

By-Laws of The National Congress of Old West Shootists

(As Adopted March 2022)

PREAMBLE

Resolved, that the National Congress of Old West Shootists is a not-for-profit living history and shooting organization formed of individuals and affiliated member units to promote interest in the period of American History known as the “Old West,” specifically the period from 1865 to 1899. (All NCOWS rules and regulations are subject to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws.)

By-Law 1: Membership

1-1. Any responsible person, 18 years of age or over, may become a full member of this organization after application and payment of the usual initiation fee and/or dues. Membership shall not be denied because of sex, age, religion, race, national origin or physical handicap.

NCOWS truly represents the period which it embraces. We recognize that this was a time when a man's word was his bond. It is our philosophy that this honor system is much preferable to legislation whenever possible. When an individual professes the desire to join our organization and participate in NCOWS events, local clubs work with new members, help them get their kit together and allow up to a year at the local or “posse” level to achieve [“Level 1” authenticity as described by Marlan Ingram’s “Three Levels of Authenticity”](#) attached elsewhere in these bylaws. Participation at Regional or National events requires full adherence to NCOWS standards and bylaws regardless of membership duration. (Amended March, 2010)

1-2. Organizations and clubs seeking Charter Membership shall comply with the National Congress of Old West Shootists Constitution and By-Laws.

1-3. Charter Club Membership. Charter Clubs will be known as Posses.

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1-3a. New Charter Club Requirements:

1-3a-1. Any organization or shooting club wishing to become a Posse of the National Congress of Old West Shootists may apply for Charter Membership, which shall be granted when that organization has satisfied the Territorial Congress that it adheres to and will abide by the purpose, goals, rules and regulations of the National Congress of Old West Shootist in the conduct of National Congress of Old West Shootists-sanctioned activities.

1-3a-2. New Posses will pay a \$35.00 Charter Fee.

1-3a-3. All Posses must carry a minimum of \$1,000,000 liability insurance policy and provide copies of such insurance policies to the NCOWS Banker and Secretary whether they are participating in the insurance reimbursement or not.

1-3a-4. At least fifty percent (50%) of the members and 100% of the officers of any Posse must be active, dues-paying members of the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

1-3a-5. A Posse may be formed with only five (5) unique members, but must have at least ten (10) unique members by the end of the first calendar year. (Amended March 2013)

1-3a-6. New Posse must submit list of posse members and their NCOWS membership numbers.

1-3a-7. New Posse must submit a copy of the Posse By-Laws showing that it will adhere to the purpose, goals, rules and regulations of the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

1-3b. Posse Rules & regulations:

1-3b-1. All Posses events shall be sanctioned events and shall adhere to all bylaws and regulations. Posses must hold a minimum of two events (do not need to be shooting events) per calendar year, and they must be published in The Shootist magazine.

1-3b-2. Any Posse wishing to vary from the rules and regulations must petition the Executive Committee for a specific waiver for that event. Said petition shall include detailed statements of need and justification for the waiver.

1-3b-3. Each Posse shall be free to set its own standards of membership within the limits set by the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

1-3b-4. After their first year and thereafter Posses must maintain a minimum membership of ten (10) members to remain an active Posse. (Amended March 2013) (Amended March 2025)

1-3b-5. Posses may be reimbursed up to one hundred dollars (\$100) per year for their advertising of NCOWS Posse events. This reimbursement can be for media ads or for table rental at gun shows where the Posse promotes NCOWS. Receipts for such paid advertising can be submitted to the NCOWS Banker.

1-3b-6. NCOWS Posse members must declare a "Home" Posse for purposes of insurance and tabulation of unique Posse membership. Each member may only be counted on their home Posse as a unique member.

1-3c Posse Renewals:

1-3c-1. Posse Charters are renewable on an annual (1 January – 31 December) basis.

1-3c-2. The yearly renewal fee of \$35.00.

1-3c-3. Renewal forms, including a current Posse membership list with NCOWS Membership numbers and list of officers shall be returned to the National office by 1 January of each year.

