



Range Officers Manual

(An Operational Guideline)

Duties of a Range Officer

February 2007

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Section 1 **Introduction**

1. Introduction:

This Range Officer training manual was prepared after a need was identified to have trained officials who could take charge of shooting exercises during association shooting events.

Training officials need to be qualified Range or Safety Officers (RO's or SO's) with relevant practical experience. This manual should not be seen as a course on its own, but should be inter-linked to other Weapons' training curricula, including a lecture on weapon safety. This course deals with the basic range safety procedures and actions, which must be implemented on any responsibly, managed shooting range.

The course also discusses basic course design. This is done to enable the Range or Safety Official to know how a range should be designed and set up with safety as the first priority.

The safety official must judge the ability of each range user and how to improve his/her weapons handling skills. Individual attention must be provided to each range user and every person should be awarded the time to improve their skills at their own pace. Because of this, more attention must be given to those members who are struggling with their weapon handling skills.

1.1 Important Note: Trainer and trainee

The implications of this course for the Range Officer:

- (i) This note is purposefully under a separate heading to emphasize it to both the instructor on this course as well as a candidate Range Officer.
- (ii) It must be appreciated that the mere existence of this manual has an effect on the legal standing of a Range Officer if he/she should ever be unfortunate enough to be involved in a shooting incident that took place while a range was under his/her control and that results in legal action.
- (iii) Because the safety procedures, areas of danger, etc. are spelled out in these notes, the Range Officer can never use the excuse: "I did not know". You can well imagine what Cross-examination Council will do to a Range Officer in the witness stand where the Range Officer failed to adhere to procedures laid down in this operational guideline.
- (iv) It also has implications for examiners. To be "chummy" and to pass a candidate who is not up to standard is not doing him/her a favour. Such a person will be judged as a qualified Range Officer according to a standard that he/she may not be able to meet, and will not get the benefit of the doubt.
- (v) As a Range Officer, you will be judged by fellow range officials, shooters, competitors and spectators on your actions and example. By allowing a lapse in standard for any individual, it will reflect negatively on not only yourself, but also all other Range Officers.

1.2 Objectives:

After studying this manual, the trainee should be able to:

- ↳ Handle a shooting range safely
- ↳ Handle an emergency situation on the shooting range
- ↳ Design, plan, prepare and execute a course of fire.

Section 2

Definitions, qualification as a Range Officer, responsibilities of a Range Officer and Shooting incidents & accidents.

2.1 Objectives:

After the completion of this phase, the trainee must know the following (as is prescribed):

- ↳ The requirements needed to qualify as a Range Officer.
- ↳ The responsibilities of a Range Officer in the capacity as a safety official and trainer.
- ↳ How to handle a shooting accident.

- ↳ Be able to identify the attributes that a person should have to be able to qualify as a Range Officer.
- ↳ Be able to describe the responsibilities of a Range Officer.
- ↳ Be able to define what procedure should be followed should a shooting accident occur on the range where he/she is a Range Officer.

2.2 Learning Contents:

Definitions:

2.2.1 Shooting Range: is a specific area that complies with all requirements that are mentioned under "Requirements for a safe range". . Such a shooting range can be one of several individual shooting ranges that form part of a Shooting Range Complex.

2.2.2 Shooting Range Complex: is an accepted SA Police Services (SAPS), SA National Defence Force (SANDF), Department of Correctional Services or Private Shooting Range facility that consists of several shooting ranges. Each of these ranges can be used individually without interference with another range of the complex.

2.2.3 Trainee Range Officer (TRO): is an officer still busy with in-service training and appointed to assist a qualified Range Officer on a shooting range. The TRO is not qualified to take command on a shooting range, but will always function under supervision of a Range Officer, Assistant Range Officer or Chief Range Officer.

2.2.4 Range Officer (RO): is a person who has qualified as a Range Officer. A Range Officer is responsible for the safety and discipline of all persons under his supervision on or present at a specific shooting range appointed to him/her. *Refer to "Responsibility and Authority of Range Officers"*

2.2.5 Assistant Range Officer (ARO): is a qualified Range Officer. The RO becomes an ARO when he/she is appointed to assist a specific RO on a specific shooting range. The ARO is qualified to take command on that shooting range, but is merely there to assist the RO appointed and mainly responsible for that specific range.

2.2.6 Chief Range Officer (CRO): is a qualified Range Officer with at least 4 years experience of handling shooting ranges. A CRO is responsible for the safety and discipline of all persons and Range Officers under his supervision on several shooting ranges allocated to him/her. The CRO merely acts as a supervisor for the Range Officers, Assistant- and Trainee Range Officers assigned to him/her. All of the Range Officers, Assistant- and Trainee Range Officers of those specific ranges have to report to the CRO appointed to those ranges. The CRO always reports to the executive or branch chairman.

Note: When using a shooting range complex (facility) other than an accepted SAPS, SANDF, DCS- or Private shooting range complex, it is recommended that the Range Manager or Officer or other appropriate person appointed by the institution to whom the shooting range belongs, should be present when used .

2.3 Legal Aspects:

2.3.1 Introduction:

The possession of firearms is regulated by the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000, which prescribes, prohibits and penalises conduct (Criminal Law) Competent legal advice should be sought for specific problems as required. The Range Officer should be familiar with relevant sections of the FCA and should preferably be in possession of a Competency certificate covering handguns, rifles and shotguns.. Various publications regarding the firearm owner and the law are available from book stores and members should be urged to obtain copies of these publications.

2.5.5 The Civil Law

Safety is the first and primary responsibility of a Range Officer. It is therefore understood that the Range Officer has complete authority on the range. This also means that the Range Officer shoulders the responsibility if anything happens on the range. This entails 3 aspects, namely:

- (i) To define when, where and for what the Range Officer is responsible.
- (ii) To determine what this responsibility encompasses
- (iii) To consider the tie-in between the Range Officer and his/her club/association.

2.6 Qualifying as a Range Officer

2.6.1.1 The candidate must:

- (i) have at least 2 (two) years shooting experience in the shooting disciplines.
- (ii) be 21 years of age or older.
- (iii) pass a theoretical exam (Safety rules: application and interpretation)
- (iv) undergo and pass a practical exam under supervision of the qualified Range Officer.
- (v) be recommended by his/her club/association executive.

2.6.1.2 In addition a Range Officer should ideally:

- (i) have good leadership capabilities.
- (ii) have experience as a weapons trainer (instructor).
- (iii) have experience in a variety of shooting disciplines.
- (iv) have experience as a shooting competitor.
- (v) have knowledge of firearms and ballistics.
- (vi) have the ability and willingness to convey knowledge to others.
- (vii) be safety-conscious.
- (viii) be able to handle situations firmly, but with diplomacy.
- (ix) be able to administer basic First aid.

