



COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING

PRE-MATCH CHECKLIST



FIREARMS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pistols (two)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rifle
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shotgun
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other(s) _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

GENERAL

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cash (for match fee)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooler
<input type="checkbox"/>	Change of Cloths
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

GUN CART

<input type="checkbox"/>	Ammo (Typical of a 6 Stage Match)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pistol - 70 rounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rifle - 70 rounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shotgun - 50 shells
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brass Bag (for empty brass)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Umbrella
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chair or Stool
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pen and paper
<input type="checkbox"/>	Camera &/or Camcorder
<input type="checkbox"/>	Towel(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Snacks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gun Covers (i.e. trash bags)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gun Cleaning Kit
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning Patches
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rags
<input type="checkbox"/>	Solvent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gun Oil
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bore Brush
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chamber Brush (for side by sides)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning Rod
<input type="checkbox"/>	Screwdriver Set
<input type="checkbox"/>	Range Bag
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eye Protection (Ballistic Wrap Around)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hearing Protection
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ammo Loading Block or Box
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

CLOTHING

<input type="checkbox"/>	Cowboy Hat
<input type="checkbox"/>	Costume Shirt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Costume Pants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Costume Foot Wear (boots, brogans, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Socks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gloves (cold weather &/or work)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gun Leather
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gun Belt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pistol Holsters
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ammo Slide (if no loops on gun belt)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shotgun Ammo Belt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shotgun Ammo Slide (if needed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prescription Glasses (if needed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bandana or Wild Rag (if needed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Suspenders (if needed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Knife
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pocket Watch (if needed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	SASS Badge
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raingear
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

OPTIONAL PERSONAL ITEMS

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

This check list is meant to be customized for each shooters specific needs. This is just a guide for new shooters. This Checklist can be downloaded from the "FILES" section of SASS Florida:

<http://facebook.com/groups/SASSFLfiles/>

SASS Florida Monthly Match Schedule

○ TRAVIS J. WALKER · SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2019 ·

This is a list of the Florida SASS clubs match schedules listed in alphabetical order by week number.

FIRST SATURDAY

- **Gold Coast Gunslingers** (Main Match) - *Sunrise, FL*
- **Panhandle Cattle Company** - (4 stage CAS/ WBAS) - *Chipley, FL*
- **Roughshod Raiders** ****new date**** - *Gainesville, FL*
- **Weewahootee Vigilance Committee** - *Orlando, FL*

FIRST SUNDAY

- **Ghost Town Gunslingers** - *St. Augustine, FL* (Oct - May)
- **Hernando County Regulators** - *Brooksville, FL*

SECOND SATURDAY

- **Antelope Junction Rangers** - *Clearwater, FL*
- **Fort White Cowboy Cavalry** - *Fort White, FL*
- **Okeechobee Marshals** - *Sebastian, FL*
- **Red Hills Rangers** - *Midway, FL*

SECOND SUNDAY

- **Fort White Cowboy Cavalry** ****new date**** (Wild Bunch Action Shooting) - *Fort White, FL*
- **Panhandle Cowboys** - *Cantonment, FL*
- **Tater Hill Gunfighters** - *Arcadia, FL*

THIRD SATURDAY

- **Big Bend Bushwhackers** - *Woodville, FL*
- **Lake County Pistoleros** - *Tavares, FL*
- **Southwest Florida Gunslingers** - *Punta Gorda, FL*
- **Valdosta Vigilance Committee** ****new date**** - *Valdosta, GA*

THIRD SUNDAY

- **Cowford Regulators** (EDC - Home Defense) - *Jacksonville, FL*
- **Gold Coast Gunslingers** (Mid-Month Practice Match) - *Sunrise, FL*
- **Lake County Pistoleros** ****new date**** (Wild Bunch Action Shooting) - *Tavares, FL*
- **Miakka Misfits** - *Myakka City, FL* (Sept - May)

FOURTH SATURDAY

- **Cowford Regulators** - *Jacksonville, FL*
- **Fort White Cowboy Cavalry** (EDC/ Home Defense) - *Fort White, FL*
- **Hatbill Gang** ****new date**** - *Titusville, FL*
- **OK Corral Outlaws** - *Okeechobee, FL*
- **Panhandle Cattle Company** - *Chipley, FL*

FOURTH SUNDAY

- **Doodle Hill Regulators** - *Ruskin, FL* (Sept - May)
- **Five County Regulators** - (Wild Bunch Action Shooting) - *Punta Gorda, FL*

FIFTH SATURDAY

- **Fort White Cowboy Cavalry** ****new date**** (Rimfire Ruckus) - *Fort White, FL*

For more detailed info including range addresses and contact info please see SASS Florida's comprehensive list. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/sass-florida/sass-florida-clubs-list-and-info/1147107602134358/>

The Magnificent Seven

1. Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded
2. Never let the muzzle of a firearm break the 170° rule
3. Be sure of your target and what is beyond
4. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire
5. Firearms remain unloaded outside of the normal course of fire – loading table to unloading table (Cold range)
6. Treat all firearms with RESPECT
7. SPEAK UP!



The 170° rule – Common Sense Approach

Posted 05 July 2011 - 01:16 PM by PaleWolf Brunelle
(edited 05JUN2018 – UPDATE DOC REFERENCES)

The 170° rule, by definition, DOES NOT always apply to/from/at the loading/unloading tables. This is due to the wide variations in range/stage setups...it does on some ranges, if they are on a common firing line with the stage itself (e.g. LT / STAGE1 / ULT...LT / STAGE2 / ULT...).

The 170° Rule

The 170° rule means the muzzle of a firearm must always be straight **down range** (+/- 85° in any direction). Muzzle direction and muzzle control is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. The 170° rule is the backbone of all safe firearm handling and is always in effect.

- A muzzle must not be allowed to “sweep” the other participants at any time.
- Long guns shall have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and **muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match.**
- A holstered revolver (loaded or empty) with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended case is considered safe and may not be interpreted as sweeping another shooter while safely secured in the holster.
- Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for a **Stage Disqualification** penalty assessment, and for repeat offenses, a Match Disqualification penalty.

