



SAFE SHOOTING

**A TRAINING PROGRAM IN FIREARMS
(LONGARMS) SAFETY FOR NEW SHOOTERS**



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Course Outline



The SSAA NSW Safe Shooting Course has been specifically designed for new shooters applying for the first time for a NSW Firearms licence (longarms). It comprises both theory and practical (face to face) components. The theory required for the course is contained in this booklet, and candidates are advised to read the booklet thoroughly before attending the face to face session.

The face to face session will include:

- a) a review of the theory component, with opportunity for the candidate to seek clarification of anything they are not sure of;
- b) assessment of the candidate's theoretical knowledge, through administration of a closed book multiple choice test;
- c) a practical demonstration of safe handling techniques including demonstration of correct sighting techniques and trigger control, followed by hands on practice (using live ammunition where practical); and
- d) assessment of the candidate's ability to safely handle a firearm.

The candidate must pass the theory assessment before receiving practical instruction or assessment.

While it is recommended that training be delivered face to face, in recognition of applicants from regional and remote areas a combination of distance learning (print and electronic) and/or face to face delivery would be acceptable.

The course can **ONLY** be conducted by an instructor approved by the NSW Commissioner of Police.

Approved instructors must hold an appropriate firearms licence, have a minimum of three years' experience in the safe use of longarms, and hold a Firearms Safety Trainer (FST) instructor approval authorising them to deliver this training.

The time taken to complete both the theory and practical components of the course will depend on the previous experience and knowledge of the candidate. A complete novice could expect to spend at least 4-5 hours to cover all material and assessments, whereas a candidate who already has some knowledge of firearms safety may complete the theory and practical assessments in an hour.

The SSAA NSW Safe Shooting Course is for new shooters applying for a NSW Firearms Licence pertaining to long arms.

Prior to undertaking this course candidates must contact NSW Police Firearms Registry to determine genuine reason and obtain all relevant forms.

Prior to undertaking this course candidates must complete a P650 Declaration Form & produce Photo Identification.

Candidates responding YES on section B of the P650 Declaration **MUST** provide written approval from the Firearms Registry prior to commencing the course.

Introduction

There are a number of reasons that may have led you to apply for a firearms licence – primary production, pest control, hunting, collecting or target shooting to name a few. If you are taking up shooting as a sport, then congratulations on choosing to participate in one of the most enjoyable and safest sports around. This training course has been developed by SSAA NSW to provide an adequate level of training in the safe handling and use of longarms (rifles and shotguns). Along with safety and shooting fundamentals, the training will include some of the legal responsibilities of firearms ownership, basic description of parts and operation as well as correct firearms use. This course covers everything you need to know in order to meet the safety training requirements of the NSW firearms licensing system and has been approved by the NSW Commissioner for Police.

Purpose of this Manual

This manual is not designed as a coaching manual to assist in gaining better competitive scores or higher levels of accuracy. Neither does it address the ethics or techniques employed by successful hunters. It is a plain English guide developed to assist you during your initial safety training, as an applicant for a Firearms Licence in NSW. For further information please contact your local SSAA NSW Branch or Affiliate Club. For further legislative information and fact sheets please visit the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

The SSAA NSW Safe Shooting Course has been specifically designed for new shooters and comprises both theory and practical (face to face) components. The theory required for the course is contained in this booklet, and candidates are advised to read the booklet thoroughly before attending any training session.

The face to face session will include:

- a) a review of the theory component, with opportunity for the candidate to seek clarification of anything they are not sure of;
- b) assessment of the candidate's theoretical knowledge through administration of closed book multiple choice exams;
- c) a practical demonstration of safe handling; and
- d) assessment of the candidate's ability to safely handle a firearm.

Objectives



There are three objectives in this course:

1. First and foremost is the delivery of training that will allow you the ability to gain the knowledge and skill, at a basic level, that will ensure your safe and responsible participation in the sport.
2. The second is to provide participants with a knowledge of the legislative requirements with which they must comply as a firearms licence holder in NSW.
3. The third objective is that by supplying a resource in an easy to use format for use by trainers and trainees at Branch or Affiliate Club level, we will gain a uniform standard of training delivery as well as enhancing the confidence and skills of members within all our Branches and Affiliate Clubs.

By the end of this Course

- You will be able to safely and confidently handle a firearm.
- Know the fundamentals of firearm safe handling.
- Be familiar with your responsibilities as a firearms licence holder in NSW.



Firearms Parts and Operation

A firearm is a mechanical device and as with any machine, it is necessary to understand how it works before it can be safely used and its operation mastered. In the hands of a responsible, knowledgeable and safety conscious person, a firearm is safe. In order to begin to understand how a firearm functions, the names and definition of various types of firearms, as well as the main components must first be identified.

A firearm is defined in the *Firearms Act 1996* as being a gun, or other weapon, that is or was capable of propelling a projectile by means of an explosive, and includes a blank fire firearm, or an air gun, but does not include anything declared by the regulations not to be a firearm.



Handguns



**Three Main Types of
Modern Firearms:**



Types of Firearm

There are three main types of modern firearms: rifles, shotguns and handguns. This course relates only to the first two types, which are collectively known as 'longarms'. If you are interested in obtaining a licence for handguns (pistols), you should contact your local pistol club for information on training.

