

Safety Briefing

This is the safety briefing that everybody has before they are allowed to shoot on the ranges. The one thing to say is that you are joining a club and not just a shooting range. We have rules and we have a constitution. We have an Annual General Meeting. This makes us all members of this club. Some of us work on the committee, none of us are paid. We are all equal to each other once we become full members. Prior to this you are a probationer. You are still an important part of the club.

At this club we shoot seven days a week, except for Christmas Day. We shoot between the hours of 10am and 9pm Monday – Friday. 10am and 6pm Saturday. 10am and 3pm on Sunday.

Now - Read the Range Rules. Sign that you have read them and that you will agree to abide by them. You must re-read them from time to time as they may be updated. You will be notified when there are changes made.

This is the start of the safety brief.

The club will accept no liability for any loss, damage or injury to you or anything you bring down here.

Now we come onto the booking-in, attendance and training record. Every time you attend the range you must fill in and sign the attendance book. The police liaison officer keeps all the information from the Attendance Register to see how many times you been attending the club. Also there is a Probationary book where there will be a page for each Probationary member. Find your page, fill it out and get a full member to sign it. The membership secretary uses these sheets to prove that you have been to the club for the 12 times minimum that we require before you become a full member. It is your responsibility to fill in this sheet. Eventually your probationary sheet will disappear when it comes up to the end of your 6 month probation and prior to the committee meeting where your membership will be discussed. If accepted you will get a message from the membership secretary and you will be asked to pay the balance of the year membership fees to April and then they will tell you to pick up your full membership card that will be in a file on the bench.

Whilst you are a probationary member you will be shooting under the control of a Range Conducting Officer (RCO) or Range Officer (RO) who will be a full member of the club. You have to follow their instructions.

When you are a full member and you might need to be a Range Officer. When we come down with just a couple of other people we take it in turns to be responsible for the safety. You just agreed to share it round. You stand back and you don't shoot. You take turns so you all get a chance to shoot. When you become a full member you can bring somebody down to be that safety person. It will be down to you to give them a briefing as to what their duties are. They have to sign in the attendance book as your safety person. The minimum age to be a safety officer is usually 21.

We have competitions. There are postal competitions. Sometimes we attend other clubs. Ask other members about these.

We show we can handle our guns safely. We do not move around with guns out of their gun slips especially when moving guns from cars to buildings and between buildings. We generally take a rifle out of the slip but we keep it pointing down the range lanes. Then we prove the rifle is safe by the insertion of a breach safety flag. When rifles require assembly, you may find them sat on the tables but in this case they must have either the bolt removed or a safety flag in to show no ammo is in the breach. Safety flags are brightly coloured so it can be seen clearly that they have been made safe. On range two, when it is busy there may not be room to assemble the rifles on the range so they are assembled in the club house. This is ok as long as the rifles are shown to be safe and the bullets are kept separate until they are taken through to the range where they are united together. The range officer will guide you with this and will check rifles are safe.

Ear and eye protection: - certain disciplines mean you have to wear eye protection. Anything involving loud bangs means that you need ear protection and my advice to anybody who only plans to shoot air rifles and pistols just to have some form of ear defenders and eye protection in your shooting kit because you could always shoot on the other two ranges but you would need to take pre-cautions. There are certain disciplines like black powder muzzle loaders that you do need to wear safety glasses to carry out their disciplines and we consider our readers and distance glasses safe because they are made of acrylic nowadays which should be safe enough but some people might need to buy shooting specs.

We consider that all our younger members should wear shooting glasses when shooting at the range. When it comes to your ears we advise that you wear ear defenders to protect your hearing.

Always read the firearms law and how it affects you. If you are going to upgrade to a different discipline read the relevant rules. You need to keep yourself updated with the law, for example 6 or 8 years ago the law on air rifles tightened, in relation to household with anyone under 18 and the storage of air rifles had to be more secure.

Always read about firearms permitted on the different ranges, we have the three ranges and we number them One, Two and Three. All ranges have lists of the permitted usage for that range. No steel BBs can be used on any range. The bullets must be deformable eg soft lead.

Range One: - the air rifle range which is for the air rifles and pistols you can go into a shop and buy over the counter and you don't need a licence for these.

Range Two: - is for .22 rim fire only. Air rifles which are sub 12 ft lb can be used on this range. 22 FAC air rifles can be on this range. No other calibre is allowed on this range. There is a maximum muzzle velocity which is marked up on the range.

Range Three: - any air rifle including FAC rifles. Also .22 rim fire including magnum. Centre fire pistol up to .455 calibre. See list of acceptable carriages on the range. Any muzzle loading pistol, revolver, musket and rifle up to .75 calibre also including miniature cannon. The miniature cannon has its own firing details.

Before you shoot a new weapon or on a new range check with the Captains and the documents on whichever range you are going to use.