2.6.2 The responsibilities of a Range Officer

2.6.2.1 Introduction:

The Range Officer's primary duty is to control the range in a manner that ensures the total safety of all shooters, range assistants and spectators at all times.

The Range Officer assumes responsibility the moment he has everybody's attention (e.g. blowing the whistle) and calling trainees/shooters forward for the briefing. All shooters and other persons on the range, irrespective of rank, social standing or position, then come under his authority.

The shoot, as conducted on the shoot proper, is the Range Officer's responsibility.
Note:

The Range Officer cannot however ignore any safety infringement on or around the range that may have an impact on the shoot or shooters.

He retains control until the moment when he releases himself from further responsibility by declaring the range safe, or once the last shooter in the detail has completed the course requirements and has left the range.

From the above, it should be clear that every range should have competent Range Officers whose duty it is to ensure that the safety rules are enforced at all times.

2.6.2.2 The responsibilities of a Range Officer:

The Range Officer may be held responsible for any accident, which could occur on the range under his command. This could mean that, where damages are suffered as a consequence of an accident, he may be held responsible.

- a) Where an accident occurs due to negligence of a Range Officer, he may be held responsible and liable. This has relevance both in control of the range as well as range setup; e.g. the Range Officer must ensure that items, like steel plates, are setup correctly and will not cause injury to either shooters or spectators.
- b) Whether or not he will be held liable will depend on whether he/she, as the Range Officer, was negligent in executing his/her duties.
- c) When it is said that the Range Officer may be held legally responsible in the case of a shooting incident or accident, it is not intended that he/she alone will be responsible. The Range Officer will have to prove that his actions were just and sufficient. Each case will be assessed on its own merits, but where a Range Officer is involved, the following provisions will apply:
 - The fact that we are dealing with firearms
 - The fact that the Range Officer is not simply a "man on the street", but
 - (i) an experienced shooter
 - (ii) a person who has had sufficient training or other equivalent experience
 - (iii) who has passed an exam of very high standard
 - (iv) who was initially chosen as a Trainee Range Officer because he/she is a safety conscious and responsible individual.

- The fact that this course has been specifically designed to equip the prospective Range Officer with the necessary knowledge to determine what is not safe and takes appropriate action.
 - The fact that the Range Officer is invested with absolute authority on the range to ensure that complete safety is maintained.
- d) Every shooting incident resulting in injury or damage to property will be subject to an investigation to determine responsibility and/or liability. The following provisions ,may apply:
- *Negligently discharging a firearm and thereby causing injury or damage in terms of the FCA.*
 - *The common law offence of culpable homicide.*
 - *Civil liability for damage caused can also be investigated.*

In the case of a shooting incident or accident, the Range Officer may also be subject to an internal disciplinary review by his branch or provincial association. The Primary function of the Range Officer is to ensure that safety on the range is maintained. (Anything that may institute danger falls within his authority)

“SAFETY BEFORE DIPLOMACY”

2.6.3 The Range Officer and his Club/Association/branch

- a) It is of great importance to the Range Officer that his Club/Assoc/branch is properly constituted and affiliated.
- b) By affiliating to certain institutions, e.g. SAGA/SAPSA, the club can attain insurance against any civil claims. Each organisation or sports body has its own set of minimum standards, criteria and rules, which will not be discussed here. Please verify these with the individual organisations.
- c) Unless properly constituted, you are simply dealing with a group of individuals, and in the case of a civil claim against the Range Officer, he is standing on his own.
- d) From the position of the Range Officer, the constitution should:
 - (i) indemnify him against all loss in the event that an action for damages is brought against him; and
 - (ii) where (as is usually the case) the constitution provides that liability of members is restricted to unpaid subscriptions (or any other restriction of liability for that matter) there should be a rider to the effect that member's liability is unrestricted where the club is required to make good on the indemnity.

2.6.4 Shooting Incidents and Accidents

2.6.4.1 Shooting incidents

Any shooting incident, including an accidental discharge, where nobody is injured should be reported to the Chief Range Officer, who must report to the relevant branch or association. There are various reasons for this, namely:

- a) It is conceivably possible that where an accident happens on a range and it appears (when the matter is then carefully investigated) that there had been

- prior unreported incidents, that an insurance claim in respect of the subsequent accident may be jeopardised;
- b) There will undoubtedly be disciplinary action taken against a Range Officer who fails to report incidents if it becomes known; and
 - c) If shooting incidents are not glossed over on the range, the shooters will be far more careful.

2.6.4.2 Shooting Accidents

In the event of a shooting accident where somebody has been injured,

- a) A full written report, in duplicate, must immediately be forwarded to the association and relevant branch
- b) The accident must be reported to the nearest SAPS as soon as possible, but definitely within 24 hours.

In submitting a written report, keep in mind that it should be comprehensive enough to be submitted to an insurance company. Normally, this report must reach the insurance company within 7 days, so be careful not to jeopardise any possible claims by postal or administrative delays.

2.6.4.3 Other aspects to keep in mind after a shooting accident:

- a) Trained medical staff should apply first aid immediately.
- b) Never dismantle or clean the firearm, which was involved in the incident.
- c) Search carefully for any broken parts of metal or wood.
- d) Do not move the weapon or broken parts of the weapon on the scene of the accident.
- e) Obtain statements from witnesses and all the persons who handled the weapon in the order in which they handled the weapon.
- f) Make a note of the lot number of the ammunition or reload data.
Do not make the weapon safe, until the investigation "in loco" is complete.

Section 3

The Range Officer's authority, Safety rules and procedures, the Range Officer's duties

3.1 Objectives:

After completion of this phase, the trainee must know the following:

- ↳ Describe the Range Officer's authority.
- ↳ Name the safety rules that apply in general.
- ↳ Name the safety procedures that apply in general.
- ↳ Be able to define what safety procedures apply when a detail is on the line.
- ↳ Be able to describe the Range Officer's duties:
 - (i) Before the shoot
 - (ii) After the shoot

3.2 The Range Officer's authority

- a) The Range Officer has complete authority on the range, irrespective of rank, social standing or position.
- b) The Range Officer is not on the range to win a popularity contest. It is inevitable that his decisions will be unpopular from time to time. Remember: "**Safety first, not diplomacy**"
- c) Range discipline is needed and it is something that is only built over a period of time by the consistent conduct of the Range Officer in bringing meaning to the words "*the Range Officer has complete authority on the range*".
- d) By the very nature of his duties, the Range Officer must apply his discretion in many instances and he should not be afraid to do so, provided it is done safely.

