

# SASS Wild Bunch™ Range Operations Manual

Compiled and Edited  
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SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY  
Wild Bunch™ Range Operations

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## SINGLE ACTION SHOOTING SOCIETY Wild Bunch™ Range Operations

All Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Range Officers must know and understand the most current version of the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Shooters Handbook, be informed, and understand any recent changes. It is recommended all posse leaders be trained in this Basic Range Operations Course. We must keep in mind what firearms are designed to do and remember they can be very dangerous and deadly unless great care is taken while handling and shooting them. We must always treat every firearm as loaded and ready to fire!

### **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

Good sportsmanship best defines “the Spirit of the Game.” When designing and running a match, every match Director and Range Officer must keep in mind the event is solely for the safe enjoyment of the shooters. Range Officers must be professional, polite, and friendly. The Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Handbook is to be followed in designing a match, and SASS rules enforced equally and consistently. These rules have been developed over time and provide our sport with a high level of safety and consistency. This course was designed to give you a better understanding of the rules and how to apply them.

Completion of this basic safety course shows your commitment to SASS and demonstrates your willingness to jump in and help out where needed on your posse.

Because our goal is to provide a safe, fun shooting experience, any competitor or Range Official who uses foul language or becomes belligerent or threatening in any manner will be disqualified from the event, and, at the Match Director’s discretion, may be required to leave the range.

It is expected both Match Directors and participants will understand the intent of the Wild Bunch™ rules and abide by them. Any modifications to firearms or any equipment not specifically listed in the Wild Bunch™ Handbook or referenced in this manual is illegal.

### **FAILURE TO ENGAGE**

A “failure to engage” occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” A Failure to Engage applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions. In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second failure to engage/Spirit of the Game penalty is assessed.



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**SAFETY RULES (FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS)**

**All competitors are Safety Officers.**

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous, and a serious accident can occur. However, the history of Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting affiliated matches is free of any serious accident.

Every participant in a Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting match is expected to be a Safety Officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her own safe conduct, and all shooters are expected to remain alert for unsafe actions by others.

Range Officers and shooters are expected to confront any participant observed in an unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in the offending shooter's ejection from the range.

While every participant is a safety officer, the assigned Posse Officials and Match Officials, as described in this document, are the ONLY persons who may judge a shooter whether on or away from the firing line.

**RANGE OFFICERS**

The purpose of trained club Range Officers is to provide the sport of Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting with competent, firm, and fair officials at all levels of competition and allow Range Officers to perform any duty on the posse.

The main objective of the Chief Range Officer is to assist the competitor safely through the course of fire and be an authority in all areas of gun safety, any time, any place.

**Range Officer's Motto:**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE RANGE OFFICER IS TO SAFELY ASSIST  
THE SHOOTER THROUGH THE COURSE OF FIRE.**

The two words in this statement paramount to why a Range Officer is even necessary on the firing line are assist and safely. Let's look at these two words separately and how they affect one's actions and attitudes.

**ASSIST**

As a Range Officer, you are there to assist the shooter. You will notice the word "penalize" doesn't appear anywhere, but the word "assist" does. This is



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not to say you won't be called upon to assess penalties when they are appropriate, but it is NOT your first priority. You are there to prevent safety violations before they occur.

Assisting the shooter may take many forms. Some of the more important ways in which you can achieve this are:

**Information.** The best way to assist the shooter is to give consistent, complete information about the stage, such as starting position, starting location, round count for each gun, where to stage each gun, and the intent of the stage. Most of the basic information will appear on the stage description, however, many of the smaller details will not. For example, the shooter may know to sit in the chair at the start but may not know he can re-position the chair to fit his or her size.

**BE CONSISTENT in what you say and how you say it. Make sure only one Range Officer answers any questions for that stage. This way the same question is answered the same way every time. Every posse must hear the same information the same way. Always read the stage description word for word as it appears on the sheet, whether you have it memorized or not.**

**Shooter Inventory.** Another good way to assist the shooter is to visually inventory each shooter at the line just before starting your range commands. This means you should inspect the shooter to see if they have all the equipment to complete the course of fire. For example, if you know the shooter is supposed to have shotgun shells on their person, but you don't see them, simply ask where they are. Also, look for the appropriate safety equipment. We all know how disconcerting it is to fire your first shot only to realize your earplugs aren't in!

**Assessment.** Assess the shooter's condition. We have all seen a shooter who is suffering from a bad case of match nerves. Even though this person may have plenty of experience, adrenaline is a strong drug and has many adverse effects. A person suffering from the effects of match nerves may be a hazard to himself or others, so it is important to pay special attention to a shooter who may be shaking violently, has trouble talking, or seems a little lost about the stage requirements. It may be wise to suggest the shooter sit down and wait a while longer before he shoots.

**Anticipate.** With time and experience, you will be able to anticipate the shooter's next move. If you can anticipate the shooter's next move, you may prevent him or her from acquiring penalties or committing an unsafe act. This is the mark of a truly good Range Officer.

**Attitude.** The best Range Officers have the best attitude. If you can do your job well and have fun too, then you will find the posse generally also has a good time. You will additionally find you are less likely to have any serious



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confrontations, and the posse as a whole will work more efficiently. Remember, it's your attitude that sets the mood for the entire match.

Coaching. This is the most direct way to assist the shooter after the course of fire begins. The Chief Range Officer should coach only when someone looks momentarily confused or lost, if they attempt to put down a long gun with the action closed or address the wrong target. However, it's not your job to "shoot the stage" for the competitor, coaching him in every action, and some shooters don't like to be coached at all. It is prudent to determine if there is anyone on the posse who doesn't want to be coached. Appropriate coaching is not considered RO interference and, therefore, will never be grounds for a re-shoot. Improper coaching that either impedes the shooter's progress or results in a procedure penalty may be grounds for a reshoot.

