressed firearms are allowed at the NTSA ranges, but shall not be fired in full automatic mode. They shall only be fired in semi-automatic mode. NFA firearms must comply with all applicable laws regarding legality, registration, etc.
- The use of firearms by anyone under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances is prohibited. Failure to comply shall subject the offender to suspension or expulsion from the club.
- Pick up all brass and shot shells when finished shooting so people do not slip on them and the mowers do not run over them. Place all trash including used targets in the barrels provided.

NTSA Safety Rules for Specific Ranges

Skeet Range Rules

- Always keep the actions open unless ready to fire.
- Keep all loaded guns pointed in a safe direction (between the houses).
- Never load until you are on your position and ready to call for your target.
- Never load more than two (2) shells in your shotgun at any time.
- When not on the shooting pad, keep the bolt open on an automatic or pump, break open and over/under or side by side shotgun.
- The maximum load allowed is three (3) dram equivalent. The maximum shot size allowed is # 7 ½ on the trap fields. Maximum shot size on skeet fields is #8.
- Clay targets are the only things to be shot at except the patterning board located near field #1. No live birds, animals, or other objects will be used as a target.
- Members and guests must register on the sign-in sheet in the clubhouse.
- Members must pay for all rounds (25 targets) of skeet or trap shot and will be responsible to see that their guests pay the appropriate guest fee.
- Keep your gun pointed in a safe direction when on shooting station.
- Unload your gun and open action before leaving or moving between shooting stations.
- When shooting station 8 ALL members of the squad will shoot high 8 before shooting low 8.
- Unload and move back away from the station if a house must be entered.
- No shot larger than #8. 9 shot is preferred. No steel shot.
- Neatly stack all empty target boxes together and leave them in the houses. The range officer will handle their disposal.
- Before operating or loading skeet or trap machines for the first time, members must seek instruction from the range manager or range officer on duty. Shooters should be aware that injury can occur when loading or operating the machines improperly.

Trap Range Rules

- Never load your shotgun until you are on your position and ready to call for your target.
- Always keep the action open and the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
- Load only one shell at a time when shooting singles, (two only if shooting doubles or wobble).
- Unload your gun and open action when leaving or moving between stations, or when there is a disruption of the Squad such as a misfire, equipment failure, etc. ***Note: It is especially important when moving from station 5 to station 1, that the action be open, the muzzle pointed down and kept parallel to the 16-yard line and not pointed backward toward the benches.***
- Unload and leave action open if it becomes necessary for someone to enter a trap or skeet house.
- A bright orange signal device must be used when entering the Trap House.
- No shot larger than 7 ½. No steel shot.

Handgun Range Rules

- During practice, and when no sanctioned match is in progress, the first shooter at the range is in charge of cease fires, flags up, and target change intervals.
- All handguns must be transported in holsters, pistol rugs/cases, or carried with the actions opened, the safety engaged, and the magazine removed, if so equipped.
- All handguns in holsters shall be unloaded (with the magazine removed, if so equipped) while not on the firing line.
- All handguns on the benches must be unloaded and the actions opened until ready to shoot, or when people are downrange. Pistols must have the magazine removed. Double action revolvers must have the action opened. Single action revolvers should have the loading gate open and a chamber flag or plastic line inserted through the cylinder. The use of chamber flags is encouraged.

- No prone handgun shooting is allowed on Pistol Bays 1, 2 and 3. Prone handgun shooting is allowed on the 50-yard intermediate range on the left side of the benches. When shooting prone, ensure that the rounds fired impact into the berm.
- All shooting in the pistol bays will be conducted from behind the benches, with one exception for Pistol Bay 1.
- Downrange shooting is only allowed on Pistol Bay No. 1 and using the following procedures. Anyone intending to shoot downrange on Pistol Bay No. 1 must inform the range manager before shooting. All four safety signs in Pistol Bay No. 1 must be placed in the down position and secured with the chains provided. All orange safety flags must be displayed. Moveable targets must be placed at the berm or within 5 yards of the berm. If multiple targets are used, a maximum firing angle of 20 degrees is permitted. No shooter may un-case or handle a firearm at the benches on Pistol Bay 1 when the signs are lowered. Shooters must supply their own moveable target stands, sticks, targets etc.
- On Pistol Bay 1, use the 25 and 50 yard frames provided to place targets. Otherwise, seek permission from the range manager to shoot forward of the benches and place moveable targets within 5 yards of the berm.
- On Pistol Bays 2 and 3, use only the target frames provided to place targets. Do not place targets on the berms.
- On Pistol Bay 3, the moveable benches must be no further forward than the roof supports.