NOTE: An obvious exception to this rule exists, where the shooter is given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from approved, legal holsters without penalty. Further exception is given when retrieving and returning vertically staged double barrel shotguns without penalty

SHB p.17

170° Safety Rule - means the muzzle of the firearm must always be pointed **down range** +/- 85 degrees in any direction.

SHB "Glossary of Terms" p.42

“Muzzle up, please move to the Unloading Table” Should be stated at the end of a shooting sequence/stage to guide the shooter. Often the competitor stops thinking. (Adrenaline!)

“Range Clear” This command is given only after the shooter has completed their run, the revolvers are holstered, the long guns are picked up and **pointed in a safe direction** with the actions open, and the shooter is on the way to the unloading area. It is now safe to gather brass and prepare for the next shooter in line.

RO1 p.41

- The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained in a safe direction at all times (generally “up” and slightly downrange).

SHB p.16

The "*problem*" seems to be the parenthetical "*generally "up" and slightly down range*" as a definition of suggested "safe direction"... It should be obvious that the reference to "*slightly down range*" applies primarily DURING the stage engagement...if the muzzle of a firearm is pointed straight UP during the 'course of fire' (i.e. @ 180°), the shooter is in violation of the 170° rule. Once the stage has ended & the shooter is headed to the ULT, there are often personnel DOWN range (e.g. setting targets/picking brass)...at that point, "*slightly downrange*" might not necessarily be a "best practice" (depending on range/stage layout).

COMMON SENSE should be used to determine the safest direction to point muzzles when moving from the LT to the stage & from the stage to the ULT. UP has already been determined to be considered acceptable. The PRIMARY consideration is to avoid SWEEPING anyone with the muzzle of ANY firearm at ANY time.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

SECTION 3 – PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

SPIRIT OF THE GAME

As the game of Cowboy Action Shooting™ has evolved, our members have developed and adopted an attitude toward their participation we call the “Spirit of the Game.” When a shooter has Spirit of the Game, it means one fully participates in what the competition asks. You do not look for ways to create an advantage out of what is, or is not, stated as a rule or shooting procedure. Some folks would call Spirit of the Game nothing more than good sportsmanship. Whatever you call it, if you don't have it, Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not your game.

A “Spirit of the Game” infraction occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage (e.g., taking the penalty would result in a lower score or faster time than following the instructions). In such case, a 30-second Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed, in addition to any penalties for misses, procedurals, and minor safety violations. It is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity is also a “Spirit of the Game” infraction. Two “Spirit of the Game” infraction penalties within a match result in a Match Disqualification penalty.

PARTICIPANT CONDUCT

Safety

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident may occur. Every participant in a SASS match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct. All shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe. Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed, unsafe situation. It is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter will result in that shooter being ejected from the range. Please refer to the Safety Rules section of this handbook for all Safety Rules. Participants must also:

- Treat and respect every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Safe firearm handling is the shooters responsibility. Refer to the Safety section for all firearm handling safety rules.
- All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times.
- SASS matches are not the forums in which to learn basic firearms handling.
- Movement is not allowed with a loaded round under the hammer of any firearm. Movement is defined by the basketball “traveling” rule. Whenever a shooter has a loaded round under the hammer of a firearm in hand, at least one foot must remain in place on the ground. The first violation will result in a Stage Disqualification penalty. The second violation will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment. Note: Shuffling the feet to maintain balance or adjust the shooting stance is allowed as long as the shooter does not actually change location.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- Leaving the Loading Area with a cocked/loaded Rifle: In such instances, the shooter will be directed to point the rifle safely downrange, bring the hammer to full cock if it is in the half-cock/safety position, then pull the trigger. If no round is fired, the shooter will be directed to finish staging firearms in order to start the stage (No Call). If a round fires when the shooter pulls the trigger, the shooter will be assessed a STAGE DQ and directed to proceed to the unloading table.
- "Shooting on the move" or "step shooting" is expressly disallowed. See rules for the safe condition of firearms for movement.
- Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guests, range officers, and others, until all shooting is done for the day. No shooter may consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.
- No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non-prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.

Personal

In addition to the safety rules mentioned above, participants are expected to follow these rules of conduct:

- The Shooter must obey all range commands given by the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator.
- Once a shooter is committed to the stage (when the first round actually leaves the barrel) the shooter must remain on the stage until it is completed, and the shooter has moved to the unloading area to clear all firearms.
- Any shooter, guest, or match official who uses foul language, is disrespectful, offensive, rude, or becomes belligerent or threatening in any manner will be disqualified from the event and, at the discretion of the Match Director, may be required to leave the property.
- Interpersonal conflicts will not be tolerated.
- Good Sportsmanship best defines "The Spirit of the Game." Be a good sport. Have fun.

Failure to Engage

A "failure to engage" penalty occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not assessed simply because a competitor "makes a mistake." A "failure to engage" applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions. In such case, a 30-second "failure to engage" penalty is assessed in addition to any penalties for misses, procedural, or minor safety infractions.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

SECTION 4 – RANGE OPERATIONS & SAFETY RULES

“Conventions” refer to standard range behaviors and rules that every shooter is expected to know and follow at all times. ALL SASS Safety conventions are not negotiable and shall never be overruled by match design or shooting course descriptions. Stage Conventions are standard default rules unless otherwise directed by stage design/description (e.g., knockdown targets must go down to count).

STAGE CONVENTIONS

The following stage conventions (stage defaults) **should be followed in all SASS matches**, unless otherwise directed in the stage descriptions.