Longarms come in five main types of operating action: – break action, bolt action, lever action, pump action and self-loading. Most of these have a magazine holding a number of rounds of ammunition. However break action firearms and some bolt action firearms have no magazine. The bolt action rifle is probably the most common type of firearm that you will come across, and you will be using one during the practical part of this course. It has therefore been selected to illustrate the main components of a firearm and how it functions. The other action types contain parts that are functionally similar, and so are only briefly described. If you are interested in further information on any of these you should contact your local shooting club or firearms dealer, or go to the local library.

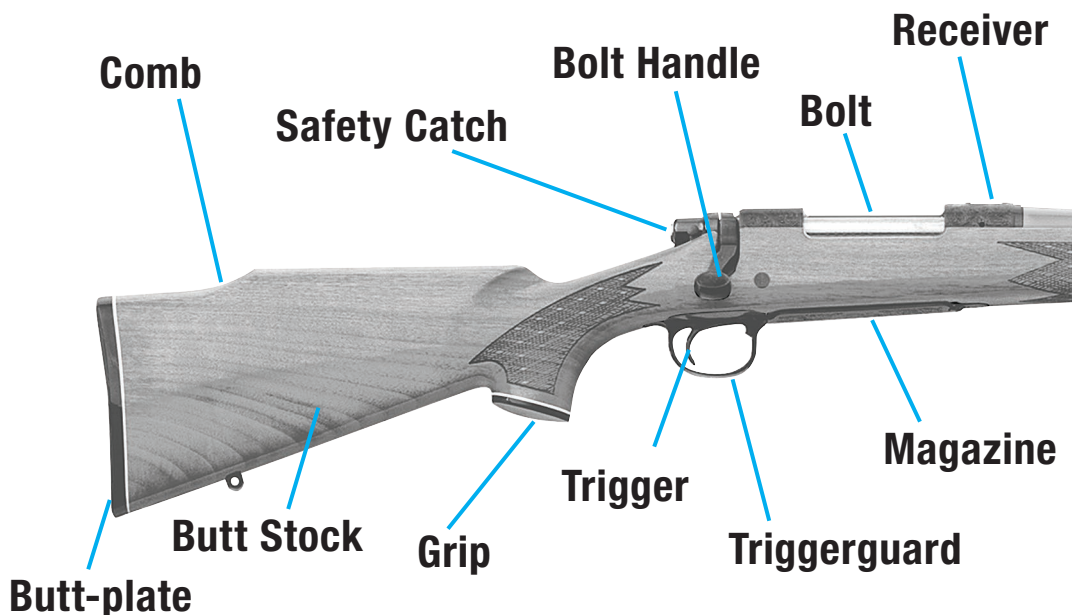


Rifles



Shotguns

Firearms Parts and Operation



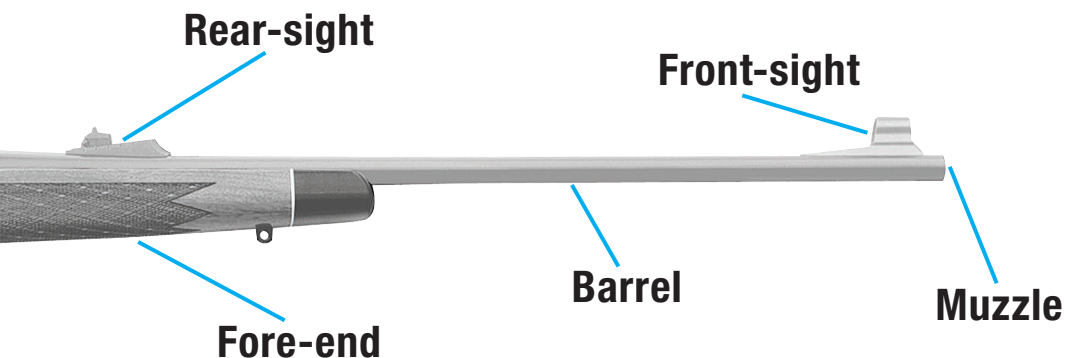
The major parts of a firearm include:

Action – the collective name for the moving parts of a firearm. It enables the firearm to be loaded, fired and unloaded. It includes the firing mechanism (referred to as a 'lock' on older firearms).

Barrel – a hollow tube through which the projectile passes upon firing. The rear end of the barrel is machined to form the 'breech', the end the projectile exits is the 'muzzle', and the internal surface is the 'bore'. Rifle barrels have a number of internal grooves twisting along the length of the barrel. These impart 'spin' to the projectile, stabilising it in flight, leading to greater accuracy and range. Shotgun barrels have no rifling, and are usually used to fire at moving targets at short distances.

Bolt – the block of metal found within an action (also called breechblock) which blocks the rear of the breech when the action is closed, prior to firing.

Breech – that part of the barrel containing the chamber into which the cartridge or projectile is loaded.



Magazine – a box shape, cylindrical or tubular container for holding extra rounds of ammunition in a repeating firearm. It may be an integral part of the action, or may be removable. Tube magazines need to be checked with extreme care to ensure that the firearm is in a safe condition.

Receiver – the frame containing the moving parts of a firearm.

Safety Catch – a mechanical device that prevents the firearm being fired, usually by blocking the operation of the trigger or hammer. Like any mechanical device, it may fail and should never be solely relied upon to prevent an accident. Always point a loaded firearm in a safe direction.

Stock – a structure into which the action and barrel are set so that the shooter can securely hold the firearm while it is being used. The fore-end is that part of the stock forward of the action, the butt stock is behind the action. These may be two separate pieces, or part of a single one.

Trigger – the lever that when pulled, releases the striker (or hammer), which in turn either hits the primer of the cartridge directly, or drives the firing pin into the primer.