Rifle Range Rules

- During practice, and when no sanctioned match is in progress, the first shooter at the range is in charge of cease fires, flags up, safety lights on, and target change intervals.
- All rifles, carbines, and shotguns shall be carried unloaded and with the actions opened or in cases while being transported to the firing line. Orange or yellow chamber flags should be used whenever possible.
- Actions shall be opened, the magazine removed, the bolt removed if bolt action and the safety engaged if so equipped when a cease fire is called and shooters go down range. The shooter shall not load the firearm or install the bolt while shooters are downrange. Unless aligning wind flags, etc., the shooter should also step away from the firing line when shooters are down range. The use of chamber flags is encouraged.
- When alone and before moving downrange, always display the orange safety flags and turn on the red safety lights when on the rifle range.
- Prone Shooting Platform – The NTSA has a permanent concrete shooting platform and a portable wooden platform on the rifle range. Both of these platforms are elevated about two feet off of the ground. Prone rifle shooting on the 100 or 200 yard ranges shall only be done from these platforms.
- On the 50-yard intermediate range, use the target frames provided at 50 yards and do not place any targets closer than 50 yards. If a shooter wants to shoot closer distances, display the orange flag and move closer to the target frames. All moveable targets shall be placed within 5 yards of the berm.
- On the 100 and 200 yard range, use the target frames provided at 100 and 200 yards. Any moveable target shall be placed within 5 yards of a berm.

Authorized Targets

- Target Frames/Backers - All shooters on the rifle and pistol ranges shall ensure that the rounds fired pass through the black plastic backers and impact into the berms. Place targets in the center of the plastic backer and avoid shooting the wood frames or the metal posts. Do not place any targets on top of the wooden frames or metal posts.
- Paper and Cardboard Targets – Paper and Cardboard Targets should be affixed to the black plastic backer in such a way that rounds fired do not impact into the wood supports or the metal uprights.

- Steel Targets - Anyone shooting steel targets of any kind must have completed the NTSA's Steel Target Training Course. No steel targets are to be shot in Pistol Bays 2 or 3. Steel targets may be shot in Pistol Bay 1, the 50-yard intermediate rifle range, and the 100 and 200 yard rifle ranges. All targets must be placed at the base of the berm or not further than 5 feet from the berm. Shooting on the 50-yard range must be conducted from behind the benches or from the left side adjacent to the benches, unless permission was granted to move forward of the benches.
- Clay Targets – Clay targets may be used on the rifle and pistol ranges if supported by a cardboard backer or other approved support and placed off of the ground.
- Bowling pins are prohibited on NTSA ranges.
- No tin cans or glass bottles shall be shot on NTSA ranges.

Authorized Ammunition

- Full metal jacketed centerfire rifle ammunition may be used on paper, cardboard, and clay targets but is prohibited on steel targets.
- Jacketed soft point or hollow point projectiles are required when shooting centerfire rifle cartridges on steel targets.
- Armor piecing ammunition is prohibited on NTSA ranges.
- Steel-tipped, steel-cased or steel-cored ammunition is prohibited on steel targets.
- Full metal jacketed centerfire pistol ammunition is allowed on steel targets if the minimum velocity is 750 feet per second or greater.
- Frangible centerfire rifle and pistol ammunition is allowed on any target.
- Cast or swaged lead bullets are allowed in rimfire and centerfire rifle and pistol.
- Number 7 ½ shot is the largest shot allowed in shotshells.
- Shotgun slugs may be used at any distance on paper, cardboard and clay targets. The minimum distance for slugs on steel targets is 50 yards.