### **SAFELY**

Safely, as it applies here, has nothing to do with the rules per se. When we talk about assisting the shooter through a course of fire safely, we mean "without incident." An accident or incident, which has the potential for injury, is of grave concern to all who are exposed to the danger, which naturally includes the Range Staff. Therefore, it is critical to do what is necessary to avoid or prevent such incidents from occurring. How is this accomplished?

1. Course Design. Some course designs are unsafe and should be avoided or changed. Example: a shooter leaves one shooting position and runs up-range (towards the spectators) to pull a pistol from his holster. This would mean the shooter, if he draws the pistol too early, could sweep the crowd with the muzzle of the gun. Solution: either stage the pistol so the competitor can't get to it until he or she is pointed in a safe direction or change the stage so the competitor has to run down-range.

**Don't be afraid to refuse to allow your posse to shoot an unsafe stage.  
Insist the stage be made safe before proceeding.**

2. Anticipate. Again, if you can anticipate what the shooter may do next, you may be able to stop an unsafe act from occurring. This is not to suggest you are expected to put yourself in danger in order to stop the unsafe act, but you might be able to prevent it from happening through verbal direction or physical action.
3. Watch the Gun. Many shooters acting as the Timer Operator rarely know what or where to actually look. Often, you will see them counting misses or looking around at the spotters. If you want to really know how to make more exact calls and anticipate the shooter's next move, watch the gun! By actually looking at the gun, you can identify where the gun is pointing and usually what target the shooter is engaging. This is critical if you have to make a call pertaining to correct target engagement. By watching the gun,



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you can also identify squib loads, warn the shooter if he or she is getting close to the 170° safety limit, or stop the shooter if there is a problem with the gun itself.

4. **Stay Within Arm's Length.** In order to stop an unsafe act, the Chief Range Officer must be within arm's length of the shooter. In fact, the appropriate position for the Chief Range Officer is behind and off to the strong side of the shooter. In other words, if the shooter is right-handed, the Chief Range Officer should be within arm's length of the shooter, to the rear and right of centerline. In this way, you can see the shooter operate the gun with his or her strong hand. NEVER let the competitor get away from you.

After you have run five or six competitors over a stage, you may get tired or lazy about staying up with the shooter, but remember, if that person commits an unsafe act, such as breaking the 170° safety rule, you will not be in a position to prevent it. If you are more than three feet away, you may not be able to see the gun. If you are getting tired, pass the timer to another Range Officer.

These are just some of the ways the Range Officer can apply safety in a practical manner.

### **RANGE OFFICER ATTITUDE**

1. Be courteous and considerate of your fellow competitors. Never be overzealous in your duties.
2. Always be firm, but fair.
3. When penalizing a contestant, do not allow yourself to be intimidated by the competitor. Stand your ground but do so in a professional manner.
4. Don't be a "hard-ass."
5. Be helpful to the competitor—learn to identify the seasoned shooters from the newer shooter—you can usually tell by their manner and confidence. If seasoned shooters need to know something, they'll ask; if newer shooters need help or coaching, give them all they need. Pay closer attention to newer shooters—from loading to unloading.
6. Always refer to the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Handbook when stating the rules. Don't quote them from memory; you may be wrong. Enforce the rules as written, not what you think they mean. This document offers interpretations and clarifications of the rules and procedures referenced within the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Handbook that will be helpful in making the correct call.
7. Make the call and call them the way you see them!!! There are checks and balances in place. In cases of rule and policy interpretation, you may be overruled. If you are overruled, don't take it personally. Be glad for the competitor if it goes in his/her favor.



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8. Never allow a competitor to badger, abuse, or argue with you or any other match official. Be firm and fair, but if they persist, don't argue with them. This is a gun sport, not a tennis match! Heated words between folks wearing firearms are not acceptable. Bring this type of behavior immediately to the attention of the Range Master or Match Director.
9. Always read the Handbook from the contestant's viewpoint.
10. Always give the contestant the benefit of doubt.

**MATCH PROCEDURES AND TERMS**

All match positions described below are Range Officers. The Timer Operator is the Chief Range Officer during shooting stage operations.

1. Match Director is in charge of the overall match and is required to ensure qualified officials are in place in all tournament areas.
2. Range Master is in charge of and oversees all stages and ensures qualified officials are in place on all stages. He reviews all stages and ensures they are designed and constructed to operate in a safe manner for both competitors and officials.
3. Posse Marshal (Required)  
Posse Marshals cannot perform all the Range Officer functions themselves but must ensure Range Officer assignments are made and the rules and regulations are being followed. It is recommended all posse leaders be trained in this Basic Range Operations Course.

Is in charge of a posse and is required to ensure all positions are manned to safely and efficiently run the posse through each course of fire.

Will understand all stages, conduct a walk-through, and answer all questions before beginning each stage.

Will appoint at least one deputy if one is not assigned.

At larger matches with additional personnel available the Posse Marshal should not act as the Timer Operator. The Posse Marshal is the next part of the appeal process if the shooter is not satisfied with the Timer Operator's call.

4. Deputy (Required)  
Acts on behalf of the Posse Marshal when the Marshal is shooting or otherwise unavailable.  
  
The Marshal and Deputy should be separated in the shooting order.
5. Timer Operator (Required)  
Is the Chief Range Officer for the stage and is in charge of the firing line, as long as he/she is running the timer.





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Is responsible for assigning and identifying three Spotters. It is a good idea to have bandanas or batons for the spotters to hold. This helps identify the spotters and keeps them on the line until they hand off the baton or bandana to the next spotter.

The Timer Operator does not have the authority to overrule the spotters in regard to misses but can question spotters as to location of misses. The Timer Operator is often in the best position to see the direction the muzzle is pointed, which is helpful in determining edge hits.

The Timer Operator should be aware of the skill level of the competitors and very attentive to newer shooters, helping and coaching them through the course of fire, as needed, and always ready to control the newer shooter.

Give seasoned shooters a little more room since they tend to move very fast. Don't let them run over you because you're crowding them.