Firearms Parts and Operation



The steps in the operation of a firearm include:

Load – loading a cartridge into the chamber.

Cock – operating the action so that the striker is held back under tension. This is called cocking the action.

Lock – closing or locking the action so that the bolt is firmly against the breech face, enclosing the cartridge in the chamber.

Fire – pulling the trigger so that the hammer or firing pin hits the primer of the cartridge in the chamber. The impact of the firing pin causes the priming compound within the primer to ignite, in turn causing the propellant (gunpowder) in the cartridge to start burning. The pressure of the hot gases so generated builds up until it is sufficient to force the projectile to move down the barrel.

Unlock and Extract – the action is opened, moving the bolt away from the breech. In the process the extractor grips or catches the empty cartridge pulling it from the chamber.

Eject – another projection or lever within the action catches on the empty cartridge case flipping it clear of the action. In repeating firearms this allows another cartridge to be picked up from the magazine and loaded into the chamber. Not all firearms eject the cartridge.

The Main Types of Action

The Bolt Action:



The bolt action is operated by pushing the bolt handle forward, causing the bolt assembly to slide in the receiver. The bolt face will collect a cartridge and push it into the chamber as the bolt assembly moves forward. When the bolt handle is pushed down locking lugs engage to lock the action firmly closed so that the cartridge is firmly held in the chamber and the firearm is ready to fire. Generally the act of closing the bolt also 'cocks' the action, that is moves the hammer or firing pin into a position where pulling the trigger will then cause it to fall or strike the primer at the rear of the cartridge, thus firing the round. After firing, the bolt is rotated upward, unlocking the action and extracting the empty cartridge case from the chamber. When the bolt is pulled to the rear the empty case will be ejected and the operation can be repeated.

The Pump Action:



The fore-end stock in a pump action firearm is linked to the bolt by action bars. Sliding the fore-end back and forth operates the bolt.

Firearms Parts and Operation

The Lever Action:



The bolt is linked to a lever located under the stock near the trigger. The action is operated by moving this lever away from the stock and back again.

The Break Action:



Break open actions are commonly found in Australia in double and single barrel shotguns or air rifles. When the action is open it cannot be fired. The action is usually opened with a release lever located on the top of the action frame. Extraction of cartridges occurs as the action swings open. Some firearms eject the spent cartridges on opening. These firearms have no magazine.

Self-loading Actions:



This type of action automatically reloads and re-cocks after firing, without the need to manually work the action. It does not fire automatically – each time the shooter pulls the trigger one shot is fired.

The Muzzleloader:



Muzzleloading firearms do not use self-contained cartridges. The gun powder is measured out and loaded directly into the chamber from the muzzle, and a projectile is pushed down the barrel. There are various methods of igniting the charge. Only 'black powder' is used in muzzleloading firearms. Extra care is required in handling and storing this as it is more volatile than the newer 'smokeless' powders used in modern cartridge firearms.



Ammunition

The major components of a complete round of ammunition (cartridge) are the case, primer, propellant and the projectile.

Case

The case of most modern cartridges is made from brass. Shotgun cases are made of brass and/or plastic. Centrefire cartridge cases can be reloaded by replacing the primer, powder and projectile with components appropriate for that calibre and intended use. Information on safe reloading is contained in reloading manuals available from most firearms dealers.

Primer

A primer is a component of pistol, rifle, and shotgun rounds. Upon being struck with sufficient force by the firing pin, a primer reacts to produce heat which ignites the main propellant charge thus creating high pressure gas which pushes the projectile from the barrel. Many different cartridge priming methods have been tried since the 19th century, but only rimfire and centrefire survive today in target and sporting use.

Propellant

As used in firearms, a propellant is a low explosive of fine granulation which, through burning, produces gases at a controlled rate to provide the energy for propelling a projectile.

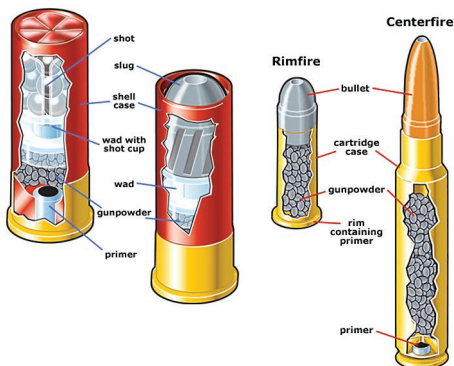
Modern propellant powders are nitro cellulose based and are referred to as “smokeless” due to the very small amount of smoke produced upon firing. The original “gunpowder” was a mixture of sulfur, potassium nitrate and charcoal and produced a huge amount of smoke when fired.

Projectile

In the case of firearms the projectile is the “bullet” that exits the muzzle when the firearm is discharged. A rifle or pistol fires a single projectile whereas a shotgun fires multiple projectiles also known as pellets.

Rimfire Cartridge

Rimfire cartridges use a thin brass case with a hollow bulge, or rim, around the back end. The rim contains the priming compound, while the cartridge case itself contains the propellant powder and the projectile. It is called a rimfire because instead of the firing pin of a gun striking the primer cap at the center of the base of the cartridge to ignite it as in a centrefire cartridge, the pin strikes the base's rim. Once discharged, the rimfire cartridge cannot be reloaded.



Rimfire cartridges are limited to low pressure calibres because of the thin case required to allow the firing pin to crush the rim and ignite the primer. Although once available all the way up to .56 calibre, modern rimfires are now limited to a small number of calibres including the well-known .22 long rifle, .22 short, .22 Magnum and .17 HMR. The low pressures mean that rimfire firearms can be very light and inexpensive, which has helped in their continuing popularity.