On range 1 there are only a few designated lanes and currently we have the ability to shoot at any target paper metal or reactive targets providing they are set out parallel to the hedges. No diagonal shooting.

Range 2 - This club is special as it is one of the on few clubs to have different distance shooting on the same range which is the case for range two and the pistol gallery. On these we have designated firing points which are numbered 1 - 8 on range 2 and 1 – 12 on range 3. Also the target frames are numbered therefore you should use the designated target for the position you are shooting. This is to prevent any round going outside the safety area. The safety area is marked by red and white posts, they are taller on the pistol gallery and they have a triangle on the top that marks the upper limit of where the bullets can land. If you shoot the correct target set out at the correct distance and used for the correct discipline then the bullet should land safely. There are a range of target frames and heights. For example on range 2, there is prone shooting where you are laying on the ground and also bench rest or standing which the rifles are much higher up therefore the targets for prone rifle shooting are shorter and the target frame for bench rest and standing are taller to compensate for the change in angles. There are also different targets for different distances such as 25 yards, 50 metres and 100 yards. The 100 yard target sits just in front of the backstop and the same target can be shot at prone and standing because the bullet will land in the sand in either case. But in comparison the 25 yard standing target is very tall to allow the arch of the bullet to land in the sand. There is quite a significant drop on .22 bullets to account for this.

When you are shooting firearms it is essential that you ensure that the spent bullet is landing in the bullet catcher and not on the grass when it can ricochet or go over the hill where it may hit something. This is not as necessary on the pistol gallery as we can shoot at practically any size target at any distance; we just have to make sure that the one we are using is the right height so the bullets land in the sand. The slope of the sand is protected by a bargeboard and you need to ensure that here is still plenty of room for the bullets to travel down and not hit the bargeboard or the grass and also not too high to worry about where the spent round is going. Also please can we make sure that we are only hitting the targets and not the wood of the target frame.

Warning notices.

There is a red flag that has to go up on the pole outside the air rifle range and the flag needs to go out on the pole night or day when there is shooting happening anywhere on the range. At night the flag is hard to see so there is a red light at the end of the building that is lit up when the generator is running. The generator is our only source of electricity – if you become a full member and you are then able to come to the range with your other shooting buddies and you wish to switch on the generator, please read the instructions carefully and discuss this with experienced members to ensure the protection of the generator. Back to the red light, this warns people that shooting is underway at the club. There is also an A board that is put out if there is shooting on Range 2. So that and the light and the flag are to prevent anyone just walking down the range. When the A board is up and you wish to go down to the

gallery then you must enter the club house and discuss with those shooting on Range 2 when it is safe to go up to the Gallery. The path to the gallery runs alongside Range 2 so no movement is allowed when Range 2 are firing. We use walkies-talkies to communicate. The RCO on range 2 will give permission to come up or go down the range. It is the range officers job to man the path and let nobody up unless all guns are safe on the range and nobody is touching their weapons. When all these criteria are met they can radio the other range and they can come back to the club house. The gallery can radio to ask for permission to come up but there may be competitions happening on range 2 that should not be disturbed so there may be a wait but you are not allowed to come up without permission even if it sounds quiet on range 2.

The emergency procedures and equipment for the range - every range has got first aid kits and an eye bath situated on them. These are self-explanatory. We have also got fire extinguishers. In the case of a fire there are to help evacuate people safely and not necessary to fight the fire - get out and call the fire brigade! Let them fight the fire. We have one other piece of equipment in the clubhouse which is a defibrillator – this will talk you through how to use it. If somebody has had a cardiac arrest call 999 and they will also talk you through usage.

There is one other piece of equipment that is on all ranges which is an air horn.

There is an emergency range stop procedure where if you hear a loud blast on the air horn no matter what range you are on, you stop shooting and do not take another shot. You make sure your weapon is safe and take a step back from the firing point. The RCO will then assess the situation and take appropriate action. This action may be to stop shooting that day so you might get the direction to unload all weapons, make them safe and that there will be no more shooting that day. To unload the weapon you may asked to discharge the loaded air rifle by firing it over the counter into the ground on range 1 only. All other fire arms need to be discharged into the sand backdrop without being aimed at the targets. Then all weapons are slipped and removed from the range in a safe and orderly manner. This may be a passing emergency in which case you might be given the command that you can resume shooting. There could be many reasons for an emergency stop such as an injury or animals roaming the range or walkers accidentally stumbling across firing points. It might be that it is something that you can see happening, it doesn't need to be an RCO that sets off the alarm. Anyone can sound the air horn if there is a danger and they think that shooting should stop immediately. You can just grab the air horn and hold it up in the air and set it off. You do not need to have permission, just do it. It might prevent an accident or even save somebody's life.

OK that concludes the safety brief.