The Timer Operator never starts a competitor in a faulted position or location. It is not considered a faulted position or location for allowing a shooter to start without appropriately loaded guns or available ammunition on their person.

The Timer Operator should not count misses, but watches the shooter for unsafe acts, correct target engagement, and stage procedures in addition to counting shots fired, if possible. However, the Timer Operator is often times in the best position to evaluate hits or misses if in question.

The Timer Operator holds the timer in a manner ensuring the last shots fired in a stage are recorded.

Don't feel you have to record every shot on the timer through the course of fire. Make sure the last one is recorded. It's the one that really counts, but it is always best to record as many shots as possible in the event of a gun malfunction.

Once the stage begins, the Timer Operator stays within arm's length of the competitor until the stage is finished.

When the stage is completed, the Timer Operator immediately announces the stage time to the shooter (and shows the shooter the timer readout). An RO immediately inspects the 1911 to ensure it is cleared and can be holstered. The Timer Operator conveys the time to the Score Keeper in a loud, clear voice. The Spotters are then polled for misses, procedures, and safeties and this information is called to the Score Keeper and the competitor in a loud, clear voice. Final



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determination regarding assessment of penalties is made by the Timer Operator

Only after the pistol is holstered and long guns are action opened, muzzles pointed in a safe direction, and the shooter is heading towards the unloading table does the Timer Operator, declare, “Range is Clear.” Only the competitor may handle their firearms.

Only the Timer Operator or Expediter calls the next shooter to the firing line.

6. Expediter or XP Officer (Optional)

The Expediter or XP Officer is in charge of making sure the posse stays on time and on task during their assigned time on each stage.

The XP Officer’s primary concern is the next shooter to be called to the line—otherwise known as the “On-deck” shooter. The XP Officer makes sure the “On-deck” shooter is ready, understands the course of fire, and proceeds promptly to the firing line to stage firearms and ammunition as quickly as possible.

The following is a guideline for the duties of the XP Officer:

1. At the first shot of the shooter on the firing line, the XP Officer calls the next shooter from the loading table to the “On-deck” position.
2. When the shooter arrives at the “On-deck” position,” the XP Officer asks the following questions and assists the shooter with appropriate answers:
  - Do you understand the course of fire?
  - Do you have any questions about the stage?
3. The XP Officer should not engage in any unnecessary conversation with the “On-deck” shooter, allowing them time to mentally prepare for the stage.
4. Once the XP Officer feels the “On-deck” shooter is ready, s/he should focus attention on the firing line. Once the line is clear, targets are set, and brass removed (if allowed), the XP Officer instructs the “On-deck” shooter to move to the firing line and stage firearms and ammunition as required by the stage description, then proceed immediately to the starting position.
5. At this point, the Timer Operator will take charge of the shooter on the line.

The XP Officer can be a Posse Member, Berm Marshal, or Stage Driver.



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The “On-deck” position should have a low table in addition to the loading table in order to accommodate the long guns of the “On-deck” shooter. It is also a good idea to have a copy of the scenario at the “On-deck” position.

The XP Officer does not count misses, reset targets, score, run the timer, or pick up brass.

The XP Officer helps assign target re-setters and brass pickers (if allowed).

Not all matches will benefit from an XP Officer, but the majority of time lost in a match is getting the next shooter to the line and staging their firearms. If used correctly, the XP Officer can shave off up to 30 seconds per shooter, thereby leaving more time for socializing after the shooting is finished!

### 7. Score Keeper (Required)

Score Keepers must never record scores for a family member.

Calls out shooting order and records times and penalties as received from the Timer Operator. If scoring instructions dictate, the Score Keeper will also total the times and penalties to calculate the shooter’s score. It is good practice for the Score Keeper to repeat in a loud, clear voice the scoring time announced by the Timer Operator.

The Score Keeper can be one of the Spotters.

The penalties are recorded in a manner not confusing to the person entering computer data. If there are five misses, for instance, don’t simply write “5,” since that can be confused as just a five second penalty. If there is one miss, don’t write “5” thinking someone will assume it just means five seconds. They may read that as five misses and add on twenty-five seconds. It’s best to write 1/5, 2/10, or 3/15 for misses and 1/10 for a procedural.

The competitor should always be aware of any misses or penalties as they are leaving the firing line. The competitor has the right to know, since once they leave the line and unload, miss penalties should not be questioned.

### 8. Spotters (Required)

Must never spot for a family member.

Have the responsibility to count shots and misses and to verify the targets were engaged in the correct order for the required number of shots. Spotters will assist the Timer Operator by watching for violations when the competitor retrieves staged firearms and draws revolvers



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since it is impossible for the Timer Operator to have an unobstructed view of both sides of the competitor's body. Spotters are obligated to stop a shooter from attempting an unsafe action if the Timer Operator is not in position to see it or react quickly enough.

Should always be in position to see all the targets in the course of fire. At least one spotter should be positioned on either side of the competitor.

Determine misses by both visual and audible means, if possible.

Always give the shooter the benefit of any doubt. Spotters should also consider the Timer Operator's observations and input regarding hits and misses due to the TO's position near the shooter.

There should always be three Spotters—the majority (two out of three) breaks the tie. As mentioned before, bandanas or batons are a good idea.

Remember, the Timer Operator is not relied upon to count shots and misses. His main function is to assist the competitor through the course of fire, and his memory can easily be altered if something out of the ordinary happens or if he becomes occupied coaching a newer shooter through a stage.

It is up to the Timer Operator to verify at least two of the three Spotters agree on misses.

9. Loading Table Officer (Optional)

Unloading Table Officer (Required)

Loading Table Officers are responsible to visually ensure all firearms are loaded with only the correct number of rounds required in a course of fire. They count, along with the shooter, rounds being loaded into rifles and shotguns and noting whether or not a magazine has been inserted in the 1911.