3.3 Restrictions on the Range Officer's authority

- a) The fact that the decision of the Range Officer is final does not mean the Range Officer is a law unto him-/herself. The Range Officer is subject to control and, if the need be, disciplinary action by authorities above him (branch exco or association)
- b) Range Officers in shooting sports have more authority than referees in other sporting disciplines because shooting sports are potentially dangerous and lethal. With this great power comes a great responsibility and duty to use it wisely and sensibly.
- c) The Range Officer is as much subject to the rules, as are the other shooters and spectators. The difference is that he is expected to know the rules. The Range Officer must make his rulings in conformity of the rules.
- d) The Range Officer may not make a ruling with ulterior motives or male fide.
- e) The Range Officer must, in a matter where he/she has discretion, actively apply his/her mind to the alternatives.
- f) The Range Officer's decision must not lead to grossly unfair results.
- g) The Range Officer must, in the case of a dispute, afford the shooter an opportunity to present his/her side of the story.

3.4 Safety rules and procedures

3.4.1 Safety rules in General:

The safety rules are the foundation on which the Range Officer executes his primary duty, namely to ensure safety at all times. The most important safety rules can be categorized as what is known as "The 3 Commandments". Contravention of any of the safety rules of the "3 commandments" may lead to reprimanding or disciplinary action against the transgressor. "The 3 Commandments" entail the following:

- a) The Range Officer has complete authority on the range.
- b) Only point a firearm at that which you wish to see destroyed.

- c) No firearms may be drawn from the holster, removed from an approved holder (container) or handled except on the firing line and on the command of the Range Officer.

The “3 commandments” are supplemented by a number of “primary safety rules”. Contravention of any of the “primary safety rules” may lead to reprimanding or disciplinary action against the transgressor without discretion on the part of the Range Officer. The “primary safety rules” entail the following:

- a) Only point the gun down range when you are on the firing line.
- b) When shooters are not on the firing line, guns must be carried in one of the following ways as prescribed for different types of firearms:

Pistols:

- (i) Magazine removed, chamber empty, slide forward and hammer down; safety catch on safe (if so equipped), holstered in an approved holster or holder.

Revolvers:

- (i) All chambers empty, hammer down and holstered in an approved holster or holder.

Pump/bolt action Shotguns and rifles:

- (i) Slide or bolt back (showing an empty chamber), magazine removed (if so equipped), standing in an approved gun rack or placed in an approved carry bag.

Semi-auto rifles:

- (i) Magazines removed, chamber empty, safety catch applied and standing in an approved gun rack or placed in an approved carry bag.

Break open shotguns or rifles:

- (i) Chambers empty and gun “broken” open or standing in an approved gun rack or placed in an approved carry bag.
- c) No liquor or drugs or any person under the influence thereof is allowed on the range or in its vicinity while any shooting activity is taking place or is going to take place.

3.4.2 Safety procedures in general:

- a) Do not deviate from the wording and use of recognised range commands.
- b) Ensure that every shooter's firearm is safe before leaving the firing line.
 - The Range Officer should personally check each gun, or have the assistant Range Officer do this in the case of a large detail, before shooters are allowed to leave the firing line.
 - Once they are off the line and not under direct surveillance of the Range Officer, unsafe guns are unlikely to be spotted, and fiddling with guns behind the line is an unfortunate fact of life. All attempts should be made to stamp it out (ruthlessly if need be). However strict range discipline might be, it is still something likely to occur and the Range Officer should be alert to this danger.

- c) Firearms' safety catches must be applied, or bolts open when loaded, with the exception when the shooter is engaging his targets. Spot checks should be carried out from time to time and strict action should be engaged against any transgressors. This is especially important with semi-automatic pistols, where the shooter may injure him-/herself when drawing the firearm.
- d) The Range Officer should automatically check the following before giving the command to load or commence shooting:
 - That the range is clear (no persons still on the range)
 - That all non-shooters are behind the firing line. It should be second nature, like disengaging the safety.

3.4.3 Details on the line:

- a) The Range Officer should always position him-/herself in such a way that he/she has a clear view of all shooters in the detail under his control.
- b) A Range Officer cannot control and supervise a large detail on his/her own. Make use of Assistant Range Officers to help in the supervision of a large detail. Try and keep the ratio to less than 6 shooters per Range Officer.
- c) A Range Officer should preferably not try and operate a manual timing system (e.g. stop watch or whistle), as well as watch the firing line.
- d) The Range Officer does not give the command to load before he/she and other Assistant Range Officers are behind the firing line.
- e) Pay particular attention to any shooter who is busy clearing a jam. Shooters very often tend to point the barrel towards the weak side, where another shooter might be standing.
- f) Exercises with a potential danger level should be strictly controlled.
- g) Caution should be exercised when shooters are shooting an exercise and a range failure occurs (eg. Target falls over). If a person is designated to correct the malfunction, it is advised that all shooters on the firing line must unload and step away from their rifles/ break shotguns or holster weapons until such time that the person is behind the firing line again. The range officer may never move forward to correct a range equipment malfunction – he must watch the detail.

3.4.4 Assault/Field courses

- a) Before proceeding with any type of field course, the Range Officer must satisfy him-/herself that it is a safe course; both in design and in range set-up. He should walk the course specifically to determine:
 - (i) that the angle of fire from all points is safe.
 - (ii) that any point where an accidental shot can be fired, e.g. over a barricade, in a tunnel, etc., is angled in such a manner that no harm can be done by a stray shot.
- b) A shooter on the move should:
 - (i) have the safety engaged, or hammer down and finger out of the trigger guard
- c) Ensure that there are no persons on the range other than the next shooter, before the course of fire commences. This is particularly important with field exercises, where the whole of the range may not be visible from the starting point. It is recommended that:

- (i) a constant and fixed number of scorers and patchers are used throughout the shoot.
- (ii) a head count is done each time a shooter is taken under command.
- (iii) a safety officer is in position with the specific duty to ensure that nobody wanders onto the range during the course of fire and that everybody is out before the shoot commences.
- d) The Range Officer gives the command "**Clear the range**" clearly and audibly before inspecting the range to assure everybody is out. This will afford anybody the chance to clear out of the range.