Centrefire Cartridge

A centrefire cartridge has the primer located in the center of the cartridge case head. Unlike rimfire cartridges, the primer is a separate and replaceable component. Almost all pistol, rifle, and shotgun ammunition used today is centrefire.

Centrefire cartridges are tough and reliable because the thicker metal cartridge cases can withstand rougher handling without damage. The stronger base of a centrefire cartridge is able to withstand much higher pressure than a thin rimfire cartridge and it is this pressure that gives a bullet higher velocity and greater energy.

While centrefire cartridge cases are complex and expensive to manufacture, the individual cases can be reused after replacing the primer, gunpowder and projectile.

Non Explosive Powered Firearms

Air rifles do not use gunpowder, primers or cases. However they are defined as a firearm in the *NSW Firearms Act 1996*, and so are subject to the same controls as firearms. Air rifles use either compressed gases or a compressed spring to launch a small lead projectile, commonly called a pellet, from the barrel.

Calibres – what do the numbers mean?

This can be a really confusing issue to new shooters, in fact many long-time shooters have a problem coming to grips with descriptions and terminology used to identify and name calibre of ammunition. Looking at it very simply, the number used to define a calibre refers to the bullet diameter, either in metric form e.g. 7mm or in the older Imperial measurement where 1 inch is broken up into 100 parts and the calibre is described as part of 100 e.g. .30 calibre (being 30 out of 100).

Safety Rules

Using a Firearm Safely

Shooting is one of the safest sports principally because shooters deliberately and consciously follow accepted procedures for the safe handling of firearms. If used carelessly, or in an unsafe fashion, firearms can inflict serious or lethal injury. Safety must always be the first concern when handling or using any form of firearm whether in the field, on the range, at home or whilst travelling.

The cause of all accidents involving firearms can be traced to ignorance and/or carelessness. Ignorance and/or carelessness is displayed when a person handles a firearm without knowing the safety rules, or how the firearm operates. Equally dangerous is the person who, although knowing the correct firearm operation and safety rules, becomes careless in properly applying that knowledge. In both of these cases, accidents can easily happen. When people practice responsible ownership and use of firearms, accidents do not happen.

Basic Firearms Safety

- **Treat all firearms as if they are loaded.**
- **Always point your firearm in a safe direction (never at another human being).**
- **Don't load a live round into the chamber of a firearm until you are ready to shoot.**
- **Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.**

Treat all firearms as if they are loaded

Always treat all firearms as loaded even when you know that they are not. Never assume that a firearm is not loaded and always visually inspect or "clear" all firearms that you may handle.

Always point your firearm in a safe direction

It is important that you are always aware of the direction the muzzle (front end of the barrel) is pointing in, which while on the range should be facing the target area. In this position, even if it were unintentionally discharged, it would not cause any injury or damage.

Regardless of this, you are responsible for being aware at all times of where your muzzle is pointing and **NEVER** point a firearm at another person, even when you know it is unloaded.



Always keep your finger off the trigger

Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot. When holding a firearm, a person has a natural tendency to place their index finger through the trigger guard and onto the trigger. When holding a firearm you must consciously remember to straighten your index finger and rest it along the outside of the trigger guard, with practice this will become an automatic action.

DO NOT touch the trigger until the Range Officer has given the command to fire and you are actually ready to fire at the target.

Never load a firearm until you are ready to shoot

You must always keep the firearm unloaded until you are ready to shoot. When picking up a firearm keep it pointed in a safe direction, with your finger outside the trigger guard immediately remove the magazine if fitted and open the action. Then look into the chamber and magazine to ensure all are clear of ammunition and therefore unloaded.

If you are not sure how to open the action and unload the firearm, leave it alone and get help from a competent person.

No firearm should be stored in a loaded condition and you must treat every firearm as if it were loaded.

Safety in the Field and on the Range

- When passing a firearm to someone or when picking up a firearm, check that it is unloaded by opening the action and looking inside the chamber and magazine.
- Positively identify your target, always ensure that the firing zone is clear and identify what is beyond your target.
- Never fire at hard surfaces or water – projectiles can ricochet in unexpected, unsafe, directions from these surfaces.
- When you have finished shooting, remove the magazine (if possible), unload and check that the chamber is empty. Never have loaded firearms in your car, home or camp.
- Do not climb fences or other obstacles with loaded firearms.
- It is strongly recommended that you wear eye and ear protection to protect yourself against the noise and debris that can be emitted upon firing.

Safety Rules

Safety in the Field and on the Range (Continued)

- Never mix shooting with alcohol or drugs; always be aware of the effects of prescription drugs. It is an offence to handle or use firearms whilst under the influence of alcohol or any other drug.
- Understand the operation of your firearm, keep it in good repair and always use the correct ammunition.
- Use only the correct ammunition for the firearm. Most firearms have the ammunition type stamped on the barrel. If in doubt ask.
- Take all reasonable precautions to prevent unauthorised access to your firearm and ammunition. Never store firearms and ammunition together, and safely lock all firearms and live ammunition away when not in use.
- Make sure that all firearms are transported safely and securely, to prevent accidents and misuse or theft.
- Encourage safe and responsible handling of firearms in the field, on the range, and within the community.
- When shooting at a range, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the range rules. Always follow the commands of the Range Officer.
- Be familiar with the legal requirements for safe storage, firearms ownership, possession and use in NSW or any other State or Territory you may visit.