They check to make sure no round is ever under the firing pin of any firearm and all loaded firearm hammers are fully down or on the "safety notch" over empty chambers. While at the Loading Table, shooters must be allowed to make corrections as necessary to be sure no round is under the firing pin and hammers are fully down on empty chambers without the assessment of a penalty. Discharging a round at the loading table is a Match Disqualification. Leaving the Loading Table with a hammer not fully down or on the safety notch on an empty chamber or with a round under the firing pin of any firearm is a Stage Disqualification.

The Loading Table is also a good place for the Loading Officer to observe the shooter's equipment, especially his firearms, inspecting for illegal modifications. A comment from the Loading Officer may save the



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shooter an embarrassing disqualification at the shooting line. Any illegal external modifications encountered at the loading table should be brought to the shooter's attention and corrected prior to shooting, if at all possible.

It is good practice for the Loading Officer to ask the shooter if he understands the stage. Explanations at the Loading Table avoid these questions being addressed at the line by the Timer Operator and prevent unnecessary delays.

These officers ensure safe muzzle direction is strictly observed and enforced when a competitor is at a Loading or Unloading Table, as well as during movement to and from the Loading or Unloading Table.

At the Unloading Table, competitors shall verify each of their long guns is unloaded, and the Unloading Officer must visually inspect the chambers to make sure they are empty. Rifles and shotguns are cycled to verify their magazines are empty. The 1911 is verified unloaded on the firing line and need not be removed from the holster at the unloading table.

Never allow a competitor to leave the loading table with a loaded firearm unless they are proceeding directly to the stage or expeditor position.

Remember: The primary responsibility always rests with the competitor. Shooters should always know the condition of their firearms and should never depend upon the Loading and Unloading Officers to ensure their firearms are correctly loaded and unloaded. The Loading and Unloading Officers are simply an added measure of safety. A competitor may never blame the Loading Officer for an incorrectly loaded firearm, and at no time will this claim be considered grounds for dismissal of penalties.

### 10. Stage Driver / Stage Marshal / Berm Marshal (Optional)

The primary responsibility of a stage marshal is to ensure consistency between posses and to keep posses running on time. To do this the following procedures should be followed:

For the first posse of each day's shooting rotations, a bit more time may be in order to get the posse organized. Take a few moments to help them get things underway by going over the posse duties as outlined in this Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Range Operations document. Make sure each posse acknowledges their Posse Marshals and each Posse Marshal understands each of the posse duties to be filled. If a duties list is provided by the match officials, be sure to pass that list on to the Posse Marshal for their personal reference during the match. Ask for questions about any of the posse duties. Only if necessary, assist the posse workers by explaining



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the role of each worker within the posse in order for the posse to run on time and efficiently.

Before the posse begins shooting the stage, do the following:

- Check the posse schedule to see if the stage is running on time. If the posse is running behind schedule, contact one of the Range Masters and do whatever is necessary to get them back on schedule.
- When a posse arrives, verify they are in the right place at the right time.
- Record the time each posse starts the stage on the score sheet for that posse on that stage.
- Read the scenario and stage description, do not paraphrase.
- After the stage walk-through, the posse should assign duties to its members.
- Once the assignments have been made, give the appropriate materials (spotting sticks, timer, props, and so forth) to the Posse Marshal.
- Before handing any score sheets to the scorer, verify they are the correct sheets for the correct posse.
- At this point, sit back, relax, and watch the shooters as they shoot the stage.

After the posse has completed shooting the stage, do the following:

- Record the time on the posse score sheet in the scorebook at that stage.
- Get ready for the next posse by making sure the timer is still working, the pens still write, and the stage is completely set.

The Stage Marshal does not have the duty to watch every move of the shooter but does have the duty to make sure each shooter completes the stage according to the directions, and they all complete it in the same way. The Stage Marshal is there to promote consistency, prevent controversies, resolve discrepancies, and do everything possible to keep each posse on schedule. If the match is a “lost brass” match, remind each posse the schedule does not allow time for brass pickup (except brass shotgun shells).

It is recommended each Stage Marshal be a graduate of the Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Range Operations Course, and as such should be familiar with the rules and guidelines. Watch for illegal equipment, ammunition, or any category specific requirements and enforce the current Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting rules exactly as they are written. Do not attempt to interpret, either liberally or conservatively, any of the rules. If a problem is encountered, be sure to follow the proper chain of command by bringing it to the attention of the RO and posse leader for quick resolution. If the problem is not quickly and appropriately resolved, notify the Range Master.



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Do not hesitate to contact the Range Masters if there are ANY questions. Each Range Master should have a current Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Handbook and all of the RO reference materials closely at hand just in case a resolution may require some research.

## RANGE COMMANDS

Standard Range Commands are used in almost every established shooting sport. It is the most efficient way to run a shooting line. Also, it allows shooters from all over the world to understand range procedures, even if they don't speak English fluently. We're not saying you have to say the range commands exactly word for word, but the closer the better. For instance, instead of "Is the Shooter Ready" the term "Is the Trooper Ready" is certainly acceptable. After all, the western flavor and spirit of our game allows for colorful individuality. There is no reason Safety, Efficiency, and Having Fun can't all co-exist! Remember, SPEAK UP! Many of our competitors are a bit hard of hearing, and all are wearing hearing protection.

1. "Is the Shooter Ready?" is normally the Timer Operator's initial command and should always be said just before the "Stand By" command. If the competitor is not ready or doesn't understand the stage, he will ask you questions. If they are ready, they'll just nod their head, and they're ready to hear the "Stand By" command. If they ask a question, answer it to their satisfaction. While the primary goal is to assist the shooter, questions regarding the negotiation of the stage should be kept to a minimum at the firing line. After it is apparent they understand the stage, say again, "Is the Shooter Ready?" Don't just say "Stand By." It's better when shooters are comfortable and given the courtesy of a starting rhythm. We are not trying to surprise them with the start signal. Don't rush the shooter, but sometimes it is up to the Timer Operator to keep things moving efficiently.
2. "Stand By" should always be the last words spoken with a one- to three-second pause before the start signal unless the stage calls for the shooter to say a line or use a prop before the time starts. "Indicate Ready by Saying the Line" can optionally be used to cue the competitor to self-start the stage. The "Stand By" command should still be used after the competitor says their line.
3. "Show Clear" is the command at the end of the stage instructing the shooter to drop the magazine (if still in the pistol and show the RO the pistol is empty).
4. "Slide Forward, Hammer Down, Holster" are the next RO commands. Trigger MUST be pulled to allow the hammer to fall unimpeded, and the pistol is then holstered ... and not taken from leather again until a new magazine is inserted at the loading table.



