

Dear Club Secretary,

In the latest revision of the NRA Handbook, there are significant changes to safety procedures. These become effective from 29 March 2013 (Good Friday).

An organisational change is that the Safety Rules, formerly at Section 61 in the Competition Shooting area of the rules, have been moved to Section 52 in the General Rules. The most important change that actually has a direct effect on conduct on the range is the revision of the unload and inspection drills, now at para 122. The inspection drill used to require the removal of the bolt from all bolt-action firearms for independent inspection. This led to difficulties with some types of firearm and inconsistency where, for example, both bolt-action and straight-pull firearms were in use in the same practice.

Accordingly, the procedure has been changed so that the requirement to remove the bolt only arises where the independent inspection is to be carried out by a fellow shooter or other person directly participating in the practice. Note that the defining condition is the status of the person carrying out the inspection, not the type of firearm.

Rule 122 is reproduced below. Please study it with care, distribute the information and apply it from 29 March. The whole of the revised Safety Rules will be available online and in the Handbook as soon as the 2013 NRA Handbook is in print, probably around the third week in March.

Regards

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Secretary to the Shooting Committee

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122 Inspection of Firearms and Magazines

a Firer's responsibilities

The firer is responsible for ensuring both that his firearm is clear and that it is independently inspected in accordance with this rule before it is removed from the firing point. The action of "unloading" in this rule requires that, before inspection, such of the following actions as are possible for the firearm type have been carried out:

- i Safety catch applied.
- ii Magazine removed.
- iii Integral magazine / cylinder emptied.
- iv Chamber and action cleared of rounds, misfires and empty cases.
- v Working parts fully open and locked.

The formal unload procedure for a Service Weapon may require additional steps after the inspection. Any firer who fails to present his firearm for inspection whether called to do so or not, or who presents his firearm for inspection in an unsafe condition, may be considered as "acting in a way that might prove dangerous" and be dealt with as in Para 546.

b Person Designated to inspect

The responsibility to carry out inspections falls to a specific individual. By default, the inspection should be carried out by the CRO or a member of the range staff to whom the CRO delegates the responsibility. The following concessions are permitted, subject to any overriding instruction by the CRO or range staff:

- i In a team event where a coach is present on the firing point, the coach may carry out the inspection.
- ii In individual competition, or in team competition if no coach is present, the register keeper may carry out the inspection.
- iii Individuals outside competition may have their firearm inspected by any person sharing range space with them.

In all cases where a concession is invoked, the person inspecting must look down the barrel from the breech end and observe that the action and chamber are clear, and the firer must dismantle the firearm to the extent necessary to permit such observation. It remains the firer's responsibility to ensure that the person inspecting does so.

c Procedure

On the conclusion of a shoot or stage, or on the order of the (C)RO, all firers must:

- i unload their firearm and inspect the chamber, action, boltface and magazine (if one is fitted) to ensure that the firearm is clear,
- ii if requesting inspection by a person other than the CRO or a range official, dismantle their firearm to the extent necessary to permit a clear view through the chamber and barrel,
- iii present their firearm to the designated person on the firing point and have them inspect and confirm that the firearm is clear,
- iv for a Service Weapon complete the unload in accordance with the current Service procedure,
- v either keep the bolt removed or insert a breech flag (or both) for any bolt-action rifle, or carry out the equivalent procedure for other firearms (which may include casing in accordance with GR&P procedure)

before leaving the firing point and before anyone goes forward of the firing point.

d Comment

The practical results of the above rule are that any firearm other than a bolt-action or break-action firearm should for simplicity be inspected by the CRO or an official on his behalf, and that if a firer requires a bolt-action firearm to be inspected by anyone other than the CRO or an official on his behalf, the firer must remove the bolt.