- All shotgun knockdown targets may be reengaged until down.
- All knockdown targets (shotgun, rifle, or revolver) must go down to count.
 - o Any knockdown target still standing once the shooter has engaged the next sequence of the stage will be counted as a miss.
 - o **EXCEPTION:** For Buckaroo/Buckarette shooters knockdown targets do not have to go down to count.
- If no starting position is given, the shooter shall stand **upright** with revolvers holstered, hands at the sides, and not touching any firearm. (SASS default).
- Cowboy port-arms is defined as standing upright with the butt of the long gun at or below the waist of the shooter, the muzzle at or above the shoulder, and the long gun held with both hands.
- In the event a target fails or is downed, the shooter should “shoot where it was.” For safety reasons a target on the ground should never be engaged.
- In the case of a suspected squib, the CRO/TO will instruct the shooter to make the firearm safe and continue with the next firearm. If the barrel is later determined to be clear, the shooter will receive a reshoot.

FIREARM CONVENTIONS

Safety & Handling Conventions – Revolvers

- Six-shot revolvers may be loaded at the loading table with a maximum of five rounds and the hammer lowered and resting on the empty chamber.
- Five-shot revolvers may load five rounds, but the hammer must rest on a dummy chamber or safety slot/pin in the cylinder to avoid the hammer resting on a live round/cap.
- If a particular stage requires a one shot reload, the sixth chamber of percussion revolvers may be charged at the bench and then capped “on the clock” either before the first round is fired or after the last round is fired. A complete reload for percussion revolver shooters is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping on the clock.
- Percussion revolvers must only be capped at the loading table or while on the course of fire. The cap over a nipple must never be seated using the percussion revolver’s own hammer. The Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO) shall require any misfires to be cleared on the firing line by either recapping and firing that chamber, or by uncapping the misfired chamber.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- A cocked revolver may never leave a shooter's hand, including from one hand to the other. This does not apply when loading or reloading on the firing line.
- Cowboy Action Shooting is NOT a fast-draw competition. Any unsafe handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any "fanning" to shoot a revolver is strictly forbidden. Slip-hammering is not the same as fanning and is legal.
- Revolvers are drawn and used in accordance with the shooter's category.
- Only Gunfighters and B-Western categories allow two loaded revolvers "in hand" at the same time. This may be corrected in regard to any other categories before cocking either one without penalty.
- Revolvers are returned to leather (re-holstered in a safe condition) at the conclusion of the shooting string, unless the stage description specifically directs otherwise (e.g., "move to the next position and set gun on table or prop"). A shooting string is defined as shots from one type of firearm prior to the next type of firearm engaged.
- No firearm may be de-cocked on the firing line to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location once a round has gone downrange. Once a revolver is cocked, the round must be expended (shot). However, if a round has not gone downrange, **and under the direction and supervision** of the CRO/TO, the revolver may be de-cocked. This requires a positive indication/acknowledgement from the TO for the shooter to do so. (See also "Double Jeopardy" avoidance in Safety & Handling Conventions – All Firearms)
- When drawing a Revolver from its holster, the revolver may not be cocked until it is pointed safely downrange (at a 45° angle downrange).

Leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a Miss penalty. However, if a live round is under the hammer, a Stage Disqualification penalty is assessed.

Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Revolvers

Revolvers are considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while holstering, or while moving through a stage) and SAFE to leave the shooter's hand in the following conditions ONLY:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber.
- Hammer fully down on an expended round. A revolver may not be originally staged in this condition, but may be restaged in this condition.
- GUNFIGHTER shooting style considerations: When shooting Gunfighter style, a gunfighter may not holster revolvers with the intent to engage another sequence. (See Gunfighter Rules).

Safety & Handling Conventions – Rifles

- Rifles may be staged with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer fully down on the empty chamber (NOT the safety notch), with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction (adheres to the 170° rule).
- The muzzle is never initially staged on the ground.
- Rifles will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing in a safe direction. If the action of a rifle closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the CRO/TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the long gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- If the rifle is the last firearm used (**NOT** recommended), it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooters hand(s) at the unloading area. (This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made safe, and then restaged for further use.)
- Once a rifle is cocked, either the round under the hammer must be expended (shot) or the action opened in order for the rifle to be returned to a safe condition.
- Unfired, ejected rifle rounds may be replaced (reloaded) on the clock.

Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Rifles

A rifle is considered SAFE to leave the shooter's hands in the following condition only:

- Empty.
- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or spent round, action closed (restaged for further use).

A rifle is considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition only:

- Hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended round, action closed.
- Action open, round on carrier or in chamber.

Safety & Handling Conventions – Shotguns

- Shotguns are always staged open and empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter's hands.
- Mule eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooters hands.
- Shotgun targets may be re-engaged until down, unless otherwise specified by the stage description.
- Shotgun shells may be removed without penalty to return the firearm to a safe condition.
- Shotguns will be cleared and discarded with their barrels pointing in a safe direction. If the action closes after being cleared, the shooter will, at the conclusion of the stage, show it to be clear to the CRO/TO. No person other than the competitor may handle the gun prior to opening the action and showing it to be clear.

Safe Conditions During a Course of Fire – Shotguns

A shotgun is considered SAFE to leave the shooter's hands in the following condition only:

- Empty.

A shotgun is considered SAFE for movement (in hand, while moving through a stage) in the following condition only:

- Action open, round in chamber or on carrier.
- Hammer(s) fully down on an empty chamber(s) or expended round(s), action closed.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