Using a Firearm



As part of the approved course of firearm safety in NSW, you will be required to demonstrate that you understand the principles of safe firearms handling. You will also need to complete a practical test before a firearms licence can be applied for.

Whilst performing these tasks you must follow the basic and general safety rules at all times.

When you first pick up a firearm, you must check that it is “safe”, that is, that it is not loaded with ammunition. Pick up a firearm carefully and open the action to make sure that the chamber and magazine are both empty. After checking that the firearm is safe, keep the action open so you, and everyone around you, can see and be assured that there is no possibility of the firearm discharging.

You must also be able to demonstrate that you can handle a firearm in a number of situations. When passing a firearm to another person you must keep the action open and the barrel pointing away from you or any other person. When carrying a firearm, again make sure you always point the barrel in a safe direction.

If you need to negotiate a fence or other obstacles, do not climb through while holding the firearm. Instead, place the unloaded firearm, with the action open, in a position from which you can retrieve it once you have negotiated the obstacle and where it will not be in the way as you climb through. Once you have negotiated the fence or obstacle, you are now able to pick up the firearm and continue on your way. When you have other people with you, another licensed person can hold your firearm while you negotiate the obstacle and then hand it back to you.

When placing a firearm in, or removing it from, a vehicle, check that the action is open and clear of any ammunition.

You will also be required to show that you can operate a firearm safely and correctly, going through the procedures of identifying your target, loading, firing and making your firearm safe.

Malfunctions

If a malfunction should occur, do your best to make the firearm “safe”. Whenever a malfunction occurs, treat the firearm as loaded, keep your finger away from the trigger and keep the barrel pointing in a safe direction. Always assume the firearm is loaded and ready to fire even if you believe it to be safe.

One common malfunction is a misfire; when the firearm does not discharge when the trigger is pulled. In this case, wait at least thirty seconds before opening the action as the round may go off unexpectedly. Again make sure that you keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction at all times.

Using a Firearm

Malfunctions (Continued)

Another possible malfunction is when a cartridge case becomes stuck while cycling the action or after firing. These jams are normally fairly straightforward to clear, however special care is needed if a live round becomes stuck in the chamber. In this case make sure the barrel remains pointing in a safe direction, and where possible open the action and remove the bolt and magazine. If you are on a range, immediately call the Range Officer. When in the field, remove the bolt to prevent any accidental discharge and take your firearm to a gunsmith. Never attempt to remove a stuck live round by putting a rod down the barrel from the muzzle.



Cleaning

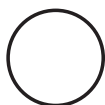
You should learn how to clean and maintain your firearm. This will help prevent your firearm from malfunctioning, as well as improving your accuracy. Most firearms manufacturers, gunsmiths and cleaning equipment suppliers have information about correct cleaning procedures.

- Ensure that your firearm is UNLOADED prior to cleaning.
- Have the appropriate cleaning rod, brushes, mops, jags and patches for the firearm.
- Field strip the firearm so that components can be thoroughly cleaned and lubricated.
- Particular attention should be taken to ensure that the bore of the firearm is clean and lubricated.
- To inhibit corrosion, prevent degradation and maintain the accuracy of a firearm it must be cleaned on a regular basis, especially after firing.





Sights and Aiming



Rear peep sight



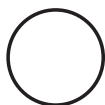
Post front sight



Correct alignment



Correct sight picture



Rear peep sight



Aperture front sight



Correct alignment



Correct sight picture



Open rear sights



Post front sight



Correct alignment



Correct sight picture

Correct sight alignment is the key to accurate shooting. Angular misalignment of the front sight with the rear sight introduces an error that is multiplied with distance.

To fire an accurate shot, it is essential to concentrate on the front sight while squeezing the trigger. The eye is capable of focusing clearly on only one object at a time. It cannot keep the rear sight, the front sight and the target in focus at the same time. When the eye is focused properly for a shot, the front sight should appear sharp and clear, the rear sight should appear a little less sharp and the target should look blurred.

No shooter, no matter how expert, can hold a firearm in a firing position without some movement. This movement is called the "arc of movement". The very best that any shooter can do is to keep the arc of movement at a minimum, it cannot be eliminated.

While maintaining a correct sight picture the shooter should gently squeeze the trigger while concentrating on minimising the arc of movement.

Using a Firearm

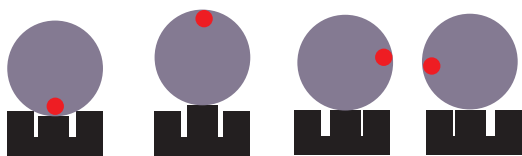
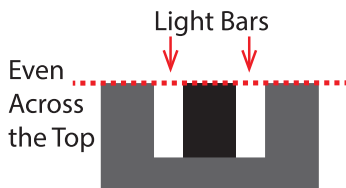
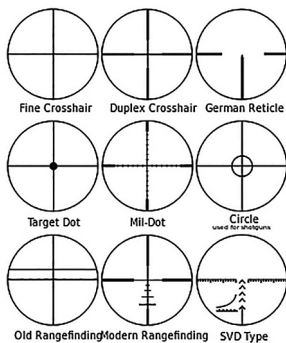
Dry Firing is the “shooting” of an unloaded firearm. It is useful in practicing marksmanship skills and allows a new shooter to concentrate on sight alignment and trigger squeeze without being distracted by the noise or recoil of live ammunition.

