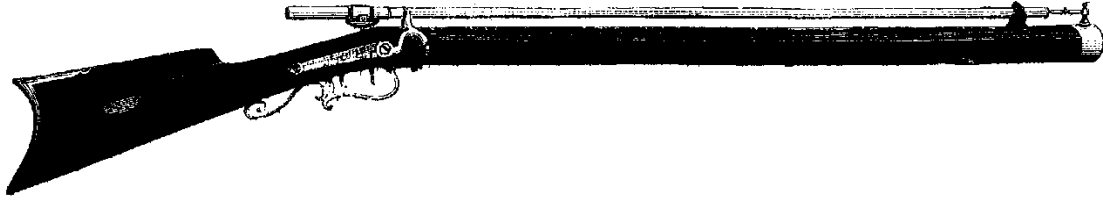


NRA Firearms Safety Principles



For the safety of all of our participants while using firearms, the following
NRA FIREARMS SAFETY Principles are to be observed at all times:

ALL guns are ALWAYS LOADED. Assume guns are always loaded, and treat them accordingly.

ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending on different circumstances.

- Following the Manual of Arms is always a safe bet. In combat, a safe direction is down-range, just over the heads of the “enemy”.

ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot. When holding a gun, rest your finger outside the trigger guard.

- Do not touch the trigger until you are given the “Ready” command.

ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

- Only load weapons when ordered to do so.

Know your target and what is beyond. Be absolutely sure you have identified your target beyond any doubt. Equally important, be aware of the area beyond your target. This means observing your prospective area of fire before you shoot. Never fire in a direction in which there are people or any other potential for mishap. Think first. Shoot second.

- In living history scenarios, the use of blank ammunition modifies this principle slightly. Since no bullet is used, knowing what is “beyond” your target is not as necessary. Your target is just over the heads of the “enemy”, at any range. Being aware of what is down range, both to the left and the right is still critical. If a safety hazard is present or about to happen, anyone is able to call for a “Cease Fire” in order to prevent an issue.

Know how to use the gun safely. Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Know its basic parts, how to safely open and close the action and remove any ammunition from the gun or magazine. Remember, a gun’s mechanical safety device is never foolproof. Nothing can ever replace safe gun handling.

- Since we primarily use muzzle-loading firearms, no mechanical “action” exists. However, the proper execution of the loading procedure corresponds to a modern firearm’s action. Safely performing this procedure is very important to the safe handling of our firearms. In addition, our weapons’ mechanical safety is the “half-cock” position of the hammer. Just as in any firearm, this device is never foolproof.

Be sure the gun is safe to operate. Just like other tools, guns need regular maintenance to remain operable. Regular cleaning and proper storage are part of the gun's general upkeep. If there is any question concerning a gun's ability to function, a knowledgeable gunsmith should look at it.

- All participants are responsible for ensuring their weapon is safe to operate. Institute officers will regularly inspect weapons to make sure of this. Follow all procedures for cleaning, maintenance, and storage that are provided by the Institute.

Use only the correct ammunition for your gun. Only BBs, pellets, cartridges, or shells designed for a particular gun can be fired safely in that gun. Most guns have the ammunition type stamped on the barrel. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on the box and sometimes stamped on the cartridge. Do not shoot the gun unless you know you have the proper ammunition.

- The only proper ammunition for living history events is blank black powder paper cartridges, along with four-wing percussion cap primers. All ammunition will be provided by the Institute, no exceptions. Should live-fire exercises be conducted on an established shooting range, .57 caliber elongated ball ammunition will be provided by the Institute, one at a time, separate from powder and primer.

Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate. Guns are loud and the noise can cause hearing damage. They can also emit debris and hot gases that could cause eye injury. For these reasons, shooting glasses and hearing protection should be worn by shooters and spectators.

- Eye protection is not used, for historical accuracy reasons (and with negligible risk to safety), unless during a live-fire exercise on an established shooting range. Ear protection in the form of flesh-colored foam ear plugs is required during all firing exercises and combat scenarios.

Never use alcohol, over-the-counter drugs or prescription drugs before or while shooting. Alcohol, as well as any other substance likely to impair normal mental or physical bodily functions, must not be used before or while shooting guns.

- Any such substance is prohibited by the Institute for the health and safety of its participants.

Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons. Many factors must be considered when deciding where and how to store guns. A person's particular situation will be a major part of the consideration. Dozens of gun storage devices, as well as locking devices that attach directly to the gun, are available. However, mechanical locking devices, like the mechanical safeties built into guns, can fail and should not be used as a substitute for safe gun handling and the observance of all gun-safety rules.

- All participants are responsible of the safe storage of their firearm. If this is ever in doubt, the participant should speak with Institute officers about an alternative solution.

Be aware the certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

- Institute firearms and the activities they are used for are unique and require specific safety precautions and procedures. Participants that follow all safety procedures can have confidence in the safety of the activity.

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