3.5 The Range Officer's duties.

3.5.1 In general:

- a) The duties of the Range Officer may be broadly divided into 4 categories:
 - (i) Primary safety;
 - (ii) The running of a contest as referee or umpire;
 - (iii) Providing a firm foundation for the sport;
 - (iv) Advancement of the sport.
- b) The Range Officer is a key element of the associations safety plan. His/her actions will help shape the future of shooting sports. Therefore, the Range Officer must set an example to other shooters. The following aspects should be taken into account:
 - (i) Image: Strive to insure that the image you project is a positive one.
 - (ii) Professional attitude: Shooting is a sport that promotes self-control. To be an excellent Range Officer, you need to develop a professional attitude. By your language and actions, the Range Officer should convey the following:
 - The Range Officer should be **calm**, because he is familiar with the rules, the job and knows how to run a range.
 - The Range Officer must be **courteous**. Each shooter must be treated in the same calm and courteous manner, despite any emotional outbursts on their part.
 - The Range Officer is in **command** of the range. When people of various skill levels are running around with loaded guns, someone has to be in command. We expect the shooter to be in control of his gun and his actions, but the Range Officer is control of the stage, the shooter and his actions.
 - The Range Officer must **think ahead**. He/she must be thinking **safety** and must be **alert** to head off potential problems **before** they occur.
 - Range Officers' must be able to read shooters and the situation. Each shooter represents a unique **safety question**. Each shooter carries a set of clues with him/her: score sheets, gear, body language and verbal interactions. The Range Officer must read and interpret these clues in deciding how to handle the situation.
 - The Range Officer must be **knowledgeable** about the rules and principles of the sport and about firearms and the job.

- The Range Officer must be **objective**. There should never be a whisper of favouritism concerning a Range Officer's actions. Each shooter should be treated with the same courteous impartiality.
- (iii) Your job and goals:
**SAFETY – PROFESSIONALISM – SAFETY- OBJECTIVITY –
SAFETY – FAIRNESS – SAFETY – CONSISTENCY – SAFETY –
KNOWLEDGE – SAFETY – CONFIDENCE – SAFETY.**

3.5.2 Safety:

- a) Again: the Range Officer's primary duty is to control the range in a manner that ensures the total safety of all shooters and spectators.
- b) Safety before diplomacy
- c) Fortunately, the Range Officer does not normally have much argument about his decisions on safety infringements. He/she should ensure that he/she builds up a reputation that he/she does not tolerate ant infringement in this spectrum by consistently and inflexibly reacting to even a minor safety infringement.
- d) Once the Range Officer allows a minor infringement to pass unchecked, a precedent has been set and the tendency of shooters are to “chance their arm” until the line is drawn; which you do not do from a position of power since a precedent was set.
- e) A word of caution: Junior Range Officers are sometimes reluctant to react to a safety infringement by his Senior Range Officer, team member, “A” grade shooter, club chairman etc. He/she should, if anything, react more severely to this person's infringements as:
 - (i) he does know better and he knows it,
 - (ii) the other shooters will notice this leniency and know that you simply did not react for personal reasons, and “bang” goes your authority and credibility.
- f) Where a safety infringement is concerned, the Range Officer has no discretion, but must disqualify the transgressor.
- g) Eye and hearing protection should be compulsory, and no Range Officer should allow any individual, shooter or spectator, on the range without it.

3.5.3 The running of a contest as an umpire or referee

- a) Disregarding the design of the course, the manner in which the Range Officer handles a shoot is the single determining factor that decides whether the shoot is a success or not.
- b) The Range Officer must take control of the range and maintain it. If he/she loses control, the shoot deteriorates into shambles, with very little enjoyment for any competitor as well as with unpleasant undertones. This control is referred in the broad sense as “range discipline”.
- c) The Range Officer should never loose sight of the fact that purpose of the sport is to test a competitor's ability to shoot in a simulated hypothetical situation.
- d) It is a sport and practised for the recreational value of it. Do not kill the fun of it.

- e) When scoring a shoot, the Range Officer should not lose sight of the rationale of the designer of the course of fire, and he should apply any penalties accordingly.
- f) The Range Officer's duty is not to see how many penalties he can award any competitor. The principles of awarding penalties are clearly defined in the relevant rules and should be enforced rigorously- do not be petty.
- g)
- h) The following principles can be applied to ensure that a competition is conducted harmoniously:
 - (i) Explain the course of fire to the competitors clearly and concisely and ensure that they understand it. Invite questions.
 - (ii) Explain the scoring method and penalties clearly and definitely. The contestant must be able to work out from this what category of shoot it is and how he should approach it. Again, invite questions.
 - (iii) Ensure that competitors can define firing points clearly if penalties are attached to overrunning or stepping out of a fixed firing point.
 - (iv) Ensure that competitors can clearly define targets and particularly penalty targets.
 - (v) Ensure that competitors can hear your commands clearly.
 - (vi) Ensure that the competitors can check and verify their scores and times (if at all possible while there is still time to raise a question if they wish to).
 - (vii) Treat all competitors impartially and equally, irrespective of personal knowledge of them, their range manners or your personnel feelings towards that person.
 - (viii) If there is an infringement of the rules, the competitor must be informed:
 - (I) in a pleasant manner, and
 - (II) if the infringement is serious, the competitor should be warned or disqualified immediately.
 - (III) Be courteous and friendly; the Range Officer need not bully to be strict.
 - (IV) When taking an individual shooter under command, try to establish rapport and set him at ease; endeavour to establish the attitude that you will be going through the course together, and **not** that you are trying to catch him out.
 - (V) Be strict, but be fair.

3.5.4 Providing a firm foundation for the sport:

As background in this regard it must be born in mind that every member is important to the association as a whole. Reasons for this being:

- i) The association needs funds and facilities, and because of the sources they come from, they are only available in meaningful measure to those that have large numbers of members and supporters.
- ii) From the ranks of the association members come:
 - a. those who are there to enjoy the shooting and camaraderie;
 - b. those who will be tomorrow's shooters and

- c. "the grafters" – people who organise and run shoots and events etc, without whom there will be no organised shoots

It follows that the greater number of shooters, the greater the depth of real proficiency and experience and of reserve manpower on which the association can draw. Since often the first contact the member has with organised shooting is his club Range Officer, it follows that a great responsibility rests on the Range Officer to promote the shooting and hunting sports.

The Range Officer has to generate and sustain enthusiasm and interest amongst members, which is the motivating force that drives the whole scene. This interest and enthusiasm come from mainly 3 factors:

- i) the club Range Officer presenting interesting and challenging shoots.
- ii) the club Range Officer conducting these shoots to the enjoyment of the shooters.
- iii) the shooter sees progress in his/her own performance and develops a desire to do even better.

This enthusiasm is contagious, for:

- i) it will rub off on other members and you will get the necessary spirit amongst them, and
- ii) the enthusiastic member will introduce new members

It also motivates the member to bring his contribution, eg. arranging and conducting a shoot. If contribution at this level is right, then you are building on a solid foundation.

There are 2 other aspects on which the Range Officer should concentrate:

- i) Training
- ii) Range discipline.