1-3d. Posse Revocation:

1-3d-1. Posses not meeting these requirements shall not have their representative recognized at the next Territorial Congress Meeting. Posses shall have 30 days after written notice to meet these requirements or face having their Posse Charter revoked. (Amended March, 2011)

1-4. Membership Classifications, Dues & Fees

1-4-a. **MEMBER.** Any responsible person at least 18 years of age—full membership rights, including the rights to vote and to hold office. Individual Dues are \$45.00/year. (Amended October 2014)

1-4-b. **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP.** Additional members of the same household may be added to an individual member's membership under a family membership — with full membership rights for additional persons (if dues are paid for all): dependents under the age of 18 have the same rights as do other JUNIOR MEMBERS. Family Dues are full dues of original member /year plus \$15.00 for each additional household member listed. Only one magazine is provided per family membership. (Amended March 2013) (Amended October 2014)

1-4-c. **JUNIOR MEMBER.** Any responsible youth less than 18 years of age at the time dues are first paid. A Junior Member must be sponsored by an adult MEMBER who shall be responsible for overseeing the Junior Member's activities. Junior Members hold full membership rights except the right to vote or to hold office. Junior Dues are \$20.00/Year. (Amended October 2014)

1-4-d. **SENIOR MEMBER.** Any Full Member who has attained the age of sixty (60) years. **FULL TIME STUDENT.** Any Full Member who is registered as a full-time student at any accredited institution of higher education. **FIXED INCOME:** Any Full Member who, due to retirement, disability, or for any other reason, is on a fixed income. Senior Citizens (age 60 or older), full-time students, and others on a fixed income shall pay dues of \$40.00 a year. (Amended October 2014)

1-4-e. **HONORARY MEMBER.** May be bestowed upon a worthy former member or other deserving individual by the membership—full membership rights except the right to vote or to hold office. Requires no payment of dues. Honorary memberships are a one-year membership and are renewable on a yearly basis by the Executive Committee.

1-4-f. **CHARTER MEMBER.** Those active members officially members as of 30 December 1994 shall be recognized as CHARTER MEMBERS. They will be so recognized on the membership rolls and in other ways as might be deemed appropriate by the membership.

1-4-g. **INDIVIDUAL LIFE MEMBERSHIP.** Any responsible person at least 18 years of age—full membership rights for life, including the rights to vote and to hold office. Individual Life dues are \$500.00. The Banker may set up payment plans for payment of Life dues. (Amended March 2013)

1-5. The Territorial Congress may create other categories of membership by a two-thirds (2/3) vote when a quorum is present.

1-6. Dues shall be paid on a calendar year basis. If dues are not paid within thirty (30) days of their coming due, the member will be dropped from the membership rolls. Reinstatement will be made upon payment of dues owed and any reinstatement fee.

1-7. The Executive Committee has the authority to reduce membership dues for a special event for promotional purposes.

1-8. A member must have dues paid and possess a current membership card (or receipt for dues) in order to be eligible to vote, hold office, participate in shoots or events as a member, or to enjoy any other privileges or benefits of this organization.

By-Law 2: Officers

2-1. The officers of this organization shall be known as Territorial Officers and shall consist of the following, elected or appointed from within and by the members of the Territorial Congress (Board of Directors); their terms and duties being described in the By-Laws.

2-1-a. The **Marshal** shall function as the President of the organization and as the Chairman of the Executive Committee. The Marshal shall preside over all General and Congressional meetings. He or she may appoint committee members as needed. In emergency situations, the Marshal may make required decisions on behalf of the Territorial Congress, subject to later review by the Congress. (Amended March 2013)

2-1-b. The **Deputy Marshal** shall function as the Vice President. Serves as acting Marshal in the absence of the Marshal. Shall serve as Sergeant-At-Arms at meetings of the Territorial Congress and General Membership.

2-1-c. The **Secretary** shall function as the Secretary-Historian. Maintains the records, minutes and correspondence of the organization. Edits and distributes official National Congress of Old West Shootists' publications, with the exception of *The Shootist*.

2-1-d. The **Banker** shall function as the Treasurer and shall maintain a ledger of expenses and income along with any bank statements, receipts, bills, etc. to support said ledger. He or she shall have charge of all NCOWS funds. He or she shall disburse funds to maintain the day to day operation of the organization. He or she shall disburse funds at the direction of the Executive Committee for expenses beyond day to day operating expenses. He or she shall present a detailed treasurers report to the Congress for the previous calendar year at the first Territorial Congress meeting of each year. Summary Treasurer's reports may be made incrementally from the last detailed report upon request of the Executive Committee or the Territorial Congress. (Amended March 2013)

2-1-e. The **Judge** shall function as the Chief Safety/Range Officer. Serves as Range/Safety Officer. Has the power to appoint Deputy Judges for individual events from the National Congress of Old West Shootists' membership. Appoints 4 members to the Authenticity Committee, Chairs the Authenticity Committee and is responsible for implementing authenticity standards. (Amended March 2013)

2-1-f. The **Editor** shall be responsible for editing and publishing *The Shootist*. The position of Editor will be by Executive Committee appointment, ratified by a majority vote of the Territorial Congress. The Editor will serve until such time as the individual holding the position or the Executive Committee terminates the relationship with thirty (30) days' notice.