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5. “Muzzle up, Please move to the Unloading Table” should be stated at the end of a shooting sequence. Often the competitor stops thinking—after all, his shooting problem is finished! He simply needs a gentle reminder of what to do next.
6. “Range Clear.” This command is given only after the shooter has completed their run, the pistol holstered, the long guns are picked up and pointed in a safe direction with the actions open, and the shooter is on the way to the unloading table. It is now safe to gather brass and prepare for the next shooter.
7. “Down Range” is announced prior to proceeding down range to reset/repair targets.
8. “Unload and Show Clear.” The command used by the Unloading Officer when a competitor comes to the unloading table (applies only to all long guns taken to the line).
9. “Gun Clear” is the appropriate Unloading Officer response as each firearm is successfully inspected empty at the unloading table. “Thank You” is appropriate after all guns have been inspected.

#### **ADDITIONAL COMMANDS**

1. “Muzzle!” This command warns the shooter their muzzle is getting close to the 170° limit and should be pointed back down range.
2. “Cease Fire!” or “Stop!” If at any time an unsafe condition develops, the Timer Operator will immediately shout “Cease Fire!” or “Stop!” The shooter is to stop firing or moving immediately. Failure to heed this command is serious and may result in a Match Disqualification. (“Whoa!” sometimes works just as well!)
3. “Yellow Flag.” On ranges where multiple stages are run in parallel using a common firing line with no separating berms, it is sometimes necessary to go down range to repair broken or malfunctioning targets. Once the “Yellow Flag” command has been given, each stage affected will allow any shooter already engaged in that stage to complete the course of fire. As shooting finishes on each stage, all in-use guns are laid down at the loading and/or unloading tables and the competitors will “stand back.” Once the firearms are secure, each stage will signal compliance by showing its own “Yellow Flag.” Once all affected stages are displaying their “Yellow Flag,” the initiating Range Officer may advance down range. When the offending targets have been fixed and the Range Officer is behind the firing line, an “All Clear” command will be given, the Yellow Flags withdrawn, and normal range operations can resume.
4. “Red Flag” means “Cease Fire!” As in “Yellow Flag” above, flags are often used and generally accompanied by a horn, whistle, or shout (“Cease Fire!”). All shooting must immediately stop, and firearms must be laid down or





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otherwise made safe. Once the ceasefire condition is resolved, an “All Clear” command is given, the Red Flags withdrawn, and normal range operations resumed. Any shooter stopped while shooting a stage is given a reshoot.

**RANGE OPERATIONS SUMMARY**

1. It is expected the Range Officers will have the primary responsibility for observing and resolving all safety-related matters occurring in the loading, unloading, and firing line areas. The Chief Range Officers will make the final determination of penalties and scores. Due care and diligence by the shooter will be taken into consideration when determining whether or not a penalty is valid, based upon factors such as a range equipment or prop malfunction.
2. In the event a competitor doesn't agree with a Range Officer's final penalty or assessment, the competitor has the right to “politely” request a Range Master to review the call. The Range Officer's call can be overruled only in the case of a rule or policy interpretation. From here, if the initial call is upheld by the Range Master, the individual challenging the call has one other option available.

ONLY the individual who was the subject of the original call may file an official protest. A fee is usually attached to any official protests and must be collected at the time the protest is filed. It is also a good idea to have some sort of official protest form available that can list the identification of the shooter, information specific to the call being questioned, the identification of the Posse and Match Officials previously involved in the call, the date, time, and stage where the call was made. This official protest must be made ONLY to the Match Director. Once the Match Director has received the completed paperwork and any associated fees, s/he will appoint a jury to make the FINAL decision. This jury should be made up of at least three experienced people knowledgeable of the rules and preferably not aware of any details of the situation. At state level matches and higher, three Wild Bunch™ Committee members or Ambassadors, posse marshals, or RO Instructors should be used as the jury. The Match Director will serve only in an administrative role to assure the protest is handled fairly and will be responsible for conveying any changes of the shooter's score to the appropriate scoring personnel. The jury must objectively research the situation with all means available to them, apply the evidence to the rules of the event, and make the FINAL decision on whether or not the original call will be upheld. If the original call is overturned, any protest fees collected from the shooter should be refunded.



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Fees may be charged to file a protest, preventing frivolous protests. The fees are sometimes returned if the protest is upheld.

3. Minor safety infractions occurring during a course of fire that do not directly endanger persons will result in a 10-second penalty being added to the shooter's time for that stage. "Minor" safety infractions are occurrences such as failure to cycle a long gun's action at the conclusion of a shooting string.
4. Major safety infractions will result in the shooter's Disqualification from the Stage or Match. "Major" infractions include: a dropped gun, a discharge that is unsafe or a discharge that impacts less than ten feet from the shooter, violation of the 170° safety rule, "sweeping" any person with the muzzle of a firearm, and similar acts that have high potential for personal injury. There are circumstances where a single Major Safety violation will result in a Match Disqualification.
5. A safe and sturdy place should be provided at each stage to position the shooter's firearms and is mandatory to use. Whether or not they are available, it is the shooter's responsibility to take reasonable care in putting down the gun. If the gun falls, the Range Officer shall make the determination of fault: either Prop Failure or Safety Violation as appropriate.