The basic firearm proficiency of beginners and less experienced shooters is dependant on the competence of the Range Officer. He should watch them carefully and gauge their progress to determine what fields they need additional help and experience; and naturally provide this or direct them to a competent instructor. The range is the place where shooters learn range discipline and its very much part of a sound foundation. Lack of range discipline points a finger at the Range Officer. The best set of safety rules does not mean anything if there is no range discipline.

3.5.5 Duties before the shoot

- a) The Range Officer must ensure that the range is safe and that all necessary flags have been hoisted.
- b) Should it be necessary to post safety patrols, it will be the responsibility of the Range Officer to ensure that they are posted and that they know their duty.
- c) The Range Officer must ensure that all targets and equipment for all of the exercises are available.
- d) The Range Officer must ensure that there are enough markers and helpers in the shooting pit, along with an Assistant Range Officer to control them.

- e) The Range Officer is responsible to divide the shooters into details.
- f) The Range Officer must brief all shooters on the exercise before the course of fire commences.
- g) The Range Officer must ensure that markers are available and that the detail is in a straight line before commencing any standards type exercise.
- h) During the course of fire, where shooters may be instructed and trained, the Range Officer must ensure that this happens safely.

3.5.6 Duties after the shoot:

- a) The Range Officer is responsible to ensure that the range is left neat and tidy and in the same/better condition than before the exercise began.
- b) That all equipment and targets are removed / replaced.
- c) That all flags are removed.

3.5.7 General duties of a Range Officer

- a) The specifications regarding danger and red flags are dealt with in Phase 4, paragraph 4.
- b) The type of shooting range or the shooting range complex will determine the use of flags.
- c) All weapons are to be pointed at the bullet stop when loading or unloading.
- d) No weapons may be handled, cocked or aimed except under command.
- e) The Range Officer is responsible to ensure that the discipline on the range is strict at all times.
- f) The Range Officer is responsible to observe the range at all times and to ensure that no person or animals pass the firing line.
- g) The Range Officer must ensure that all persons understand the proceedings and rules and that the event runs smoothly.
- h) The Range Officer is responsible for all orders given to shooters on the firing point.

Section 4: Range Procedures and Course Design

4.1 Objectives:

After completion of this phase, the trainee must:

- ↳ Know the range procedure and problems that can be encountered.
- ↳ Know the procedure (shooting range drill) to be followed with the different firearms in use.
- ↳ The basic rules of course design as it is prescribed.
- ↳ Be able to discuss the different problems that can be encountered during range procedures.
- ↳ Name the factors to be taken into account when designing a course of fire.
- ↳ Be able to define why training is an important factor that must be taken into account when designing a course of fire
- ↳ Know the standard course of fire and its potential danger areas.

4.2 Range procedure:

4.2.1 Patching and scoring

On a detail shoot, it is advised that spectators should remain at least 5m behind the line and not move up until the "Range is clear" command has been given. Empty cartridges should not be picked up until the range has been declared safe.

4.2.2 The procedure (shooting range drill) to be followed for different firearms.

The procedures for the different firearms in use differ and may change from time to time. The Range Officer must keep up to date with the changes in the drills concerning the respective firearms. It is imperative that these commands should be kept as generic as possible, as not to confuse shooters who may visit other shooting ranges from time to time. These procedures are discussed in:

- (i) Pistol shooting range drill: Appendix A
- (ii) Shotgun shooting range drill: Appendix B
- (iii) Rifle shooting range drill: Appendix C

4.3 Problems that can be encountered during the range procedures:

4.3.1 Malfunctions (Equipment failure)

In the event of a malfunction, the Range Officer may be required to assist the shooter in clearing/correcting the malfunction. The muzzle of the firearm must be pointing down the range at all times. The shooter may place his firearm on the ground, but must remain within one arm's-length of his weapon.

4.3.2 Broken firearms:

If a firearm cannot be unloaded due to a broken or malfunctioning system, the Range Officer will take such action as he thinks best and safest. Under no circumstances may a shooter leave the firing line with a loaded firearm.

4.3.3 Unable to finish course of fire

The Range Officer must afford the shooter every chance to correct a malfunction in order to continue with the course of fire, provided that it is done in safe manner and the action is not against the rules. If the shooter is unable to do so, he must signal the Range Officer, who will then assist the shooter in making the firearm safe.

4.3.4 Movement:

When a shooter is required to move within a course of fire, this movement must be done with the trigger finger outside of the trigger guard. The muzzle of the weapon must be pointed in a safe direction at all times.

4.3.5 Assistance/interference

No assistance/interference, either physical or verbal, except as prescribed, may be given to any shooter after the start signal for the course of fire. The Range Officer is the only person who may assist the shooter at this time.

4.4 Course design:

A properly designed course of fire is the basis of:

- i) of an enjoyable and stimulating shoot,
- ii) which can be conducted safely and without hitch and argument, and
- iii) which sustains the shooter's interest and enthusiasm by challenging his ability without crippling penalties on unrealistic targets.

Course design also determines the development of the sport, and it is particularly in this field, where the Range Officer with the necessary imaginations and ingenuity to design new courses that pose both a new challenges and problems can make a vital contribution.

4.4.1 Factors to be taken into account when planning a course of fire.

There are five aspects, which should be taken into account when designing a course of fire, namely safety, clarity, practicality, variety and training (These are dealt with in more detail below). These aspects should be combined together with other aspects that may improve spectator appeal. If the sport has spectator appeal, it would improve the interest of future sponsors. A vital aspect in obtaining spectator appeal is the use of visual targets that fall over/register when hit. This enables the spectator to follow the progress of the shoot and observe the difference between individual skills.

4.4.1.1 Safety

As has been stressed before, safety is the primary function of the Range Officer, and this is as much a consideration when designing a course of fire. A major factor to be taken into account is the ability of the shooters. With standards type exercises, you often have inexperienced shooters next to "old hands". It is particularly in this exercise where the chances of an Accidental Discharge, and possible injury, is the greatest.

When designing a course of fire, the Range Officer should pay particular interest to the following scenarios as possibly dangerous situations:

- i) Exercises which entail movement from standing to kneeling and to prone position (especially if conducted with more than one shooter on the firing line)
- ii) Exercises where time limits become very tight.

It is not suggested that the above list is the only danger areas, but it is the most common. It is also not suggested that these situations should be avoided, but to keep the competency level of the shooters in mind when incorporating these situations into a course of fire.