2-1-g. No individual shall hold more than one office or position on the Executive Committee.

2-2. The term for each officer shall be for one (1) calendar year. The officers will be elected by the Board from within the membership of the Board. In the event that an officer resigns or otherwise becomes unable to fulfill his/her duties as an officer, the Marshal (or Deputy Marshal in the absence of the Marshal) in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall appoint a replacement to serve until a new officer can be elected at the next Annual Convention.

2-3. There shall be no limit to succession in office.

2-4. These officers, plus the Chair of the Territorial Senate, elected by the Territorial Senate for a one-year term, and the Chair of the Territorial Representatives, elected by the Territorial Representatives for a one-year term, acting together, shall constitute the Executive Committee of this organization. Their term of office shall run from the Congress meeting in which they are elected until the next Congress meeting where elections of officers are held. Officers who are no longer eligible for office due to loss of Senator seat or Territorial Representative election shall fill out their term of office until replaced by appointment or special election. The Executive Committee has all of the powers of the organization in the intervals between meetings with any limits established by By-Law. (Amended March 2013)

By-Law 3: Governance

3-1. The National Congress of Old West Shootists shall be governed by a representative body, the Territorial Congress (Board of Directors), consisting of fifteen (15) Territorial Senators elected from within the Full Membership at large, and any number of Territorial Representatives, elected by the Posses. Each Posse is entitled to elect one (1) Territorial Representative. Each Territorial Senator and Territorial Representative shall have equal voice and vote; ex-officio members have equal voice, but no vote. A Territorial Senator or Representative's duty shall only be that of a general representative, unless additional specific authority is designated by the Territorial Congress. Senators' and Representatives' terms of office shall be one year beginning January 1 of each calendar year. Incoming Senators and Representatives are eligible to run for chairperson of their respective groups and stand for election as an officer. The outgoing Senators and Representatives shall have no vote or eligibility beyond the end of their one year term. (Amended March 2013)

3-2. Any Territorial Senator or Representative who cannot attend a Territorial Congress must notify the NCOWS office or the Marshal either with the name of the NCOWS member who will be attending in his/her place (votes will be recorded as "<X> voting for <Y>") or by providing his/her written proxy to a Territorial Senator or Representative. Proxies may be

general or specific in nature. Proxy votes of “Abstain” will be permitted for any/ all agenda items. A separate proxy must be sent for each Territorial Congress Meeting that cannot be attended, i.e. No permanent proxies will be allowed. Any Territorial Senator or Representative who fails to fulfill their duties as proscribed in this paragraph shall be removed from office and may not run for re-election for a period of three (3) years. Action taken by this By-law may be rescinded at next Territorial Congress Meeting by 2/3 vote of Congress present.

3-3. The Territorial Congress shall create rules and regulations in regard to the administration, membership, financing policy, activities, and the general welfare of the National Congress of Old West Shootists. These shall be the BY-LAWS of the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

3-4. The Territorial Congress shall determine all questions of National Congress of Old West Shootists business and policy not specified in this Constitution and the By-Laws, and shall in all respects be the governing body of the National Congress of Old West Shootists. To this end, the Congress shall be limited and bound by the provisions of this Constitution and the Article of Incorporation in all matters, except as otherwise provided for under the Corporation Laws of the State of Iowa.

3-5. The Territorial Congress shall act as a judicial body in regard to matters of dispute within the membership.

When taking disciplinary action as described in the By-Laws, the Congress must call a special meeting to consider the question. The individual involved shall be given thirty (30) days notice in writing of the charges, and the time, date, and place of the meeting. The accused may be present, call witnesses, and offer a defense.