Rules for Commissioned Law Enforcement Officers

- Commissioned law enforcement officers (LEO) in uniform or in plain clothes may carry their loaded handguns in their holsters on NTSA ranges.
- Plain clothes officers must wear their badge on their belt next to their holstered handgun, unless the handgun is concealed.
- LEO's intending to target practice with his or her duty handgun shall not draw the handgun unless on a firing line.
- If the LEO is competing in a sanctioned match, the LEO shall move to a safe area, remove the handgun from the holster and unload it before re-holstering, or secure the loaded handgun in their vehicle and use another handgun. Pistols in holsters must be unloaded and have the magazine well empty. A safe area is a bench in one of the other shooting bays where a firearm may be safely handled.
- Commissioned LEO's intending to shoot a rifle, carbine, or shotgun, shall not remove the loaded firearm from their vehicle unless it is cased. The firearm must be taken to a safe area to unload, or to the firing line to uncase and shoot.

Rules for Concealed Handgun License (CHL) Holders

- Concealed Handgun License (CHL) holders shall not carry their loaded handguns on NTSA ranges, unless they are concealed.
- CHL holders shall not draw their loaded handguns unless they are on a firing line or in a safe area.
- If the CHL is competing in a sanctioned match, the CHL shall move to a safe area, remove the handgun from the holster and unload it before re-holstering, or secure it in their vehicle and use another handgun.

Sanctioned Matches

- Sanctioned matches are those matches authorized by the Board of Directors to be held on a certain dates and times, and on certain ranges.
- The Board authorizes the Match Director to be in charge of the ranges and the match until it is completed.
- Sanctioned matches are listed on the official calendar in the clubhouse and the NTSA website.
- All sanctioned matches involving action shooting with pistols, carbines, or shotguns are held on a “cold” range, which means that all firearms are unloaded until the shooter is called to the firing line by a Safety Officer. All firearms handling will be done on the firing line or in the designated safe area. A shooter may load rounds into magazines at any appropriate time but shall not load magazines into the firearm until the shooter is on the firing line and is instructed to uncase or unholster and load by the Safety Officer.
- During action shooting matches with pistols, carbines, or shotguns, unless the shooter is actually firing at target(s), the manual safety shall be ON when the firearm is loaded. The shooter’s finger must be outside the trigger guard and off of the trigger until the shooter is aimed-in at the target and ready to shoot. When a shooter is required to move from one firing point to another during a stage, before moving, the safety shall be ON, the finger outside the trigger guard, and the muzzle pointed down range towards the targets and the berm.
- During action shooting with pistols, carbines, or shotguns, the shooter must know where his or her muzzle is pointed at all times and not violate the 180 degree rule. For example, while facing the target(s), the shooter must not point the muzzle beyond 90 degrees either left or right side of the target(s).
- Match Directors may impose additional firearms safety rules as appropriate. Likewise, Match Directors can modify certain rules to accommodate operating procedures for their specific matches. For example, during benchrest matches, it is customary for benchrest rifles to be handled off of the firing line with the bolts and/or firing pins removed.

NTSA Steel Reactive Target Policy

Steel reactive targets are generally limited for use in sanctioned competitions conducted by a NTSA Match Director or Range Officer. However, casual shooters may use steel reactive targets when in compliance with this policy and after completing a NTSA training course, but are limited to .22 rimfire ammunition only. Casual shooters are those shooters who are not competing in a sanctioned match.

Use of Steel Reactive Targets

- Steel reactive targets are limited to the 100 and 200 yard rifle ranges, the 50 yard intermediate range, and Pistol Bay 1.
- Steel reactive targets must be placed at the base of the berm whenever possible and under no circumstances placed greater than five yards from the berm regardless of the minimum distances listed below.
- The minimum shooting distance from the steel reactive target when using centerfire handgun cartridges or .22 rimfire is 15 yards.
- The minimum shooting distance from the steel reactive target when using shot shell cartridges is 15 yards.
- The minimum shooting distance from the steel reactive target when using shotgun slugs is 50 yards.
- The minimum shooting distance from the steel target when using centerfire rifle cartridges such as .223 and .308. is 100 yards.
- Targets faces shall not be placed directly on the ground.
- Target faces that are cratered, pitted, pockmarked, or damaged shall not be used.
- Targets should be placed with a 3 foot lateral and deep offset from the adjacent target.
- If shooting multiple targets, the angle of engagement should not exceed 20 degrees.
- Hearing protection and wrap-around shatter resistant eye protection are required.