Safety & Handling Conventions – All Firearms

- All staged firearms must have their barrels pointed in a safe direction.
- All long guns initially staged on a horizontal surface shall be staged lying flat where at least the rear of the trigger guard is on the staging area.
- All handguns initially staged on a horizontal flat surface must be staged with the entire handgun on the staging surface.
- All firearms will remain unloaded except while under direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.
- The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained in a safe direction at all times (generally “up” and slightly downrange).
- As long as the shooter has contact with the firearm, it is considered in their control.
- If a shooter trips and falls during the course of fire, provided no safety rules have been violated, the shooter will be allowed to regroup and continue the course of fire.
- Any unloaded firearm dropped during a stage will result in a Stage Disqualification penalty assessment. This does not apply to holstered revolvers that remain “in leather” in the event of an equipment failure (e.g., broken belt buckle) causing the gun belt or ammo belt to fall. Shooter may safely recover a fallen gun/ammo belt and continue finishing the stage without penalty or wait until finishing the stage for retrieval.
- Any dropped loaded firearm will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment.
 - o A shooter should not be allowed to pick up a dropped firearm. The CRO/TO should recover the firearm, examine it, clear it (if necessary), return it to the shooter, and assess the appropriate penalty.
 - o This does not apply to holstered revolvers that remain “in leather” in the event of an equipment failure (e.g., broken belt buckle) causing the gun belt or ammo belt to fall. Shooter may safely recover a fallen gun/ammo belt and continue finishing the stage without penalty or wait until finishing the stage for retrieval.
- If a firearm is shot out of sequence or from the wrong position or location, the shooter will be assessed a single procedural penalty. In this situation, if the shooter elects or is forced to miss an appropriate target due to unsafe angles or target availability, a round may be reloaded to avoid a miss penalty assessment (the dreaded “Double Jeopardy” of a procedural and a miss). This does not mean a shooter may reload a rifle or revolver at any other time to make up a miss.
- If a competitor has a firearm malfunction that cannot be cleared during the course of fire, the shooter may not leave the firing line until the firearm has been cleared. A Match Disqualification penalty will be assessed to the shooter if they leave the firing line with the malfunctioning firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match official.
- Long guns will be emptied and discarded with their barrels pointed safely downrange. This condition may be corrected on the clock, prior to the next round being fired. If the long gun is not discarded empty prior to the next firearm being fired, only the shooter may return to open and/or clear the firearm at the end of

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

the stage under the observation of the CRO/TO. Should an empty casing/hull be ejected or found in the action or chamber, or a live round on the carrier of an open action, a Minor Safety Violation (MSV) will be assessed. However, if the action is opened, and a live/unfired round is ejected, a Stage DQ (SDQ) will be assessed for a long gun with a "live round under a cocked hammer having left the shooter's hands". In this case, there is no opportunity to correct this condition before firing the next firearm, as the penalty takes effect upon leaving the shooter's hands.

- If the long gun is the last firearm used, it must be cleared prior to it leaving the shooters hand(s) at the unloading area.
- This does not apply to firearms shot out of sequence, made safe, and then restaged.

SAFETY

The Magnificent Seven

- 1- Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
- 2- Never let the muzzle of a firearm break the 170° rule.
- 3- Be sure of your target and what is beyond.
- 4- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
- 5- Firearms remain unloaded outside of the normal course of fire — loading area to unloading area.
- 6- Treat all firearms with respect.
- 7- Speak Up.

The 170° Rule

The 170° rule means the muzzle of a firearm must always be straight down range (+/- 85° in any direction). Muzzle direction and muzzle control is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. The 170° rule is the backbone of all safe firearm handling and is always in effect.

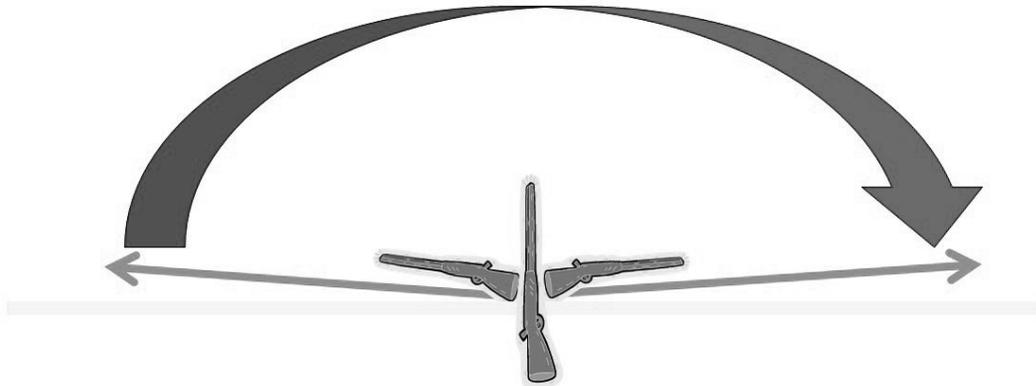
- A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants at any time.
- Long guns shall have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match.
- A holstered revolver (loaded or empty) with the hammer fully down on an empty chamber or expended case is considered safe and may not be interpreted as sweeping another shooter while safely secured in the holster.
- Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for a Stage Disqualification penalty assessment, and for repeat offenses, a Match Disqualification penalty.

NOTE: An obvious exception to this rule exists, where the shooter is given the ability to draw and holster revolvers from approved, legal holsters without penalty. Further exception is given when retrieving and returning vertically staged double barrel shotguns without penalty

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

The 170° Rule



170° rule means that the muzzle of firearm must always be straight down range +/- 85° in any direction

Safety Officers/Chief Range Officers – CRO (Timer Operator – TO)

The role of the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO) is to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire. Coaching and constraining the shooter from unsafe acts are expected when appropriate, minimizing procedural and safety penalties whenever possible. Proper coaching or no coaching at all is NOT considered RO interference and will never be grounds for a reshoot.

Failure to stage firearms or ammunition at the designated position(s)/location(s) is the fault of the competitor and scored as a procedural unless the competitor is able to correct the situation unassisted, while in the process of completing the stage under time. The penalty of using “illegally acquired” ammunitions (i.e., NOT carried to the line/staged by the shooter in an approved manner) is a PROCEDURAL. Any targets hit using that ammo are scored as MISSES. NO adjustments will be made to the stage raw time.

It is expected the Chief Range Officer will be the responsible party for resolving all safety related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. However, as all shooters are considered Safety Officers, any shooter who observes a safety infraction not witnessed by the CRO should call the infraction to a CRO's attention, at which time the matter will be resolved.