3-6. Further responsibilities of the Congress. The Territorial Congress shall discharge the following responsibilities:

3-6-a. Oversee the financial policies of the National Congress of Old West Shootists. An independent review of the previous year’s Banker’s report shall be made each year by a committee of three(3) NCOWS members appointed by the Marshal. The Banker shall provide any and all records requested by the committee. (Amended March 2013)

3-6-c. Assess membership dues.

3-6-d. Authorize and determine the editorial and business policies of any publications established by the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

3-6-e. Approve the membership applications of the Posses seeking to join the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

3-6-f. Establish the criteria for authenticity in firearms, accouterments, and clothing for official National Congress of Old West Shootists events. To be administered through an Authenticity Committee chaired by the National Judge. (See 2-1e) (Amended March 2013)

3-7. An Oath of Office shall be required of all members of the Territorial Congress upon taking office. The Oath will be administered by the Marshal, who shall in his/her turn, if necessary, be sworn by the Deputy Marshal. The Oath (instructions and phrases in square brackets [] are optional): [Right hand on Bible] I, _____, do hereby swear/affirm to uphold and abide by the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws of the National Congress of Old West Shootists, and to support the National Congress of Old West Shootists and represent those who have elected me to the best of my ability. [So help me, God.] (Amended March 2013)

3.8 Responsibilities of the Executive Committee (Amended March 2013)

3-8-a. Appoint individuals to be in charge of specific National Congress of Old West Shootists’ functions.

3-8-b. Approve Honorary Membership.

3-8-c. Recommend the approval of Posses seeking to join the National Congress of Old West Shootists to the Territorial Congress who have met the required criteria.

3-8-d. The Executive Committee may establish and schedule at least one match each year open to all- National Congress of Old West Shootists members, and shall sanction and schedule other National Congress of Old West Shootists-sponsored events as proposed and run by the various Posses. The Executive Committee shall authorize an amount of \$750 to be paid to the posse or posses conducting the National Shootout. The Executive Committee may also establish and schedule an annual convention and trade show of the National Congress of Old West Shootists. The Executive Committee shall authorize an amount of \$1000 to be paid to the posses conducting the annual Convention. (Amended March 2024)

3-8-d-1 Regional Events (Amended May 2020)

Regional events differ from normal posse multi-day shoots in that they must adhere strictly to all NCOWS categories, rules, and regulations. This means local posse variations, additional categories, prize awards, etc. are not allowed. The event would only be open to NCOWS members, however the discounted membership for “New” members is allowed. Shooting medals would be available from NCOWS at cost, plus shipping. They also would be able to advertise the event on the NCOWS website, The Shootist magazine and on CasCity as a Regional Event.

3-8-d-2 Any posse or group of members may petition the Executive Committee to hold a Regional Shooting event. The petition must list the dates and location of the event and identify what region of the country it would represent e.g. 'Midwest; Southwest, Northeast, etc'.

3-8-d-3 Petitions must be received by the Executive Committee at least six months in advance. Multiple petitions for the same dates will not be allowed. Petitions may not be identified as the same region. But a Midwest and a South Central or North Central would be allowed.

3-8-d-4 The NCOWS Executive Committee shall act upon the petition or petitions within 30 days. The Marshal shall make a motion to approve the petition.

3-8-e No actions of the Executive Committee shall circumvent the wishes of the Territorial Congress. The Congress may rescind or revise the decisions of the Executive Committee by a majority vote at any regular or special meeting of the Congress.

3-9 In the event that a Senator is not capable of completing his or her elected term, a pro tempore Senator shall be appointed by the Marshal to complete the term of office. (Amended May 2020)

3-9-a The Executive Committee may solicit names from the general membership if no candidate comes forward on their own accord.

3-9-b The Executive Committee shall review potential candidates for pro tempore Senator. The Marshal then shall select a candidate for appointment.

3-9-c The Executive Committee shall then accept a motion from within the Executive Committee for the candidate. Once seconded, the Executive Committee shall vote on whether the Marshal shall appoint the proposed candidate. A majority vote of the Executive Committee is required to accept the Marshal's appointment.

3-9-d At the end of the term to be completed, the pro tempore Senator has the right to run for election in the general Senate election.

By-Law 4: Elections

4-1. The time, the place, and the date of Territorial elections shall be determined by the Territorial Congress and announced to the membership as least sixty (60) days in advance.