4.4.1.2 Clarity

Some courses are sometimes unsatisfactory because the course designer him-/herself was not clear on what he/she hoped to achieve. This happens when there is no planning behind the design of the course. For this reason it is suggested that the course designer go about the design of the course in the following way:

- i) Find a real life situation (in broad outline), which you find adaptable to a course of fire. eg hunting scenarios.
- ii) Analyse the situation and determine what would be the best way to handle the situation.
- iii) Define the standard most suitable to such a situation.
- iv) Design the course on paper.

4.4.1.3 Practicality

- (i) As few restriction as possible should be placed on technique, stance etc. in order not limit the freedom of improvisation. The shooter should rather be asked to solve a given problem as best he/she can.
- (ii) limit forced reloads. Rather let the shooter learn the hard way not to engage targets with an empty gun.
- (iii) Avoid fixed firing positions Allow for freedom of improvisation. This will also cater for different shooters of different shooting capabilities.
- (iv) Try and incorporate technical aspects into the course of fire. This will provide a challenge and force the less experienced shooter to "push" himself and develop.
- (v) The accent should be on shooting, not on:
 - a) athletic feats such as long distance sprinting, scaling walls or crawling underneath obstacles.
 - b) "technicalities" such as stepping over a line by a fraction etc.
 - c) involved, detailed instructions that make the test more on memorising the shooting order than shooting.
- (vi) No restrictions should be placed on the reloading of a weapon.
- (vii) Concealed or partial targets are acceptable.
- (viii) Where penalty targets are utilised, the penalty should preferably be 2 x the highest possible score on the same type of scoring target.
- (ix) The practical challenge should be diverse.
- (x) Use practical targets.

4.4.1.4 Variety

- (i) Avoid stereotype courses. No course should be shot repeatedly ad nauseam and allowed to become a definitive measure of practical skill.
- (ii) On the range, the importance of fun shoots should not be neglected. Balloon-, numbers-, dart board shoots, etc. as well as falling plates, night shoots, etc all help to maintain the interest of members, who may not be contenders on the competitive scene.

4.4.1.5 Training

The purpose of training is:

- i) To improve proficiency in the handling of firearms
- ii) To fix a pattern of automatic reaction... in other words to train the shooter to react sub-consciously.

- iii) To develop engagement logic.

It is therefore imperative that:

- i) exercise shoots are necessary to provide the foundation of shooting proficiency.
- ii) that different shooting disciplines form an integrated whole and should be viewed as such.

To measure the success of training, the Range Officer must keep statistics reflecting the progress that is made. Possibly the best way of keeping statistics, is to keep score-sheets. These statistics must be analysed by the Range Officer, problem areas identified, and courses of fire designed to address these problems.

4.5 Basic rules of course design:

- 4.5.1 Quality:** The value of the practical training is determined by the quality of the challenge and the visible relevance of course design to hypothetical situations requiring the use of a firearm.
- 4.5.2 Balance:** The proper balance of speed and accuracy will depend upon the nature of the test but neither speed nor accuracy will be rewarded without interdependence.
- 4.5.3 Realism:** The practical challenge must be realistic. Courses of fire should always follow a practical scenario (rationale) and stimulate hypothetical situations in which firearms might be used.
- 4.5.4 Diversity:** The practical challenge must be diverse. No single course of fire should be repeated enough to allow its use as a definitive measure of practical skill.
- 4.5.5 Freestyle:** Practical competition is freestyle. No course of fire should be prescriptive in shooting position or stance. Circumstance may be created, which will force a shooter into certain stances.
- 4.5.6 Difficulty:** Courses of fire should assume a graduated difficulty of challenge. No shooting problem or time limit may be protested as inhibitive.

4.6 General:

Course design is more than placing a number of targets around at random, adding elements and ingredients to "spice" it up and picking a scoring system. There should be methods to the madness.

Section 5: Firearms, reloading, bags and rigs

5.1 Firearms:

In this section, we are concerned with the malfunctions in firearms that are likely to occur at the range. The following safety precautions are recommended and shooters should be trained accordingly.

- i) The primary responsibility to ensure his firearm (and ammunition) is in safe working order rests on the shooter. This aspect does fall under the blanket authority of the Range Officer however, and he may declare firearm or ammunition unsafe and it ban it from the range if need be.
- ii) In the interest of the safety, the benefit of the doubt is not given to the shooter. A firearm that malfunctioned is suspect! The Range Officer must satisfy him-/herself completely that it is functioning properly before giving it the "OK"
- iii) You are entitled to rely on the assurance of an experienced shooter that his gun is now in order.
- iv) To satisfy yourself that a gun is in safe working order:
 - a. work the action of the gun by hand with the gun empty.
 - b. If necessary, fire, or have the shooter fire a few shots.
- v) In the case of an inexperienced shooter, the Range Officer should take the malfunctioning/jammed gun from the shooter and clear the malfunction if it seems that the shooter is unsure of what needs to be done. Whether requested or not, explain to the shooter what malfunction occurred, why and demonstrate to him how it was rectified.
- vi) In the case of a detail shoot:
 - a. except in the case of a jam, the shooter should under no circumstances fiddle with the gun. He should simply stand still and raise his weak hand to draw the Range Officer's attention to the problem.
 - b. Once the detail has completed the exercise, the other shooters should be made suitably safe. The shooter with the errant firearm which he should still be holding must be asked to take 1 or 2 paces forward with the Range Officer and must then be given permission to rectify the malfunction.
 - c. Once the malfunction has been rectified, the shooter should then be allowed to continue. The Range Officer should watch the functioning of the firearm closely.

5.2 Possible causes of malfunctions:

5.2.1 Jams

5.2.1.1 Revolvers:

- a) A bullet may be jammed between the cylinder and the barrel straddling the flash gap. This bullet will have to be pushed back into the case and this should not be done in haste on the line.
- b) A small foreign object (shaving of lead, etc.) may be lodged between the cylinder and the barrel. Normally a little force will allow the cylinder to rotate.
- c) Under recoil, an improperly crimped bullet may move forward in the case.
 - i) In the case of a Colt or similar actions, where the cylinder rotates clockwise, the cylinder may be opened and the defective round ejected without problems.
 - ii) In the case of a Ruger/S&W etc. where the round comes from the opposite side, the protruding bullet will have to be pushed back into the case far enough to get past the barrel before the cylinder can be swung out and the round ejected.
 - iii) Proud primers may prevent the cylinder from revolving.