### RE-SHOOTS/RESTARTS

SASS matches above the club level are "no alibi" matches. Once the first round goes down range, the competitor is committed to the stage and must finish the stage to the best of his or her ability. Reshoots/restarts are not awarded for ammunition or firearm malfunctions. However, if there is a range failure (failure of props, timer, or the range officers) beyond the competitor's control, a restart may be granted. On a reshoot/restart, the competitor starts over clean, carrying only accrued safety penalties forward. At all SASS annual club, state, Regional, National, and World Championship matches, no reshoots/restarts will be given after the first shot goes down range as determined by the Chief Range Officer and the Match Director, except for:

- Prop or match equipment failure
- A Range Officer impeding the progress of the shooter
- Timer failure or unrecorded time

For example, if the Range Officer stops a shooter from completing a shooting sequence because of a suspected squib load, and the gun turns out to be "clear," the Range Officer has impeded the progress of the shooter, and a restart is in order. In this case, the shooter starts over with no misses or penalties (except safeties).



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Proper coaching or no coaching at all is not considered RO Interference and therefore will never be grounds for a reshoot/restart.

Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the Timer Operator are seen to be taking advantage will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.

## **DURING THE COURSE OF FIRE**

### **INCIDENTS**

As each shooter engages a course of fire, CROs should be prepared for any or all of the following incidents to occur and should be expeditious in his or her necessary corrective action. CROs must never be tentative with a safety call. If a safety command is given by the CRO, that is later determined to be errant, (e.g., if a squib call is determined to actually be clear), the shooter will automatically receive a re-shoot.

### **SQUIBS**

In the event a Chief Range Officer suspects a squib load has been encountered, an immediate command shall be given to the shooter to make that firearm safe and continue on with the next procedure. The CRO will instruct the shooter to make the firearm safe on a nearby and appropriate horizontal surface (box, table, straw bale, ground, etc). Multiple squibs by a shooter will be cause for the Timer Operator to request the shooter change ammo.

### **TARGET FAILURE**

In the event a target fails or falls to the ground, the Chief Range Officer should instruct the shooter to “shoot where it was.” This call will never result in a penalty of any kind to the shooter. This process has been found to be far less confusing, and thereby safer, to the shooter than requiring an alternate target to be engaged, although it is perfectly acceptable for the shooter to engage an alternate target and be scored for hits and misses in the normal manner. Do not allow the shooter to engage a downed target as this may cause further damage to the target, or worse, may result in dangerous ricochets.

### **PROP FAILURE**

Given the nature of “Old West” props and stage fronts, failures sometime happen. Prop failures include: Fronts falling down, gun blocks falling over, tables collapsing, fences falling over, activating mechanisms of targets not working, and other such occurrences. In the event of a prop failure, the Chief Range Officer should be prepared to make a determination of whether or not



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the shooter can continue the course of fire or ceasefire immediately. The shooter will not be penalized for a prop failure.

### **BREAKING THE 170° SAFETY RULE**

A CRO/TO/Spotter shall make an immediate “Cease-Fire” call if any gun breaks the 170° safety rule. This call will result in a Stage or Match Disqualification to the shooter. The Chief Range Officer shall make a good faith effort to prevent the shooter from breaking the safety rule by verbal command or physical contact, if necessary.

### **TRIPPING OR FALLING**

In the event a shooter accidentally trips or falls during a course of fire, the Chief Range Officer shall make an assessment of the shooter’s condition and give a “Cease-Fire” command only if a safety infraction has occurred. Otherwise, the shooter will be allowed to regroup and continue with the course of fire.

### **THE 10 “COMMANDMENTS”**

- Safety
- Keep it fun
- Use common sense
- The benefit of the doubt goes to the shooter
- Treat everyone as you would like to be treated
- Treat everyone equally (Sam Colt made us that way)
- Keep the stage moving (if a problem arises, take it away from the firing line)
- Make sure all the assignments are covered
- Coach when needed
- Keep it simple

## **PENALTY OVERVIEW**

### **SPIRIT OF THE GAME / FAILURE TO ENGAGE**

A “Spirit of the Game” occurs when a competitor willfully shoots a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage.

A “Failure to Engage” occurs when a competitor willfully or intentionally disregards the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not assessed simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” A Failure to Engage applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions. In such a case, in addition to any penalties for misses, a 30-second Failure to Engage



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penalty is assessed. Note: Two Spirit of the Game/Failure to Engage penalties will result in a Match Disqualification.

### **5-SECOND PENALTIES**

Rifle, pistol, and shotgun targets must be engaged with the appropriate type of firearm. A “miss” is defined as the failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate type firearm. Target placement should always allow a shooter the opportunity for a clean miss to be scored without argument. Overlapping targets of the same type should be avoided if at all possible and should not cause a Procedural “trap” by making it difficult to determine the shooter’s intent when engaging the targets.

- Each missed target.
- Each unfired round.
- Each target hit with an incorrect firearm, either intentionally or by mistake.
- Each target hit with “illegally acquired” ammunition.
- Each target hit with an “illegally acquired” firearm. (e.g., one reused after being declared as malfunctioning)

To help understand this concept, a “MISS FLOW CHART” is provided. It is also good to understand “A MISS CANNOT CAUSE A PROCEDURAL.”

### **10-SECOND PENALTIES**

#### **PROCEDURAL PENALTIES**

Any unintentional procedural errors caused by “brain fade,” confusion, ignorance, or mistakes (not to exceed one for any given stage).

- Failure to attempt to fire a firearm.
- Failure to attempt a prop or stage maneuver.
- Shooting targets in an order other than as required by stage description.
- Engaging the stage (firearms, targets, or maneuvers) in an order other than as required by the stage description.
- Failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which you are competing.
- Firing any firearm from a position or location other than as required by the stage description.
- Use of “illegally acquired” ammunition. (i.e., NOT carried to the line/staged by the shooter in an approved manner, or overloaded ammunition).
- Use of “illegally acquired” firearm. (i.e., NOT carried to the line/staged by shooter in an approved manner).

Accommodations are always allowed for those unable to comply with specific stage procedures due to physical limitations with no procedural penalties assessed.