4-2. Nominations for Territorial Senator must be received by the Secretary in their entirety, including the candidates' platforms, by 15 July each year. The election of Territorial Senators will be completed by 1 December each year. (Amended March 2022)

4-3. Each Member is entitled to one vote.

By-Law 5: Dues and Fees

Moved to By-Law 1-4

By-Law 6: NCOWS Affiliations

The National Congress of Old West Shootists will establish and maintain a club affiliation with the National Rifle Association and other such organizations as the Territorial Congress deems appropriate.

By-Law 7: Authenticity

7-1. It is the responsibility of the individual to document the authenticity of all items of apparel, accouterments, and firearms. The remainder of this by-law shall act as a general guide, however, the Territorial Congress, in conjunction with the Authenticity Committee, shall maintain, update and publicize specific lists of both "Approved" and "Not-Approved" items of apparel, accouterments, and firearms. These lists shall be made a part of this by-law and shall take precedence over any other portion of this or any other by-laws with which they may conflict. Questionable items may be granted temporary amnesty by the Judge on an individual member basis (not a blanket proclamation) until said item is listed by the Territorial Congress.

7-2. No modern (post 1899) firearms will be allowed unless they are authentic reproductions of traditional firearms or very markedly resemble traditional firearms. Traditional firearms are defined as those manufactured and/ or commonly used during the 1865-1899 time period. Center-fire calibers may substitute for original rim-fire calibers in reproduction firearms. Reproduction firearms chambered in calibers not utilized in original models shall be allowed as long as such calibers are original to the period or are otherwise approved by the National Congress of Old West Shootists.

7-3. The Territorial Congress shall establish and maintain a list of firearms and calibers approved for official competition. This list will be reviewed and up-dated yearly. Members wishing to have a particular firearm or caliber added to the list must petition the Territorial Congress and supply full documentation attesting to the historical authenticity of the firearm or caliber.

7-3-a. Petitions from members seeking to add replica firearms to the "approved" list (see By-Law 10). or to seek approval of disputed items of replica apparel or equipment, shall be made through the Authenticity Committee, to be chaired by the Judge.

7-3-b. A successful petition must have at least the following: (1) a minimum of two (2) primary published references proving the historical existence of the original of the petitioned replica firearm or item. Such references must adequately describe the original item being reproduced, prove its availability, use, or manufacture for sale during the time period 1865-1899; and/or (2) A minimum of one (1) dated period photograph, woodcut, engraving, catalog, and/or advertisement of the original of the petitioned replica firearm or item, or a photograph from a collector's reference (such as Flayderman's) proving that the original of the replica firearm or item did exist and could have been used during the period 1865-1899; and/or (3) an actual artifact representative of the petitioned replica firearm or item, properly authenticated and documented as to time period.

7-3-c. The Authenticity Committee may refer any petition back to the petitioner for additional information or evidence. The Authenticity Committee shall report its recommendation in writing, including all evidence, to the Territorial Congress within ninety (90) days after receiving the petition. The Territorial Congress shall then accept or deny the petition at the next Congress Meeting after receiving the recommendation of the Authenticity Committee.

7-3-d. An unsuccessful petitioner may appeal the decision of the Authenticity Committee to the Territorial Congress.

7-4. Only historically appropriate small conveyances for competitors' firearms and shooting supplies will be allowed (e.g., no converted golf carts, modern shooting carts, etc.). Visible ammunition containers and shooting supplies and equipment shall be consistent with historical authenticity. No plastic ammo boxes shall be visible at any time.

By-Law 8: Vendors and Dealers

8-1. Vendors wishing to sell merchandise or services at National Congress of Old West Shootists-sponsored events must obtain permission from the National or local Judge or his/her Deputy. In the case of the National Convention, the sponsoring posse leaders. (Amended March 2024)

8-2. Vendors wishing to sell merchandise or provide services in the immediate visual area of the shooting participants and spectators may only display and sell original or authenticated replica goods or services of the period 1865-1899. The seller and his/her employees shall be appropriately dressed and accoutered for the time period, and their display of merchandise shall be appropriate to the historical period. (Amended March 2024)

8-3. Vendors wishing to sell merchandise or services of a general "Western" nature but who do not or cannot conform to the stipulations of By-Law 8-2 may do so with special approval from the National or local Judge or his/her Deputy. (Amended March 2024)

8-4. All commercial vendors may be assessed a set-up fee which may be paid in cash. Such fees shall be determined by the National Congress of Old West Shootists or the Posse sponsoring the sanctioned event, and shall be appropriate for the size and scope of the event.