Range Commands

Standard Range Commands are the most efficient way to run a shooting line and are used in almost every established shooting sport. As a matter of safety, all shooters are required to obey all range commands given by the CRO/TO. For a more in-depth understanding of range commands, schedule your SASS RO 1 Course today.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

IMPORTANT COMMON RANGE COMMANDS

- **“Cease Fire” or “STOP!”** – The command called out by the CRO/TO or any witnessing Range Officer/Match Official at any time an unsafe condition develops. The shooter must stop shooting and stop moving immediately. Willful failure to comply to a Cease Fire or Stop command given by, and while under the control of the CRO/TO will result in a Match Disqualification penalty assessment.
- **“Muzzle!”** – This command quickly and efficiently warns the shooter their muzzle is getting close to the 170° and should be pointed in a safe direction (back down range).
- **“Down Range”** – This command is announced prior to anyone proceeding down range for any reason], including to reset or repair targets. When a “Down Range” command is announced, all participants at both the loading and unloading areas should cease firearm loading/unloading. Common practice is to raise hands in the air as a visual confirmation that no firearms are being handled while someone is down range.

SASS Range Safety Courses – RO-I & RO-II

For a more in-depth understanding and discussion of all SASS Practices, including Range Operations, Match Roles, Rules, Procedures, and Penalties, SASS encourages ALL shooters to schedule and attend at a minimum the SASS RO-I Course early in their Cowboy Action Shooting™ journey. Additionally, you will learn the fundamentals for all match positions that serve a critical function in the fair, efficient, and SAFE execution of a match. SASS RO Classes are presented by SASS certified Instructors and can be scheduled through your local club(s).

MATCH PROCEDURES & STANDARDS

Range Operations

Cowboy Action Shooting™ is not intended to be a precision shooting competition. Small targets and long distances take the “action” out of the game and make it more discouraging for newer shooters.

Both experienced and inexperienced shooters want hits on their targets. Some folks just hit (or miss) a little faster than others. Too many misses, or the perception that targets are too difficult to hit, discourages folks from continuing to play, especially less proficient shooters.

Ask any experienced Cowboy Action Shooter, and he or she will tell you there is no such thing as a target too big or too close to miss!

While a more detailed guide to match design and administration is available in the official SASS Match Directors Guide, there are no absolute rules when it comes to target placement.

- Steel (and paper) targets of generous size are used.
- Reactive targets such as pepper poppers and falling plates are used when practical to enhance shooter feedback and spectator appeal.
- Targets are set at close to medium range. While there are no absolute rules, the following are distance recommendations by firearm, if using a target size of approximately 16"x16":
 - o Revolver targets: 7 to 10 yards.
 - o Shotgun targets: 8 to 16 yards.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- Rifle targets: 13 to 50 yards.
- Derringer/Pocket Pistol – point blank to 3 yards **when shooting paper, cardboard, or balloons only**. It's too close to safely shoot steel.

As the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting™ continues to evolve, Match Directors across the world react to and serve shooting scenarios and target placement in response to their shooters demands and enjoyment of the match. As such, most club and matches are using much closer target placement than the above example, increasing the “fun factor” for their shooters.

If closer than recommended target distances are used, the target faces must be appropriately angled toward the ground in order to eliminate most “splash back” due to the proximity of targets. The condition of the steel/target faces must also be considered, in that target faces should have no dimpling or damage and should be flat (not convex or concave).

To the extent possible, reactive targets should be set to fall when squarely hit with no more than a standard .38 Special factory load.

No Alibi/Reshoots/Restarts

SASS matches above the club level are “no alibi” matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability.

- Reshoots are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, failure of the timer, or Range Officer interference) beyond the competitor's control, a reshoot may be granted.
- On a reshoot, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties forward.
- The Match Director has the authority to override an “RO assisted” MSV penalty for a reshoot.
- Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start, before the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the CRO/TO are seen to be “taking advantage,” will not be entertained as they are not in the Spirit of the Game.

Match Roles & Match Terms

This section is a very basic, summarized listing and definition of Match roles, Match Officials, and terms. For a more in-depth understanding regarding all match roles and the crucial function they serve at any match, please attend a SASS RO 1 Course.

- **Posse** – A group of shooters scheduled to shoot through all stages together during the course of a match.
- **Match Director** – is in charge of the overall match and is required to ensure qualified officials are in place in all competition areas. The Match Director is typically the stage writer/designer of the match and has the authority to override an “RO-assisted” MSV penalty for a reshoot.
- **Range Master** – is in charge of and oversees all stages and ensures qualified officials are in place on all stages. He or she reviews all stages and ensures they are designed and constructed to operate in a safe manner for both competitors and officials.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- **Match RO** – acts as an intermediary between Posse Marshals and the Range Master in resolving issues regarding the application of rules/penalties.
- **Posse Marshal/Deputy Posse Marshal** – is in charge of a posse and is required to ensure all posse positions are manned to safely and efficiently run the posse through each course of fire, ensuring all rules and regulations are followed.
- **Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO)** – is the Chief Range Officer (CRO) for the stage and is in charge of the firing line as long as he/she is running the timer and has the primary objective to safely assist the shooter through the course of fire.
- **Spotters/Counters** – have the responsibility to count shots and misses and to verify targets were engaged in the correct order for the required number of shots. A minimum of three spotters are required – majority 2/3 breaks any ties in regards to misses.
- **Scorekeeper** – records the times and penalties appropriately for each contestant on the provided score sheets for each stage.
- **Loading Table Officer** – is responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are loaded with only the correct number of rounds, verify no round is ever under the firing pin of any firearm, and all loaded firearms' hammers are fully down on an empty chamber.
- **Unloading Table Officer** – is responsible for visually checking to ensure all firearms are unloaded (clear) at the completion of the shooting stage.

Penalties Overview

There are five types of Penalties in SASS matches: 5-second penalties, 10-second penalties, Stage Disqualification penalties, Match Disqualification penalties, and Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game penalties. For a more in-depth understanding of all penalties, please attend a SASS RO 1 Course.