Dry firing is a good training exercise and can be practiced at home by picking out a point on the wall and going through a firing sequence. Dry firing practice will provide an opportunity to the new shooter to become familiar with properly applying good shooting fundamentals, especially trigger squeeze and sight alignment.

Always be absolutely certain that the firearm is unloaded and that it never points in the direction of any other person. Don't forget, you must obey all firearm safety rules whenever handling a firearm, even when dry firing.

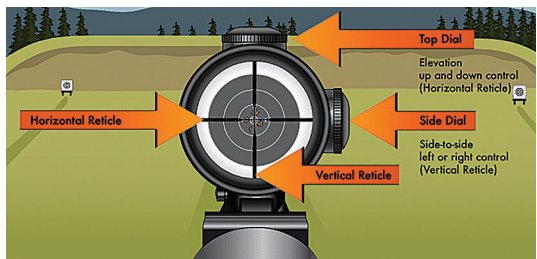
Common Shooting Errors

Most shooter's problems result from the failure to properly apply the two most important shooting fundamentals: sight alignment and trigger squeeze. However, other factors may also cause a shooter to have problems in properly delivering a shot to the target.



DISPLACEMENT OF THE BULLET WHEN THERE IS ANGULAR SHIFT ERROR IN THE ALIGNMENT OF THE FRONT SIGHT

PROPER SIGHT ALIGNMENT AND SIGHT PICTURE



Personal Health and Hygiene



Lead Risk

Lead risk is a very real danger when shooting and must be treated seriously. Always wash your hands after shooting or handling firearms and ammunition. Remember that shooting involves handling lead as well as cleaning solvents known to be harmful to humans, both directly and as vapors. Never eat, drink or smoke unless you have washed your hands.



Hearing Protection

Hazardous noise levels are a very real danger when shooting and must be treated seriously. Always buy and use the best available hearing protection.



- Ear plugs – these are cheap and highly portable (easily fit in a pocket), and can be effective when used correctly. However, they are usually only made for a one time use.
- Molded plugs – these are made from high-grade silicon, they are molded to fit your ear exactly and will last for many years. Their perfect fit makes these plugs very effective.
- Ear muffs – are easy to use and provide good protection. Ear muffs with the highest rating are recommended.
- Electronic or amplified muffs – these are ear muffs with noise limiting electronics that are designed to cut loud impulses. They will still allow you to hear conversation while cutting out the noise of shooting.



Eye Protection



When choosing Shooting Glasses, nothing is more important than impact protection and barrier protection against projectiles. Lens color, fit, etc. are all important, but no eyewear is worth owning if the lens won't properly protect your eyes; you need decent protective glasses. They need to be able to withstand impacts from ejected shell cases or worse and also wrap around your face enough to prevent irritants and particles from entering under your glasses from the sides. It is important that all shooters invest in strong, high quality, eye protection.

Enclosed Footwear

Sandals, thongs or other open footwear are NOT ACCEPTABLE when shooting – enclosed footwear must be worn.



NSW Firearms Legislation*

Course participants are advised to make themselves aware of the General Legislative Requirements available on the Home Page and Licence Page of the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms. Study of these General Legislative Requirements should be included in pre-course reading by all candidates.

Firearms Licences

The *NSW Firearms Act 1996* makes it an offence to possess or use a firearm without an appropriate licence or permit. Applicants for a firearms licence must be at least 18 years old and must satisfy the Police Commissioner that they have passed an approved course in firearms safety, that they have a genuine reason for having a licence and they are a fit and proper person to have possession of firearms.

It is the responsibility of all firearms licence holders to be aware of, and comply with the firearms laws of NSW and any other State that they may travel to or through. It is an offence to contravene the conditions on the licence.

NOTE: Personal protection or the protection of another person does not constitute a genuine reason for possession and use of a firearm. Additionally, the protection of property does not constitute a genuine reason for possession and use of a firearm, other than for the genuine reason of Business Security Industry.

When applying for a firearms licence in NSW you must:

- be a NSW resident (or about to become a NSW resident);
- be 18 years of age or over;
- complete a firearms safety training course;
- confirm that you are able to meet the safe storage requirements for the category of licence concerned; and
- be a fit and proper person and be able to be trusted with possession of firearms without presenting a danger to public safety.

Personal history checks are conducted on all applicants to ensure that provisions within the legislation, including provisions with respect to public safety are met. Certain criminal history may prevent a person from obtaining a firearms licence in NSW. A licence cannot be issued if:



- a person is subject to an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO), or for 10 years from the expiry of the AVO;
- a person is subject to a good behaviour bond for a prescribed offence;
- a person is subject to a firearms or weapons prohibition order; and/or
- a person has been convicted within the last 10 years for an offence prescribed by the Regulations.

A prescribed offence is a conviction for offences involving firearms or weapons, prohibited drugs, violence, offences of sexual nature or involving fraud, dishonesty, stealing, robbery or offences relating to terrorism.

It is an offence to supply false or misleading information in relation to an application for a firearms licence.

Minors Permits

The applicant must be aged between 12 and 18 years of age and the permit will be issued subject to the consent of the parent or legal guardian of the applicant. Proof of legal guardianship is required.

This permit authorises the minor to possess and use firearms under the direct supervision of a firearms licence holder for the purpose of receiving instruction in the safe use of firearms or competing in shooting events. This permit does not authorise the acquisition of firearms.