8-5. Individual NCOWS members may from time to time display and offer for sale appropriately authentic items at meetings and shoots without otherwise being subject to the restrictions placed on commercial vendors.

By-Law 9: Insurance

9-1. All posses shall be required to maintain liability insurance coverage as provided by this by-law and to the level established by NCOWS.

9-2. The Executive Committee shall secure and maintain a general liability policy for the overall organization to protect the corporation in the event of litigation and to cover the location of the National Shoot and the Convention.

9-3. Deleted. (Deleted March 2025)

9-4. NCOWS Posse insurance benefit will be paid or reimbursed at the following rates.

The term "unique member" is defined as a home posse member who is not being used to count towards the insurance benefit on any other posse. They are paid current members, Individual, Charter, Life, Family, Senior, Junior, or Honorary, that are listed (for insurance purposes) on only one home posse roster. A member who is listed on more than one posse must declare a single posse as his/her 'Home Posse'.

The term "100% NCOWS membership" is defined as all members of the posse are current paid members of NCOWS, regardless of type of membership, be it Individual, Charter, Life, Family, Senior, Junior, or Honorary.

A posse with 100% NCOWS membership and 10 or more unique club members shall be paid or reimbursed the full amount of the insurance except for the Lockton Risk Purchasing Group (RPG), NRA dues, and all riders.

Posse must submit membership list and members NCOWS membership numbers at time of policy renewal. (Amended March, 2011, March 2013, March 2025)

By-Law 10: Shooting Classes

10-1 NCOWS shooting classes are unique and offer the shooter a greater variety of firearm options. These options are in keeping with the various ways in which someone might have equipped themselves in the Old West. All NCOWS shooting classes, as established by By-Law must be made available to all shooters at each National, Regional or Charter Posse Shoot. These classes shall be:

Men's and Women's Four Gun Smokeless Shootist: Shooter uses two pistols, one shotgun, and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters may shoot smokeless powder and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip.

Men's and Women's Three Gun Smokeless Shootist: Shooter uses two pistols and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters may shoot smokeless powder and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip.

Men's and Women's Two Gun Smokeless Shootist Working Cowboy: Shooter uses one pistol and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters may shoot smokeless powder and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip. (Amended March 2025)

Men's and Women's Four Gun Black Powder Shootist: Shooter uses two pistols, one shotgun, and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooter must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute powder in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges, and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip. Shotguns may NOT include any model of pump shotgun.

Men's and Women's Three Gun Black Powder Shootist: Shooter uses two pistols and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooter must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute powder in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges, and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip.

Men's and Women's Two Gun Black Powder Shootist Working Cowboy: Shooter uses one pistol and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooter must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute powder in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges, and may fire handguns using a two-handed grip. (Amended March 2025)

Men's and Women's Four Gun Smokeless Duelist: Shooter uses two pistols, one shotgun, and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters may shoot smokeless powder and must fire handguns using a one-handed grip.

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Men's and Women's Two Gun Black Powder Duelist Working Cowboy: Shooter uses one pistol and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooter must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute powder in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges, and must fire handguns using a one-handed grip. (Amended March 2025)

Boy's and Girl's Four Gun Juniors: Shall be open to those 12 through 17 only. Shooter uses two pistols, one rifle and one shotgun. May use any of the above shooting styles.

Boy's and Girl's Two Gun Juniors: Shall be open to those 12 through 17 only. Shooter uses one pistol and one rifle. May use any of the above shooting styles.

Men's and Women's Four Gun Pistooleer: Shooter uses two pistols, one shotgun, and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters are restricted to the use of percussion revolvers, pre-1873 percussion or original/authentic reproductions of rimfire cartridge pocket pistols, exposed hammer double-barreled shotguns (percussion or cartridge) and reproduction or original pre-1873 pistol-caliber repeating rifles (e.g. 1860 Henry, Spencer, 1866 Winchester, etc.) Shooters must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges. Pistols and revolvers must be shot one-handed. Pistooleer shooters will shoot the same course of fire as the other competitors except that in a stage requiring more than two shotgun rounds the Pistooleer shooter would not be required to shoot the extra rounds.