5-SECOND PENALTIES

Misses are 5-Second penalties. Revolver, rifle, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type of firearm. A MISS is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type of firearm and includes:

- Each missed target.
- Each unfired round.
- Inadvertently left rounds in a revolver are misses, unless there is an unfired round under the hammer, in which case it is a Stage DQ.
- Each target hit with an incorrect firearm – either intentionally or by mistake.
- Each target hit with illegally acquired ammunition.

10-SECOND PENALTIES

10-second penalties include “Procedural” (P) penalties and Minor Safety Violations (MSV). Procedural errors are simple, unintentional mistakes made as a result of “brain fade” or confusion, where the competitor engages the stage in a way other than how it was intended. Procedural penalties cannot exceed one per stage. Minor Safety Violations (MSV) are lesser safety infractions that do not directly endanger persons.

Procedural (P) infractions include:

- Failure to attempt to fire a firearm, engage a prop, or perform a stage maneuver.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- Shooting targets in the wrong order.
- Engaging the stage in the wrong order.
- Use of illegally acquired ammunition.
- Not returning revolvers to leather (unless otherwise specified).
- First offense in the same match for “shooting out of category.”

Minor Safety Violation (MSV) infractions include:

- Leaving empty or live round(s) in a magazine, action, or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded.
- Open, empty long guns that slip and fall – but do not break the 170° safety rule or sweep anyone.
- Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45° down range.

STAGE DISQUALIFICATION PENALTY (SDQ)

A Stage Disqualification (SDQ or “Stage DQ”) is generally a safety violation of a more serious nature, and means the competitor’s time and performance on the course of fire is disqualified as a result of the violating action by the shooter.

- Shooting on the move (continuous, fluid movement while engaging targets).
- Any dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line.
- Long guns that slip, fall, and break the 170°.
- Violation of the 170° Safety Rule/Failure to maintain appropriate muzzle control.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or non-expendable stage prop 5 – 10 feet from the shooter.
- Returning a revolver to leather with the hammer not fully down on a spent round or empty chamber.
- A cocked revolver leaving the shooters hand.
- Staging or discarding a long gun containing a live round in the chamber (once it leaves the shooter’s hands).
- Second offense, in the same match, for “shooting out of category.”
- Changing location/moving with a live round under a cocked hammer or firearm with the hammer down on a live round.
- Changing location with a long gun with the action closed and the hammer cocked (exception for rifle from the loading table to the stage with no round chambered).
- Unsafe firearm handling.
- Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line.
- Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm.
- Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round.
- Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm.
- Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures.
- Leaving the firing line once the stage has begun for any reason.
- Dry firing at the loading or unloading areas.
- De-cocking a revolver, rifle, or hammered shotgun *without* positive direction to do so from the CRO/TO.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

MATCH DISQUALIFICATION PENALTIES (MDQ)

A Match Disqualification (MDQ or "Match DQ") penalty is of the most serious in nature, and means the shooter puts his/her firearms away and is done shooting for the duration of the match.

- Two accumulated Spirit of the Game assessments.
- Two accumulated SDQ penalties (even on the same stage). *This does not apply to a single action that carries multiple penalties (e.g. breaking the 170° with an unloaded firearm AND simultaneously sweeping someone).
- Belligerent attitude or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Willful failure to comply with a "Cease Fire" or "Stop" command given by, and while under the positive control of the CRO/TO.
- Shooting under the influence of alcohol, prescription drugs, or any substance or medication that may impair the shooter's physical or mental abilities.
- A shooter leaving the firing line with an un-cleared, malfunctioning firearm unless under the direct supervision of a Match Official.
- Shooting illegal ammunition (e.g., Ammo that exceeds the max velocities and ringed or necked shotgun shells. This does not include ammo that does not meet the power factor).
- Dropping a loaded firearm.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than five feet from the shooter.
- Any discharge at the loading or unloading areas.
- Any discharge that is deemed unsafe.
- Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm.
- Third offense, in the same match, for "shooting out of category."
- Interpersonal conflicts.

FAILURE TO ENGAGE/SPIRIT OF THE GAME

A Failure to Engage or a Spirit of the Game infraction carries a 30 second penalty. The accumulation of two Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game penalties in the same match results in a Match Disqualification Penalty.

- Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage (Spirit of the Game).
- Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor or minimum velocity. The penalty is applied for each stage a competitor is checked and their ammunition is found to not meet the power factor or minimum velocity (Spirit of the Game).
- Willfully refusing to make an attempt to complete any non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions (Failure to Engage).

ASSESSING PENALTIES AND PROTESTS

During the course of fire, a shooter may on occasion incur penalties which need to be assessed. The immediate authority on the stage to that end is the Chief Range Officer/Timer Operator (CRO/TO), assisted by the input of the spotters. The scope of assessing penalties includes safety violations, procedural errors, appropriate completion of stage activities, illegal firearms and equipment, appropriate ammunition, appropriate dress, and other category specific requirements such as the adequate production of smoke in the blackpowder

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

categories. The CRO/TO may unilaterally assign penalties for safety violations and procedural errors when they have clearly occurred (this does not include assessing misses). Assessing misses is purely in the purview of the spotters.

In the event a competitor feels a CRO/TO's ruling is in error or has been unfairly assessed, and the firearms have been made safe and unloaded, the ruling may be **politely** and **calmly** appealed, initially to the CRO/TO and/or Posse Marshal, and **only by the competitor** involved. The discussion should be taken off the firing line so as not to incur any delays in the shooting flow, **involving only those officials** on the line at that time and the shooter (the shooter, CRO/TO and spotters). The CRO/TO must remain completely objective, consider the facts and evidence as it is, and must be prepared to discuss the details addressing any questions the shooter may have. Recorded video/audio or photographic data will never be allowed to be presented as evidence in either regard. Remember: The benefit of any doubt always goes to the shooter. Competitors are typically required to register their appeal or protest **prior to leaving the stage** or bay where the event in question took place.