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**MINOR SAFETY PENALTIES**

- Not cycling the action of a long gun at the end of the shooting string before the next firearm is fired.
- Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard while moving with the pistol.
- Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard while reloading the pistol.
- Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard when clearing a pistol malfunction.

**30-SECOND PENALTIES**

- Failure to Engage
- Spirit of the Game

**STAGE DISQUALIFICATION**

- Any dropped unloaded gun on the firing line (from the loading table to the unloading table).
- Long guns that slip and fall and break the 170° safety rule.
- A discharge striking anything five to ten feet from the shooter. Except for props considered expendable or squib loads.
- Violation of the 170° safety rule / Failure to manage appropriate muzzle control.
- A cocked, loaded pistol leaving the shooter's hand.
- A live round left in the chamber of a gun.
- Second offense, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- Changing location with a live round under a cocked hammer or a gun with the hammer down on a live round. This includes leaving the loading table.
- Unsafe firearm handling.
- The use or presence of an outlawed item.
- Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line.
- Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm.
- Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures.
- Restaging a long gun for further use with the hammer NOT fully down on an empty chamber or fired case and the action closed.
- De-cocking a pistol, rifle or shotgun with a live round under the hammer.
- Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage within the same day (assessed on the previously completed stage).
- Leaving the firing line after being committed to the stage.
- Re-holstering the pistol AFTER it is first charged without it being cleared by



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a match official.

- Shooting on the move. (Violation of the “Basketball Traveling Rule.”)
- Dry firing at the loading table is not allowed and results in a stage disqualification. Dry firing is allowed only at designated safe areas. Dry firing is defined as the act of bringing the firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the firearm to fire normally.
- Loaded long guns not staged with the muzzle downrange, action closed, the chamber empty, and the hammer either down on the safety notch or fully down.

### **MATCH DISQUALIFICATION**

- Two accumulated Stage Disqualifications or Two Spirit of the Game / Failure to Engage assessments.
- Belligerent attitude / Unsportsman-like conduct.
- Shooting under the influence of alcohol, prescription, or other medication that may impair the shooter’s physical or mental abilities.
- Shooting illegal ammunition. This includes ammunition that exceeds the maximum velocity, and shotgun shells that have been bottle-neck resized or ringed. This does not include ammunition that does not meet the power factor.
- Dropping a loaded firearm.
- Any discharge that hits the ground or stage prop less than five feet from the shooter (except for props considered expendable or squib loads), any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, (except for a declared malfunctioning firearm being handled at the unloading table in a safe manner).
- Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm.
- Third offense, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- Leaving the stage with a malfunctioning firearm containing live ammunition unless under the direct supervision of a match official.
- Willful failure to comply with a “Cease Fire” or “Stop” command given by, and under the positive control of, the Timer Operator.
- Interpersonal conflicts.

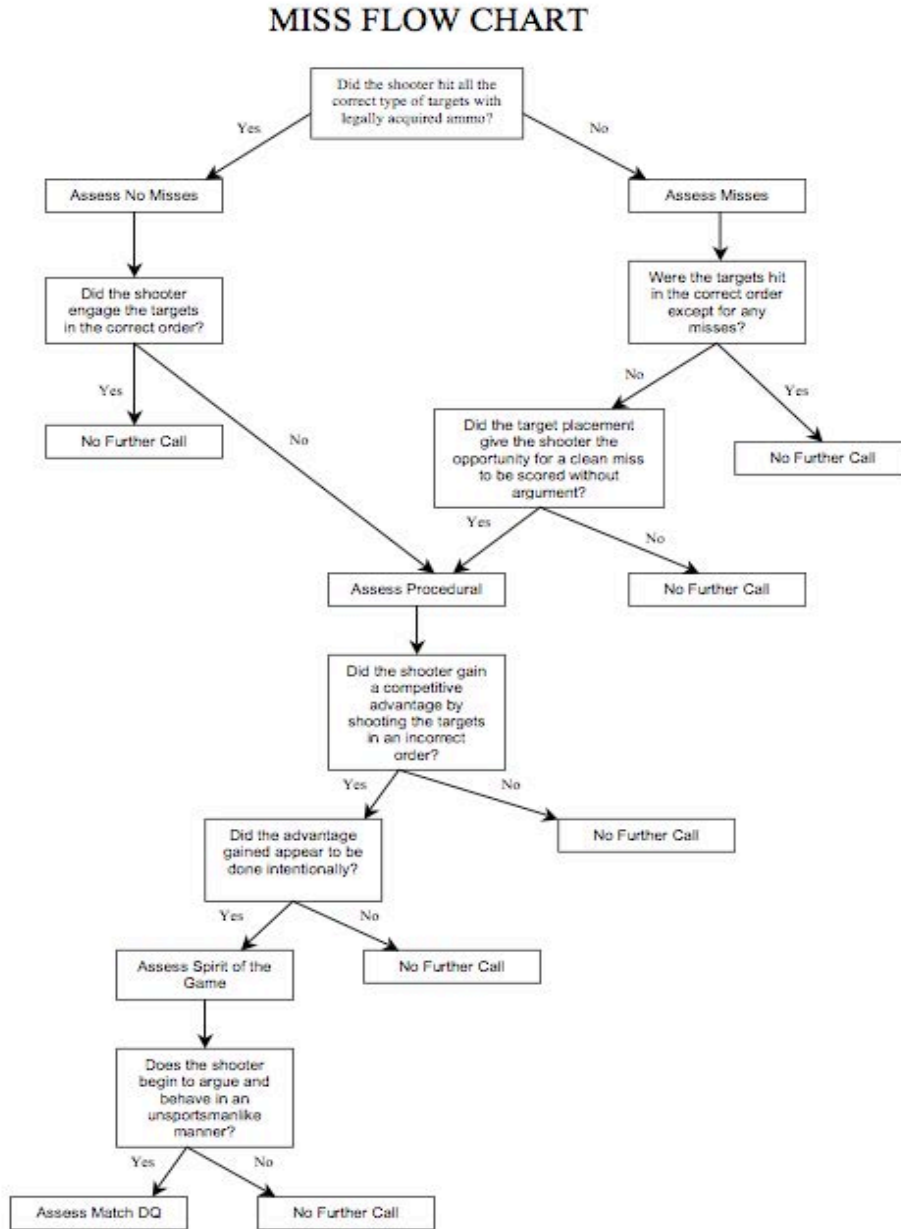
### **MATCH DISQUALIFICATION FOR SCORING PURPOSES ONLY**

- Ammunition that does not meet power factor.
- Illegal equipment or an illegal or illegally modified firearm.



