

Range Rules and Regulations

1. Firing ranges shall be “cold;” i.e., there shall be no loaded firearms allowed anywhere but the firing line.
2. No fast draw competition.
3. Eye and ear protection are mandatory in “hot” areas—the firing line and immediate surroundings.
4. Ear muff-style hearing protectors are allowed, as are modern-designed shooting glasses.
5. No alcohol allowed on the range during shooting hours, either for use or possession. No illegal controlled substances at any time. No smoking in the shooting area.
6. No fingers in the trigger guards unless the shooter is on the firing line and preparing to fire at the command of the range officer, or in the act of shooting. Shooters failing to observe this rule may be disqualified from competition.
7. All participants, hearing the command “cease fire,” or being made aware of other danger signals, will immediately cease firing and keep their firearms pointed down range with the muzzle in a downward position.
8. Shooters are responsible for the safe condition of their firearms.
9. Individuals making a formal protest to the Judge or Deputy Judge of questionable acts or violation of the rules by an individual shall accompany such protest by a \$10.00 protest fee. If the protest is upheld the fee will be returned. If the protest is denied, the fee is forfeited to the individual against whom the protest was made. The Judge or Deputy Judge's decision shall be final.
10. The Timer Operator shall not hold the timing clock device any farther forward than the shooter's elbow of the arm operating the trigger to prevent injury to the timer operator in the event a mishap occurs. For a shooter that is hard of hearing and cannot hear the sound of the timing device starting, the Timer Operator shall provide tactile alert by tapping the shooter on the shoulder at the time the timing device sounds the audio alert. (Added March 2023) (Amended March 2024)

Safety and Procedure Rules For All National, Regional and NCOWS Posse Shoots

1. Treat and respect every firearm as if it were loaded.
2. Eye and ear protection is required for all competitors and spectators. Safety glasses with side shields recommended.
3. No loaded firearms except at the firing line or loading table.
4. No quick-draw at any time.
5. Revolvers are to always have the hammer down on an empty chamber or between chambers when loaded.
6. No breaking a 170 degrees plane with any firearm at any time during the stage. Draws from a cross draw must be done with the body turned to the firing line so the muzzle of the revolver is not breaking the 170 degree rule. Stage disqualification for first offense, match disqualification for second offense in same day. Penalties for having the finger in the trigger guard or the revolver cocked before it is pointed down-range: 1st infraction - disqualification from the stage; 2nd infraction - disqualification from the match.
7. All long guns will have actions open at all times except at the loading table, on the firing line or when they are in cases. (Amended March 2024)
8. When carrying firearms to loading or unloading tables, muzzles must be in vertical position, pointed straight up.
9. A dropped unloaded firearm ends the stage for a shooter. A dropped loaded firearm will result in a match disqualification. The firearm will be retrieved and cleared by Posse Leader or Timer.
10. A dropped round is a dead round and must be picked up at the end of the stage. (Judges option: shooter may acquire another round from person.)
11. Everyone will load, stage, and unload his/her own firearms, except for those physically challenged or inexperienced, needing assistance.
12. No running under time with a charged firearm in hand.
13. No fanning or twirling a firearm at any time.
14. Shotguns are staged with magazines and chambers open and empty and are loaded under the clock. (Pistoleer class, arms charged but not capped.) All empty shells must be ejected before grounding or moving throughout a stage when carrying the firearm.
15. Initially load rifles and revolvers at loading table only and only when the loading table is manned.
16. Shooter is to retrieve his/her own firearms and go directly to manned unload table after stage is completed.
17. No squib or magnum velocity loads. No jacketed bullets, only cast lead alloy only bullets. Shot is to be lead only, and no larger than #7 1/2's. Only cartridges and velocities approved in The Tally Book are allowed. Shooters may be held responsible for damage caused to a target by too “hot” a load.

17a. Cartridge Firearms: When it is suspected a squib load has been fired, the timer operator will stop the shooter immediately. "Suspected" is when the round is too quiet, and no projectile exits the barrel and hits the target or the ground. The firearm shall be taken by the timer operator or designee, muzzle up, to the unloading table where the firearm will be made safe. The shooter may continue the stage with the other firearms. Rounds left in the firearm with the squib load will be counted as misses unless a reshoot has been offered. (Added March 2021).