- Shooters and observers should wear long pants, long sleeve shirts, a cap or hat with a brim, and closed toe shoes when shooting steel.

Target Specifications

- All target faces must be 500 Brinell AR steel for centerfire rifle and pistol, and for shotgun.
- Targets for .22 rimfire may be commercially manufactured and sold specifically for use with .22 rimfire ammunition, or they may be made of any steel that is a minimum of 3/16 inch thick.
- All target faces must be designed to fall forward if mounted on a stand; or if suspended on supports, pivot so the target face angles downward when struck; or, if placed on a support or base, absorb the impact of the projectile and fall to the ground when struck. As an example, targets like the "Texas Star" where the target faces are not permanently attached to their bases or supports fall to the ground when struck.
- Targets shall be manufactured with a base or support that elevates the target face off of the ground.

Ammunition

- Jacketed soft point or hollow point projectiles are required when shooting centerfire rifle cartridges.
- Ammunition that exceeds 3,100 feet per second at 10 feet from the muzzle is prohibited.
- Ammunition that travels below 750 feet per second at 10 feet from the muzzle is prohibited.
- Number 7 ½ shot is the largest shot allowed. BB's, steel shot, or air gun pellets are prohibited.
- Armor piecing, steel-tipped, steel-cased or steel-cored ammunition is prohibited.
- Full metal jacketed centerfire rifle ammunition is prohibited on steel targets.
- Full metal jacketed centerfire pistol ammunition is allowed on steel targets if it conforms to the velocity requirements.
- Frangible centerfire rifle and pistol ammunition is allowed.
- Cast or swaged lead bullets are allowed in centerfire rifle and pistol.

Responsibilities and Approvals

- Prior to shooting, it is the user's responsibility to inspect all targets for damage and functionality. If the target faces are damaged, or the target does not operate as designed, the target shall be resurfaced or replaced before it can be used.
- Any steel target can be inspected at any time by the NTSA Range Manager for compliance and removed from use, if necessary.
- The NTSA Range Manager will approve all steel targets to be used at the NTSA Range that meet the requirements listed in this policy. However, no steel targets will be used unless approved by the Range Manager.
- Match Directors will request approval for all steel targets to be used during sanctioned competitions or other events. This can be done by allowing the Range Manager the opportunity to inspect the purchase documents and the targets prior to using them in a competition. This procedure will apply anytime a new target is purchased.
- During sanctioned competitions, Match Directors and Range Officers shall ensure that all shooters are using the specified ammunition and comply with all instructions and restrictions listed in this policy including placement of the targets. In addition, Match Directors and Range Officers must comply with all of the manufacturer's safety instructions.
- Upon NTSA Range Manager approval, casual shooters may use steel reactive targets on Pistol Bay 1 and the 50-yard intermediate range, but are limited to .22 rimfire ammunition. To receive approval for .22 rimfire targets, the user must take the required training course, sign a document that states that the user understands and agrees with the Steel Reactive Target Policy, and allow the Range Manager the opportunity to inspect the targets prior to use. The Range Manager will then sign the same document indicating that the user has received approval.
- The casual shooter is at all times responsible for the safe use and the proper maintenance of his or her steel reactive targets.
- Failure to comply with the policy will result in losing the privilege to shoot steel reactive targets, and may result in losing his/her membership.

Training Course

- A NTSA subcommittee will develop an approved training course for use by Match Directors and Range Officers, and approved by the Board of Directors.
- This course will include all the instructions, restrictions, and responsibilities listed in the steel target policy.
- This course will require that the user sign a document stating that he/she has read and will comply with this policy.
- The document will certify that the Range Officer has received the required block of training and provide signature blocks for the Range Officer, the person providing the training, and the Range Manager.
- The Range Manager will keep the original certification to be filed at the NTSA clubhouse and provide a copy to the Range Officer.

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