5.2.1.2 Pistols

- a) Normally a jam is the result of a failure to feed or eject. The following steps must be taken:
 - i) Ensure that the gun is pointing down the range. Because of the considerable force sometime necessary to achieve this, a common error is that the shooter may turn the arm in-line with barrel or even turn the gun to point it at another person.
 - ii) Remove the magazine
 - iii) Push the slide back and lock
 - iv) Remove the jammed case or round.
- b) Slide not locking closed is commonly caused by:
 - i) A bullet not seated deeply enough. When attempting to clear the jam, the bullet may remain stuck in the barrel, pulling out the case and spilling the powder into the working parts of the gun. The gun should be cleaned thoroughly before further use.
 - ii) A build-up of foreign matter (dirt, lead, shavings, etc.) against the ridge of the chamber.
 - iii) A loose primer may fall out and prevent the slide from travelling all the way.
 - iv) The case may exceed the chamber dimensions and thus fail to chamber fully. (Casing is bulged)

5.2.1.3 Rifles

- a) faulty ammunition eg no powder and bullet now lodged in barrel
 - . If this is not easily dislodged by tapping with a cleaning rod, then it should be referred to a competent gunsmith to avoid any possible damage to the barrel.

b) OAL of cartridge which creates a jam when the bolt does not close easily, and sometimes results in the bullet becoming lodged in the barrel while the case is pulled free, dumping powder in the action. This should be thoroughly cleaned as in the pistol example above and the bullet removed from the barrel as in a) above.

c) excessive load causing extraction problems – tapping the bolt gently with a plastic hammer or similar should free the problem. If not, then take the firearm to a competent gunsmith to avoid further possible damage to the rifle. The shooter must not be allowed to continue with the same ammunition,

d) broken extractor – tap the cartridge case out with a cleaning rod and suggest the rifle be taken for repairs.

5.2.1.4. Shotguns

a) misfire – if it persists, probably a damaged spring or firing pin, take to gunsmith

b) Failure to extract, check extractor for damage or wear

NOTE, ADDITIONAL NOTES CAN BE INCLUDED HERE if required

5.3 Reloading:

A Range Officer should be familiar with:

- (i) the common principles of reloading; and in particular common or basic mistakes in reloading.
- (ii) the powders currently available on the local market and the safe loads of these for the calibres normally encountered on the range. A Range Officer who is not familiar with the powder load and bullet weight of a certain calibre must under no circumstance advise the shooter in this regard. It is perfectly acceptable to refer the shooter to the reloading tables.
- (iii) identification of heavy loads by sound and by pressure signs on a fired casing.
- (iv) formulae to compute F factor ratings.
- (v) the use and operation of a chronograph.

When a club member starts reloading, the Range Officer should by way of friendly, informal chat, satisfy him-/herself that the new reloader does not constitute a potential danger. A wary eye should also be kept on reloaders who are known to have a tendency to use hot loads.

On the line, the Range Officer should be alert to:

- (i) overloads, including particularly heavy loads in cheap guns.
- (ii) uncharged rounds (puff-loads)

Note: While the experienced shooter will probably immediately detect this, the inexperienced shooter will not and the Range Officer should be alert to this potential problem and stop the shooter immediately if he/she sees a problem. In a detail, detection by sound may be impossible...watch for a shooter who lowers a firearm with a puzzled expression.

- (iii) excessive crimps on auto rounds.
- (iv) split cases

(v) case head separation

5.4 Rigs and bags:

Holsters must be practical and safe.

Bags and holders must be practical and safe

Section 6: Shooting range assessment

6.1 Objectives

After reading this phase, the RO must know:

- ↳ How to plan and prepare a shooting exercise.

6.2 Introduction

There are currently a number of assessment methods. If you have standardised process, it is simple to maintain a specific standard. Such a process must be adaptable to accommodate the needs of all the various role players.

6.3 The assessment process:

The assessment process is divided into 4 elements, which will be discussed separately:

- (i) Purpose/goal
- (ii) Role players
- (iii) Detail information
- (iv) Equipment

6.3.1 Role players

Who is involved?

- Shooter
- Range Officer
- Spectators
- Other personnel

Ask the following question about each of the above mentioned. If you do not have the answers, try and obtain them, as they would assist you with your planning.

- How many are there?
- What are their abilities? (Knowledge of firearms, course design, shooting experience, course safety etc.)
- Will they help you?
- How can they help you?
- Any other information you think you will need?

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6.3.2 Detailed information:

- a) Range authorities -
- b) Time - When will the shooting take place?
- How long will it take?
- c) Weather -
- d) Weapons - Type

- e) Ammunition - Type
- Amount

- f) Detailed tasks - Shooters
- Range Officer
- g) Place - Where is the range?
- Which range?
- h) Exercise - Type

6.3.3 Equipment/Terrain

- (i) Eye protection
- (ii) hearing protection
- (iii) Targets
- (iv) Illumination
- (v) Red flags
- (vi) Tape
- (vii) Staple gun and staples
- (viii) Pliers
- (ix) Target frames
- (x) Fire extinguishers
- (xi) Transport
- (xii) Medical support
- (xiii) Patches
- (xiv) Wire
- (xv) Spade
- (xvi) Whistle
- (xvii) Timer
- (xviii) Score-sheets
- (xix) Communication

What should you know of the above? Considering the purpose and the role players, it can give you an indication of the type of course/exercise. Together with detailed information, it can give you assistance with the equipment you need. Remember that a thorough, timely preparation not only gives a good impression, but the aim of the exercise will be attained as well.

6.4 The Range

What constitutes a safe range is another subject, which is not capable of an exact definition, as there are an infinite number of variable factors that have to be taken into account. Broadly speaking however, the following principles apply:

- (i) Stray shots must not be able to do damage
- (ii) Directed shots must be contained
- (iii) The range must be capable of spectator control.
- (iv) The range, as a danger area, must be clearly defined.

The Range Officer should be capable of assessing the safety of a range, and should be able to advise a club on measures and precautions to be taken in order to ensure the safety of the range and its environment. A Chief Range Officer might inspect a range and request a safety certificate from SAIRO & I. Similarly, a shooting range complex may be inspected and certified by the SAPS.

6.4.1 Stray shots must not be capable of doing damage

6.4.1.1 The situation on the range:

- a. It must be accepted that even on a well-controlled range, a stray shot may from time to time go whistling off into the wild blue yonder. In the bundu, this probably doesn't matter, but most shooting ranges are close to places frequented by people where it does matter.
- b. As a rough but conservative rule of thumb. It may be accepted that a range is safely situated if there is no such "danger point" closer than 4000m behind the backstops (direction of fire).
- c. Although a bullet will not travel this far, it does allow for a margin of safety for persons who move away from the "danger point" towards the danger area.
- d. If the backstop is high enough that a stray bullet can expend its energy in a relatively sharp "critical" angle, the safe area may be proportionally reduced.
- e. Provided that strict control and range discipline is maintained, the safe area in other directions than, other the firing direction, may be less than the distance stipulated above. In practise, it will probably be found that the complaints from noise will in any event ensure that the range is located a safe distance from any built-up areas.