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the shooter by the CRO/TO and /or Posse Marshal, and they wish to take the matter further, they may then elevate their appeal to the Range Master. The Range Master will objectively and without bias consider the appeal on grounds of policy and rules interpretation only and should conduct their own investigation by interviewing those persons directly involved in the matter (CRO/TO, Spotters and the Shooter). For issues involving illegal equipment and/or firearms, illegal modifications, questionable ammunition, illegal clothing or dress, a direct inspection must be made, including if necessary, following the procedure for assessing power factor/smoke production.

If the matter is still not resolved to the satisfaction of the shooter by the Range Master, and they wish to take the matter further, they may then elevate their appeal to the Match Director (MD). The MD will conduct their own review as per the above procedure using the same guidelines. **The MD's decision is final.**

At the discretion of the MD, a special protest jury comprised of three Territorial Governors (TGs) not from the shooter's home state, may be empaneled to aid the MD in making a reasonable judgment. The process for convening a jury of experienced and knowledgeable TGs who are not familiar with the matter may require that the shooter pay a "protest fee" and complete a "protest form." Once the fee is paid and appropriate documentation is collected by the MD, the jury will be convened. A thorough investigation of the facts should take place in the same objective and unbiased manner. Should the outcome of the protest be in favor of the shooter, the fee will be refunded. In this case the MD will act purely as an administrator of the process.

Scoring

SASS matches are scored based upon elapsed shooting time (Total Time Scoring), plus penalty points for missed targets, procedural errors and various other rules infractions. Each stage is scored individually, and the total combined raw time score plus any penalties incurred for all stages is used to determine place of finish, either by category, overall, or both.

When using Total Time scoring, a maximum allowed time for each stage is to be calculated prior to the match, and is used as the Stage Disqualification score (SDQ) and maximum stage score.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

The maximum time allowed for a stage is the total of all available targets/miss penalties plus 30 seconds.

(Example: 5 seconds each for all available targets (10 rifle, 10 pistol, 4 shotgun = 24 targets x 5 seconds = 120 seconds. Add 30 seconds for a maximum score of 150 seconds).

The score for a SDQ is the maximum allowed time for that stage, as per the above description for calculating maximum allowed time. The score for a DNF (not finishing a stage) is the same as a Stage Disqualification penalty — the maximum allowed time for that stage. The score for a Match Disqualification Penalty (MDQ) is “NO SCORE.” A MDQ results in the removal of the contestant from all score sheets; thus, removal from the match entirely. Two SDQ/DNFs (or one of each) in the same match results in a MDQ.

Overall winners, often including both the top male and top female competitors are traditionally recognized at SASS matches. The “best score” for the main match stages determines the overall winner.

AMMUNITION COVENANTS

Power Factors

The minimum standard for center-fire ammunition used in all smokeless categories in all SASS matches, including State, Regional, National, International, and World Championship competitions is not less than a minimum power factor of 60 and no velocity may be less than 400 fps.

The **maximum velocities** are **1000 fps for revolvers and 1400 fps for rifles**. Ammunition that exceeds these velocities is considered illegal (this does not include ammunition that does not meet the power factor). Pocket pistols, derringers, and long-range rifles are exempt from the power factor and velocity requirements.

Power factors can be calculated by multiplying the bullet weight (in grains) x the velocity (in feet per second) and then the resulting number divided by 1000. Examples:

- 100 gr bullet traveling at 600 fps has a power factor of 60: $(100 \times 600) / 1000 = 60.00$
- 77 gr bullet traveling at 800 fps has a power factor of 61.6: $(77 \times 800) / 1000 = 61.6$
- 200 gr bullet traveling at 400 fps has a power factor of 80: $(200 \times 400) / 1000 = 80.00$

Power Factor / Blackpowder Smoke – Testing

The Range Master or Match Director may, at their sole discretion, require the testing of any ammunition suspected of not meeting SASS ammunition specifications at any time during the match. If a competitor's smokeless ammunition is being checked for power factor, they will be asked to provide five rounds from each suspect firearm, already loaded at the loading table. From the five rounds, one round will have the bullet pulled and weighed. The other four rounds will be fired across a chronograph using the competitor's firearm to record velocity data. The muzzle should be raised to at least 80 degrees into the vertical before each shot is fired. The competitor may not choose the firearm to be tested, all firearms regardless of caliber are subject to testing at any time.

If the average velocity of the four rounds meets or exceeds the calculated power factor of 60 AND the minimum velocity of 400 fps, the loads will be considered legal. If the loads do not meet the 60 power factor OR the minimum velocity of 400 fps, the competitor will be assessed a 30 second Spirit of the Game (SOG) penalty for the last stage completed. Any subsequent

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

stages completed with the illegal ammunition will result in the SOG penalty being assessed for those stages. Two SOG penalties will result in a Match DQ.

Testing of blackpowder rounds for the production of adequate smoke will also be conducted in a similar matter as described above. Rounds should be obtained from the shooter's loaded firearms while at the loading table. The rounds should be fired in comparison to test rounds made using the following load data:

- Standard .38 Special case.
- 1 cc GOEX 2F powder.
- Federal Standard primer.
- 145 grain bullet lubed with SPG.
- Powder lightly compressed with a medium roll crimp.

Failure of the shooter's rounds to produce the same level of smoke as the standard rounds will result in a penalty for not adhering to the category requirements. The first offence will be assessed as a procedural penalty, the second offence in the same match a Stage DQ, and the third offence in the same match a Match DQ.

Ammunition Requirements

Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target or injury to personnel due to "bounce back/splatter" because of inappropriate and/or illegal ammunition. This major safety violation is grounds for instant disqualification and ejection from the match (MDQ).

REVOLVER AND RIFLE AMMUNITION

- May not be jacketed, semi-jacketed, plated, or gas checked. It must be all lead. Moly-Disulfide, polymer coated bullets, or equivalents are acceptable.
- Must be of "single projectile" design. "Multiple projectile" bullets are illegal.
- Ammunition with bullets recessed below the case mouth is not allowed.
- All center-fire or rim-fire ammunition must be designed to package the bullet, gunpowder, and primer into a single metallic case precisely made to fit the firing chamber of the firearm. The primer must be of the type that uses only a small charge of impact sensitive chemical that may be located at the center of the case head or at its rim.
- Electrically fired ammunition is illegal.