Men's and Women's Three Gun Pistooleer: Shooter uses two pistols and one pistol caliber rifle. Shooters are restricted to the use of percussion revolvers, pre-1873 percussion or original/authentic reproductions of rimfire cartridge pocket pistols, and reproduction or original pre-1873 pistol-caliber repeating rifles (e.g. 1860 Henry, Spencer, 1866 Winchester, etc.) Shooters must shoot black powder or approved black powder substitute in all firearms except those chambered for rimfire cartridges. Pistols and revolvers must be shot one-handed.

Men's and Women's Originals: Shooter uses two guns, one rifle and one pistol to complete the course of fire. This class must be shot duelist/traditional style. Must have three originals present to have the class. For complete rules and regulations see Appendix A at the back of the Tally Book.

In addition to these classes, Chartered Clubs and special events may offer additional classes so long as they adhere to the general outline of these By-Laws. (Amended March, 2011) (Amended June 2013) (Amended March 2022)

10-2. Smokeless powder loads shall not exceed the maximum muzzle velocities of comparable black powder loads, e.g. 1500 fps for single shot cartridge rifles; 1300 fps for lever action rifles; 1000fps for handguns. Smokeless loads may be chronographed and certified by the Judge before the shooter will be allowed to compete. No loading below manufacture's recommendation. Minimum velocity for any main match firearm is 600fps or published loading data.

10-3. The Territorial Congress, in conjunction with the Authenticity Committee and Executive Committee, shall establish and maintain official NCOWS Rules and Regulations to govern approved firearms, calibers, and load, and clothing and accouterments, and range rules and regulations.

10-4. National and Regional NCOWS sanctioned matches require a minimum of 3 competitors in any class in order to be eligible for awards.

10-4 (a) A participant of any NCOWS approved shooting class not meeting a minimum of 3 participants at a National or Regional match shall have the opportunity to change to a shooting class with the minimum number of participants.

10-4 (b) Alternatively, the shooter may choose to remain shooting in his or hers chosen class with the knowledge that no awards will be given in a class that does not meet the minimum number of participants. The scores will be tallied and posted in the same manner as shooters participating in classes with the minimum number of shooters.

10-4 (c) Participants in classes not meeting the minimum number of shooters will be given the opportunity to change to a class which meets the minimum number of shooters up to the time of the safety meeting on the first day of the main match of any NCOWS sanctioned regional or national shoot.

By-Law 11: NCOWS RULES AND REGULATIONS

11-1. No matte-finished or brushed-finish stainless steel firearms are allowed except as specifically exempted in these Rules and Regulations, e.g. only those stainless steel firearms whose finish resembles an original nickel-plated finish.

11.2. No modern commemorative firearms shall be allowed

11-3. Projectiles shall be cast lead or lead alloy. No metal-jacketed projectiles shall be permitted. Muzzleloaders shall use round ball or elongated projectiles if such were original to the firearm.

11-4. Muzzleloading percussion firearms shall be original to the period or authentic reproductions.

11-5. Cartridge firearms shall be original to the period or authentic reproductions of original makes and models. "Short-stroke" modifications to lever-action firearms are not allowed.

11-6. Sights for all firearms shall be of original design or configuration.

11-7. Approved calibers and loads include any that were introduced prior to or during the period of 1865-1899 and that were originally introduced as a black powder load. Common examples include but are not limited to: .22 rimfire, .32-20 WCF, .32 S&W Short, .32 S&W Long, .38-40 WCF, .44-40 WCF, .44 S&W American, .44 S&W Russian, .45 Long Colt, .45 S&W, .45-70 Government. Any cartridge designation that was not originally introduced as a black powder load will not be allowed except for appropriate firearms in the smokeless cartridge division only, or for specifically- designated shooting events. .38 Special/.357 Magnum and .44 Special/.44 Magnum cartridges will be allowed if loaded with black powder or with smokeless powder to black powder velocities.

11-8. .22 caliber hand guns for main stages are to be pocket pistol/derringers only. .22 revolvers and rifles are restricted in use for specialty shoots only.

11-9. Single-Shot cartridge rifles shall weigh no more than twenty (20) pounds for official NCOWS competition.

11-10. The use of modern brass or lead bullet components may be used in order to fabricate ammunition for approved period correct original firearms for which no commercially manufactured ammunition is readily available. (Added March 2021).