17b. Percussion Firearms: When a percussion squib occurs (i.e. the percussion cap fires, but it does not fire the charge of black powder), the timer operator will stop the shooter immediately. The shooter will keep the firearms pointed down range for a minimum of 5 seconds to be sure the round is not a delay fire. Then, the firearm shall be taken by the timer operator or designee, muzzle up, to the unloading table where the firearm will be made safe. The shooter may continue the stage with the other firearms. Rounds left in the firearm with the squib load will be counted as misses unless a reshoot has been offered. (Added March 2021).

18. All participants must attend a safety meeting before shooting in any event.

19. Poses should have no fewer than eight persons: one timer, one shooter, one watching the loading area, one watching the unloading, three watching hits and picking up brass, one loading

20. Refusal to follow the Stage Marshal or Judge's direction regarding safety or procedural rules will be grounds for match disqualification. Remember to think safety first and always! Don't be afraid to speak up if you see anyone handling a firearm improperly, but also remember to be courteous. If someone points out that you're handling a firearm carelessly, be grateful, not upset. It's better to be corrected than have someone get hurt.

21. It is permissible if Poses allow for mule-eared shotguns to be cocked at the beginning of a scenario whether staged or in the shooter's hands.

22. No cocked firearm with a live round under the hammer may ever leave the shooter's hand except for a malfunction. This also means from one hand to the other.

23. Penalty for a missed target is 10 seconds. If the majority of the counters are unsure if the shooter missed, it is not a miss.

24. Penalty for a procedural (shooting targets out of order, or otherwise not shooting the scenario as written) is 20 seconds.

25. A willful violation of the stage instructions to gain a better score will result in the shooter being assessed a 30 second penalty for violating the "Cowboy Code". This "Cowboy Code" penalty will be added to the shooter's score in addition to any penalties for misses and procedural. Two "Cowboy Code" penalties within a match will result in a Match Disqualification.

The "Cowboy Code" penalty will be awarded if all stage spotters and the time keeper come to a unanimous conclusion that a violation as stated above has been committed.

NCOWS Rules for Air Horns and Flags

If something should occur down range that will need someone to cross over the firing line to fix it is the responsibility of the Timekeeper to use the air horn to notify his/her posse and all other posses that there is a problem. If the problem is not a matter that would endanger anyone — two short blasts on the air horn after the shooter has finished the stage lets the posse leader on that posse know that a yellow flag is required. When two short blasts are heard and a yellow flag is raised on another posse, the Timekeeper should allow his/her shooter to finish his/her stage, proceed to the unloading table, lay all guns on the table and step back from the unloading table. Once the Timekeeper has determined that all firearms are either lying on the loading or unloading tables, then he/she will tell his/her Posse Leader to raise the yellow flag for that posse. When all posses' yellow flags are raised, it is then safe for someone to cross the firing line to set targets, retrieve hats, etc. Once the problem has been rectified, the initiating posse's Timekeeper will tell his Posse Leader to raise the green flag. Only when all green flags have been raised, can any firearm be picked up or moved and shooting resume. If something should occur down range that presents eminent danger to person or persons, a long blast on the air horn by a timekeeper signifies an immediate cease fire. The long blast should be relayed by all Timekeepers to ensure everyone up and down the line hears it. The person on that and all stages are to stop firing immediately, lay down his/her firearm on the ground in front of him/her with the barrel facing down range, stand, step back from the firearm, and raise open and empty hands to signify he/she is clear. At that time the Timekeeper tells the Posse Leader to raise the red flag. Once the danger has been remedied, the initiating Timekeeper will let his/her Posse Leader know to raise the green flag. Shooters in the middle of stages on a red flag will be allowed to reshoot that stage. Firearms will be picked up and carried to the unloading table where they will be unloaded and cleared. The shooter will then need to proceed to loading table, reload and get ready to shoot through the stage again. While the interrupted shooter is unloading and reloading, the next shooters in line may proceed through the stage. Once the interrupted shooter is ready, he/she will shoot where ever in the shooting order that occurs.