SHOTGUN AMMUNITION

- Shotgun size must be number 4 lead birdshot or smaller for all events (no steel or plated shot).
- Magnum and high velocity shotgun shells are not allowed.
- Shotgun shells shall not be sized down (necked) by the use of any die not manufactured for the specific gauge.
- Shotgun shell shall not be scored (ringed) as to cause the shot-shell case, wad, and shot column to be shot from the firearm as one projectile.
- Pump and lever action shotguns are allowed to load no more than two live rounds at a time in the main match stages unless specified in the stage description. In team events, shotguns may be loaded to their maximum magazine capacity.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

BLACKPOWDER AMMUNITION

- Throughout this handbook, blackpowder means blackpowder, or a blackpowder substitute such as Pyrodex, 777, APP, or comparable propellants intended for muzzle loading firearms. Propellants containing nitrocellulose are **prohibited** as blackpowder substitutes.

Any combination of smokeless and blackpowder (so called duplex loads) is specifically **prohibited** in ANY category. (e.g., Blackhorn 209). Through testing of various loads, it has been determined that 1cc of blackpowder, in either a .32, .38, .44 or .45 caliber case, all produce approximately the same amount of smoke (see Blackpowder – Testing section for additional requirements). Before deciding on any reduced loads, a competitor should test them to ensure they meet the base line standards.

Ammunition Conventions

- Shooters may not start a stage with ammunition in hand(s).
- Any ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or ejected from any firearm *may be retrieved and replaced*, or alternatively, must be replaced from the shooters person or other area as allowed by stage description.
- Dropped rounds or rounds safely placed onto a prop from their original loading area may be recovered and used. In any case of recovery of a dropped or safely placed round must be performed carefully as to not create a loss of muzzle control.
- Illegally acquired ammunition is any ammunition not carried to the line and/or staged by the shooter in an approved manner.
- Failure to bring enough ammunition to the line to complete a stage is scored the same as misses for any un-fired rounds.
- A shooter may not leave the line once the stage has begun to retrieve ammo or firearms until all firearms brought to the line are verified as clear. The penalty for this violation is a Stage Disqualification.
- Inadvertently leaving unfired rounds in a revolver is a miss. (Unless the round is under the hammer, then the penalty is a Stage Disqualification).
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun carries a Stage Disqualification penalty.
- A live round left in the magazine or on the carrier, as well as an empty round left in the chamber, magazine, or on the carrier of the firearm in which it was loaded, results in a Minor Safety Violation.
- Malfunctioning firearms still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the firearm is made safe.

Uncontrolled Discharge

Uncontrolled discharge (also known as “Accidental Discharge/AD”) is defined as any discharge of a firearm that was not controlled or intended by the shooter, either by accidental discharge or by shooting a round in an unsafe manner (e.g., over the berm).

- A round over the berm carries varying penalties. Site specific match & range rules establish the penalty, up to and possibly including a Match Disqualification.
- Uncontrolled discharges have penalties:

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- Any discharge that hits the ground or non-expendable stage prop 5 – 10 feet from the shooter: Stage Disqualification.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or non-expendable stage prop less than five feet from the shooter, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, any discharge off the firing line, or any discharge that is deemed unsafe result in a Match Disqualification.
- The impact distance should be measured from the toe of the shooter's foot closest to the point of impact where s/he was standing at the time of discharge.
- Any discharge in a safe direction after stage engagement during the process of correcting a malfunction by a gunsmith or reasonably competent person will not be penalized.
- Match Directors have the latitude to place props so that shooters must negotiate them. In doing so, Match Directors may declare props as expendable (shootable) without penalty.

Loading and Unloading Area Conventions

Shooting stages/areas at all SASS matches provide a loading and unloading area in proximity to the firing line. The primary responsibility for loading and unloading firearms always rests with the competitor. Shooters should always know the condition of their firearms and should never depend upon the Loading and Unloading officers to ensure their firearms are correctly loaded or unloaded.

- All loading and unloading shall be conducted only in the designated areas.
- The competitor may never blame the Loading or Unloading Officer for an incorrectly loaded firearm or a firearm not unloaded. At no time will this claim be grounds for dismissal of penalties.
- All firearms will remain unloaded except while under the direct observation of a designated person on the firing line or in the designated loading and unloading areas.
- Any competitor's failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures will result in a penalty of a Stage Disqualification.
- Leaving the unloading table without clearing all firearms will result in the penalty being assessed on the stage where the infraction was committed. Competitors arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage **within the same day** will be assessed a Stage Disqualification penalty on the previously completed stage.
- Competitors shall not leave the designated loading area with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding to the stage as the next competitor to begin the stage.
- Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area. It is not permissible to seat percussion caps on a revolver's nipple using the revolver's hammer. Percussion revolvers may only be capped at the loading area or on the firing line.
- Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and results in a stage disqualification. Dry firing is allowed only at designated safe areas. Dry firing is defined as the act of bringing the firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the firearm to fire normally.

SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY

Shooter's Handbook

- Competitors shall unload each of their firearms at the designated unloading area and have them visually inspected to make sure all chambers are empty. Rifles and shotguns must be cycled to verify their magazines are empty. All firearms taken to the firing line must be checked, whether or not they were used. Only two main match revolvers may be taken to the line.

Lead Precautions

An often-overlooked aspect of shooter safety is exposure to lead. Lead exposure concerns are not limited to the Reloading process. Shooters handle lead ammunition while loading their firearms and may be exposed to lead dust in the air on or near the firing line. Over time, lead exposure can result in lead levels that are higher than most Doctors recommend.

Simple precautions can help lessen and/or eliminate high lead levels. After shooting, handling ammunition, or reloading, you should always wash your hands thoroughly, especially prior to eating or smoking. Hand wipes will help at the range where water may be sparse. There are specialized wipes and hand soaps designed to clean lead from the skin.