A minor's permit will expire when you are 18 years and 3 months of age. An application for a firearms licence will be forwarded to you before the expiry of your minors permit

Genuine reasons for obtaining a firearms licence

Licence holders who use club membership to support their genuine reason must maintain their membership for the duration of their licence otherwise the genuine reason no longer applies and loss of licence may occur.

A licence holder who is a member of an approved target shooting club must, over any 12 month period that the licence is in force, participate in no less than 4 shooting competitions conducted by any approved target shooting club OR attend a shooting range where any approved target shooting club conducts shooting activities, on no less than 4 occasions for shooting practice.

A licence holder who is a member of an approved hunting club must participate in no less than 2 events in any 12 month period that the licence is in force. The events must be approved by your own hunting club or by any other approved hunting club and involve hunting, shooting or firearms safety training.

Club attendance is a condition of the licence and noncompliance may result in loss of licence.

NSW Firearms Legislation*

Genuine reasons for obtaining a firearms licence (Continued)

- **Sport/Target Shooting** – target shooting activities as a club member on an approved target shooting range.
- **Recreational Hunting/Vermin Control** – hunting and vermin control on rural land where the person is the owner/occupier or has permission to shoot from an owner/occupier or an authorised Government Agency or is a member of an approved hunting club.
- **Primary Production** – for the business of Primary Production.
- **Vertebrate Pest Animal Control** – contract shooters or officers of prescribed Government Agencies needing to suppress vertebrate pest animals or primary producers participating in an authorised eradication campaign.
- **Business or Employment** – security business, security guards, commercial fisherman, or other businesses who can demonstrate a genuine occupational need for a firearms licence.
- **Rural Occupation** – a person employed or engaged in a rural occupation and who requires the use of firearms.
- **Animal Welfare** – RSPCA or Animal Welfare League employees, veterinary practitioners, employees of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) or Local Land Services, owner, transporter, drover or other handler of animals which require the use of firearms.
- **Firearms Collection** – a person who is a club member wishing to collect firearms for a genuine historic, thematic, financial or commemorative value.



Licence Categories

Licence category A covers air rifles, rimfire rifles (other than self-loading), shotgun/rimfire combinations and shotguns (other than self-loading or pump action). Any or all of the above genuine reasons can be used when applying for a Category A licence.

Licence category B covers muzzle loading longarms, centre-fire rifles (other than self-loading) and shotgun/centre-fire rifle combinations. Any or all of the above genuine reasons can be used when applying for a Category B licence.

For Licence categories A & B target shooters must be a member of an approved target shooting club. Recreational hunters must either be a member of an approved hunting club, and/or submit to the Registry written permission from a landowner giving the licence applicant permission to hunt on their property.

Licence category C covers self-loading rimfire rifles with a magazine capacity of no more than 10 rounds and pump action and self-loading shotguns with a magazine capacity of no more than five rounds. The only genuine reasons for this category of licence are primary production, or target shooting (only for shotguns). Target shooters must be a member of an approved target shooting club affiliated with the Australian Clay Target Association or other approved peak shooting body such as SSAA, and provide evidence that you have a physical need for a shotgun of this category in order to compete.

Licence category D covers all firearms covered in category C, plus self-loading rimfire rifles with a magazine capacity of more than 10 rounds, self-loading centrefire rifles, and shotguns with a magazine capacity of more than five rounds. The only genuine reason for this category of licence is vertebrate pest control and applicants must be a professional contract shooter, a primary producer, or employed or authorised by a government body.

Licence category H covers all handguns. The only genuine reasons for an H category licence are target shooting or business or employment. Target pistol shooters must maintain membership of an approved pistol club.

Licence category G covers firearms. This category of licence does not permit the licensee to use or fire any firearms held under this licence. The only genuine reason for this class of licence is collecting, and the applicant must be a member of an approved firearms collecting club. More information on this licence category and other licence categories can be found on the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

NSW Firearms Legislation*

Acquiring and Disposing of Firearms

All firearms (other than some particular types of antique firearm) must be registered, and all transfers of ownership must be processed through a licensed firearms dealer. Before acquiring or purchasing a firearm, you must have an appropriate firearms licence and a permit to acquire that type of firearm. Application forms for permits to acquire are available from clubs, firearms dealers or by emailing the NSW Police Firearms Registry at firearmsenq@police.nsw.gov.au. The legislation imposes a 28 day cooling off period for the issue of a permit to acquire, however the waiting time has been reduced in certain situations.

When selling or disposing of a firearm you must sell it to an authorised firearms dealer or a licensed person with an appropriate permit to acquire, and the transfer must be processed through a licensed firearms dealer. Unwanted firearms can also be handed in to a Police Station. An unlicensed person who comes into possession of a firearm must immediately surrender it to a police officer.

- A person must not supply, acquire, possess or use a firearm that is not registered. Unregistered firearms must be immediately surrendered to police.
- It is an offence for a person to possess or use a firearm without the authority of a licence or permit.
- It is an offence to use a firearm other than in connection with the licence holder's genuine reason for possessing or using the firearm.

Acquiring and Disposing of Ammunition

You cannot purchase or possess ammunition unless you are over 18 years of age and hold a licence or permit authorising you to possess or use a firearm that takes that ammunition. All ammunition sales and purchases must be conducted through a licensed firearms dealer or the club armourer, or ammunition may be purchased from the holder of an Ammunition Purchase and Sell permit (e.g. sports store).

When you go to the firearms dealer or club armourer to buy ammunition, you must take:

- identification showing your name and address; and
- your current firearms licence or permit authorising you to possess the firearm for which the ammunition is being purchased; or
- the permit authorising the purchase of the ammunition.