6.4.1.2 Potential danger areas

- a) There are back-roads, tracks and paths in the vicinity of many ranges. These are not in normal use, but where the odd wanderer may be encountered.
- b) This brings us into the realms of "legal considerations", where the "reasonable man" in the form of the Range Officer should have foreseen the possibility of a dangerous situation arising.

6.4.1.3 Directed shots must be contained

- a) Irrespective of any other considerations, such as the location of the range etc, all directed shots (including allowance for a reasonable amount of error)

- should be safely contained within an area, which the Range Officer can control directly. The solution is an effective backstop.
- b) Where shots are fired in more than one direction, e.g. practical shooting, this applies to all directions of fire.
 - c) If a natural barrier is used, it should also be close enough to ensure that:
 - (i) the range officer can at all times see what is between the firing point and the backstop.
 - (ii) it forms a safe area small enough for him to control (e.g. any person in that area will hear/see him if he shouted/waved).
 - d) The backstop should be:
 - (i) high enough to stop any bullets in a direct line from the muzzle to the point of aim with a reasonable amount of safety.
 - (ii) wide enough to stop any bullet in the direction of fire with a reasonable amount of safety, which in this case is taken as 7.5° deviations in either side of the line of fire.
 - (iii) soft enough to absorb any bullet hitting it without damage to the backstop itself by continuous use. Earth is the natural choice.
 - (iv) Obviate any possibility of a ricochet. This means that an earthen backstop should not contain any stone or rock on or near its face.

6.4.2 The range must be capable of spectator control:

- a) This is very much a question of common sense and needs very little discussion.
- b) Spectators inherently constitute a danger, as they are:
 - (i) they are the only non-shooters in the immediate vicinity of the range.
 - (ii) not under the direct control of the Range Officer when they are on the range proper; and
 - (iii) often occupied with something, which draws their attention away from the range and what is happening there, e.g. children playing, bored people moving around etc.
- c) Such people may easily wander into a danger area unless they are confined to a safe area with a safety officer keeping watch.
- d) The safety area should be demarcated in some clear manner.

6.4.3 The range as a danger area must be clearly identifiable

- a) The usual way in which this is done, is by:
 - (i) erecting a permanent notice board with an appropriate warning at all entrances to the range, and
 - (ii) by displaying warning flags whilst the shoot is in progress.
- b) With regard to warning flags, the following principles are applicable:
 - (i) The flags should be clearly identifiable as such. This entails that:
 - (I) They should be a brilliant red colour;
 - (II) large enough to be visible from a distance (a size of 1.2 x 1.8 m is recommended)
 - (III) displayed on a flagpole high enough for the flag to be visible above any visual obstructions.
 - (ii) The flags should be visible from all approaches to the range. The recommended minimum number of flags and positioning of the warning flags is:
 - (I) 1 at the entrance to the range.
 - (II) 1 on either side of the backstop.
 - (III) 1 some distance behind the backstop to indicate the line of fire.
 - (IV) where it is visible from a direction in which a person might be approaching the range on foot or otherwise.
 - (V) where it is recognisable from a distance well outside of the danger zone.
 - (VI) which enables an intruder to retreat in the same direction from he/she came, to cover every possible approach to the range.
- c) Every road, whether used or not, which passes through the danger area, should have a warning flag displayed at a safe distance from the range.

Appendix A: Shooting Range drill

Range commands:

1. “Clear the range”.

It is suggested this command be given prior any other commands. This command would normally be given from the back of the range, whilst the Range Officer is moving to the firing line and inspecting to ensure the range is clear.

2. Declaring the range closed.

Several commands for this action are in use. The most common is listed below. This means that no person is allowed to move from the firing line, unless given permission to do so by the Range Officer in charge. Secondly, no spectator is allowed closer than 10m from the firing line.

i) **“The range is closed”.**

This command is common and used by SAPS, SANDF and most security companies as well as IPSC sports.

3. Explaining the exercise.

The exercise is explained to the shooters in detail. Shooters should acknowledge that they understand the shoot.

4. Loading.

Several commands for this action are in use. The most common is listed below. Upon command, the shooter will present his/her firearm, load with the necessary safety precautions and get ready to shoot.

i) **“Facing down the range, you may load and make ready”.**

ii) **“Draw, load, lock and holster”** in the case of a handgun

5. Command to fire

Depending on the type of shoot, some will be started by an audible signal, whistle, etc, and may be stopped in the same way. The course of fire and procedure will depend upon the exercise. Once the shooter has completed the exercise, he/she reapplies the safety catch and lowers the firearm (barrel facing down the range) and wait for the next command. This command may differ (refer to point 6).

6. “Unload and hold for inspection”

Several commands for this action are in use. The most common is listed below. This will encompass an inspection of each firearm by the Range Officer.

- i) If you are finished, unload and show clear.
- ii) Unload and show clear.
- iii) Unload and declare.
- iv) Unload.

Upon this command, the shooter will:

- Remove the magazine
- Cock the slide open and apply the slide stop, if necessary.

- Inspect the chamber and body and remove any rounds if they had not been ejected.
- Hold the firearm for inspection, whilst pointing the muzzle safely down the range.

It is suggested that the Range Officer examines every firearm individually, rather than having the shooters declare their firearms safe, especially with inexperienced shooters. Most Range Officers prefer to insert a finger into the firearm's mag-well to ensure no magazine is present, since "the gun is black, the mag is black and the hole is black"

7. Ease spring and holster or bag

After the Range Officer has inspected the firearm and is satisfied that it is safe, he will give the command:

- i) Slide forward, hammer down and holster.
- ii) Close the bolt and release the firing pin and bag the weapon
- iii) Bag the weapon

Upon receipt of this command, the shooter will oblige accordingly.

8. Declaring the Range safe

The range is declared safe by the Range Officer and allows the shooters, helpers and spectators to score and patch. No shooter may approach his/her targets within 2 meters (especially in competitions) and may definitely not touch the target before the score has been taken. The most common commands are:

- i) **"The range is clear"**
- ii) **"The range is safe"**

9. "Cease fire"

This command is given as an emergency measure. It may be accompanied by the blowing of a whistle. Once this command is given, the shooters must cease-fire immediately, engage the safety catch on the weapon and holster or unload and put down the weapon. Depending on the situation, the Range Officer will direct the shooter further.

10 Immediate action drill in case of a stoppage:

Cock/reload and continue. If the weapon still refuses to fire, inspect it. Identify the stoppage and rectify the cause.

If the firearm is considered unserviceable then unload and holster or bag it.

Notes