Storage of Firearms

All licence holders in NSW are subject to the general requirement for safe storage of firearms under section 39 of the *NSW Firearms Act 1996*. Any person in possession of a firearm must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the firearm is kept safely, is not lost or stolen and does not come into the possession of an unauthorised person.

When any firearm is not actually being used or carried, it must be stored in a locked receptacle of a type approved by the Commissioner of Police and that is constructed of hard wood or steel and not easily penetrable. There are specific requirements for the safe storage of firearms for category AB and CDH licence holders and these may be obtained from the Safe Storage page on the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

Any receptacle must be secure enough to prevent unauthorised entry. If police determine, upon inspection, that the receptacle is easily penetrated, due to the material used, or the type of lock, or the ease of using a crow bar or similar to jemmy open the door, or the positioning of the receptacle, police will not pass the inspection and will advise on the alterations required to make the receptacle compliant.

Any ammunition for the firearm must be stored in a separate locked container of a type approved by the Commissioner.

It is a condition on a licence that the licensee allows inspection by police of the safe keeping and storage facilities for the firearm at a mutually agreed time. If your safe storage requires inspection, police will contact you to arrange a time for the inspection. Upon successful completion of the inspection, police will notify the Firearms Registry and issue you with an inspection event number.



NSW Firearms Legislation*

Transportation of Firearms

All licence holders in NSW are subject to the general requirement for safe storage of firearms under Part 4 of the *NSW Firearms Act 1996*. Any person in possession of a firearm must take all reasonable precautions to ensure the firearm is kept safely, is not lost or stolen and does not come into the possession of an unauthorised person. Further information on transport of firearms can be obtained from the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

Although there are no legislative requirements for the transport of category A & B firearms the Commissioner has determined that 'all reasonable precautions' have been met if category A & B firearms are conveyed in the same manner as category C, D & H firearms as described below.

Category C, D & H firearms must be conveyed unloaded, with the ammunition kept in a locked container separate from the firearms. They must be rendered temporarily incapable of being fired (e.g. by removal of the bolt/firing mechanism or the use of trigger locks) or must be kept in a locked container that is properly secured to, or is within the vehicle.

Reasonable precautions to prevent loss or theft would include the security of the vehicle in general; security of the vehicle when left unattended and how long the vehicle is left unattended. Leaving the firearms unattended overnight or for extended periods of time without added security or locking the vehicle in a secure compound would not be considered to be reasonable precautions to prevent loss or theft.

Handling firearms during this course whilst unlicensed

The *NSW Firearms Act 1996* gives authority under section 6B for unlicensed persons to participate in directly supervised shooting activities such as 'Try Shooting' at an approved range, and approved firearms safety training courses such as the SSAA NSW Safe Shooting Course for the purpose of obtaining a firearms licence. A P650 personal history declaration must be completed prior to the commencement of the course.

Further information on the P650 personal history declaration is available on the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

Penalties for Breach of the Act and Regulation

Penalties for breaching the Firearms Act or Regulations are severe, ranging from suspension or revocation of a firearms licence for a period of 10 years, to imprisonment for up to 14 years.

Assessment Guidelines



Recognition of Prior Learning

The following documentation will be recognised as demonstrating a sufficient level of prior learning, to meet the requirements of the practical assessment:

1. A firearms licence or minors permit issued after 1996 by any Australian State or Territory.
2. Evidence that the person is a serving member of the Australian Armed Forces, or has been discharged within the last five years.

Candidates claiming RPL for the practical assessment will still have to undertake and pass the theory assessment.

The Assessment Procedure

The competency of each new shooter completing this course of study will be assessed through a series of questions, and by observation of the candidate.

Part A of the Assessment will consist of a series of multiple choice questions. Part 'A', can be conducted as either a written assessment, or verbally by question and answer at the discretion of the assessor. If the latter method is adopted, then the assessor must indicate this on both the questionnaire and the assessment answer sheet that this method was used.

The candidate must pass the Part A assessment before undertaking Part B

Part B is a practical assessment of the candidate. It will include observation of the candidate's adherence to correct procedures for handling firearms, and their knowledge of firearms parts and function. Assessments conducted at an approved shooting range can use live ammunition, however assessments conducted at any other premises are restricted to using an unloaded firearm (dry firing).

A student who does not feel ready for the assessment at the completion of the course should discuss arrangements for alternative assessment times, or additional instruction, with their instructor.

In the event that a student disagrees with the assessment outcome, the matter should be raised first with the assessor. If the student subsequently wishes to appeal the assessment, a written request should be forwarded to the club secretary.

Important Contact Information

SSAA (NSW) Inc.

For general shooting and club related information SSAA (NSW) Inc. can be contacted at:

- Postal address: PO Box 1001 St Marys NSW 1790
- Phone: 02 8889 0400
- Website: www.ssaansw.org.au
- Email: admin@nsw.ssaa.org.au

The NSW Police Firearms Registry website

The NSW Police Firearms Registry website has a range of information including legislative information and FACT Sheets which are invaluable to licence holders.

Please visit the NSW Police Firearms Registry website at:
www.police.nsw.gov.au/services/firearms.

The NSW Police Firearms Registry can be contacted via email to firearmsenq@police.nsw.gov.au or via the Customer Service Line on 1300 362 562.

*SSAA (NSW) Inc. wishes to thank and acknowledge the NSW Police Firearms Registry for its contribution to this training material by making available the information on legislation on pages 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30.