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**MISS FLOW CHART**



Updated March 2010





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WILD BUNCH POCKET RO CARD

Wild Bunch Pocket RO Card March 2020 “SDQ” = Stage Disqualification; “MDQ” = Match Disqualification “MSV” Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty	M	S	M
	S	D	D
	V	Q	Q
Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard while moving.			
Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard while reloading.			
Failure to have the trigger finger outside the trigger guard when clearing a magazine.			
Not cycling a long gun's action at the end of a shooting string.			
Placing the 1911 down with the action open and live ammunition in the magazine.			
Leaving the loading table with a cocked loaded firearm			
Moving with a live round under the hammer			
Live round left in the chamber of a long gun			
A cocked pistol with a live round in the chamber leaving the shooter's hand			
Re-holstering the pistol after it is charged without it being cleared by a stage official.			
Discharge impacting 5-10 feet from shooter, while on the firing line			
Leaving the firing line after the first round goes down range			
Violation of 170 rule (without sweeping anyone)			
Sweeping anyone with unloaded firearm			
Not adhering to loading or unloading procedures			
Dropped gun (unloaded/empty)			
Manually de-cocking any firearm on the firing line			
Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing			
Dry firing at the loading table			
Shooting on the move (shooting multiple shots during continuous movement)			
Empty long guns that slip and fall but don't break 170 or sweep anyone			
Improperly staged long gun			
Loading other than at the loading table or on the firing line (1911 magazines)			
Restaging a long gun for further use, hammer not fully down, empty			

Wild Bunch Pocket RO Card March 2020 “SDQ” = Stage Disqualification; “MDQ” = Match Disqualification “MSV” Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty	M	S	M
	S	D	D
	V	Q	Q
Presence of an outlawed item			
Use of illegal or illegally-modified firearm (for scoring purposes only)			
Use of ammunition that does not meet power factor (for scoring purposes only)			
Discharge impacting within 5 feet from shooter while on the firing line, or any discharge away from the firing line, or any discharge in the loading or sweeping anyone with loaded firearm			
Any two (2) stage DO's or 2 F.T.E./S.O.G.'s during the course of a match			
Dropped gun (loaded)			
Belligerent attitude/unsportsmanlike conduct/interpersonal conflicts			
Shooting under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications			
Willful failure to comply with a “cease fire” or “stop” command given by, and while under the positive control of the TO.			
Shooting illegal ammunition			
Firing overloaded rounds	P		
Shooting out of category. 1 <sup>st</sup> violation is a procedure, 2 <sup>nd</sup> violation is SDQ, 3 <sup>rd</sup> violation is MDQ.	P	2	3

**Procedural:** Unintentional errors caused by confusion or mistakes. If unable to comply with stage instructions due to physical limitations or handicap, the RO may make allowances for the shooter to complete the stage w/o penalty, adhering as closely as possible to the spirit of the game. **10 seconds; no more than one procedural penalty may be assessed per stag**

**Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game:** Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage or willfully disregarding a non-shooting procedure. **30 seconds**

**Not meeting Power Factor OR an illegal or illegally modified firearm is a MDQ for Scoring purposes only.**

**Re-shoots** are granted for failure of props/match equipment; Range Officer impeding shooter progress; or timer failure. Only safety penalties carry over.

**Restarts** shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a “clean” start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O. are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained.



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**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Action Cycled (lever of pump action long guns)** – Opening the action far enough to cock the hammer.

**Action Closed (lever and pump action long guns)** – Bolt in “full battery,” i.e., unable to further close by manipulation of the lever or pump mechanisms.

**Action Open (lever and pump action long guns)** – Bolt not closed completely.

**170° Safety Rule** – means the muzzle of the firearm must always be pointed down range +/- 85 degrees in any direction.

**Basketball Traveling Rule** – aka movement with a firearm. Once the firearm is cocked, one foot must remain in place on the ground until the firearm is made safe. This means after the pistol is first charged one may move when the slide is locked open and the trigger finger is outside the trigger guard. One may move with a rifle or shotgun when the action is open or hammer down on an empty chamber or an expended case action closed.

**Charging** – the act of placing a live round in the chamber of the pistol.

**Firearm Cleared** – no live or empty cases in or on the chamber, magazine, or carrier.

**Cocked** – hammer not down (on full, or half-cock).

**Committed to a firearm** – the point at which a firearm would have to be made safe to leave the shooter’s hand.

**Committed to a stage** – when first round is fired down range.

**Commonly Available** – obtainable by anyone given ordinary circumstances with ordinary means.

**Course of Fire** – once the shooter has signified “ready,” from the beep of the timer to the last shot fired.

**Down Range** – 180 degrees from the shooter toward the targets of a stage.

**Dropped Firearm** – a firearm that has left the shooter’s control and come to rest at a location or position other than where it was intended.

**Dry Firing** – defined as the act of bringing of an unloaded firearm into a shooting position, cocking the hammer, and pulling the trigger as if to cause the gun to fire normally.

**Duelist Shooting Style** – a pistol fired one handed, unsupported. The pistol, hand, or shooting arm, may not be touched by the off-hand except when reloading or resolving a malfunctioning problem. This shooting method is *required* for Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Traditional competitors.

**Engaged** – attempting to fire a round at the target.

**Equipment** – any non-apparel item that you take to the firing line.

**Failure to Engage** – willfully or intentionally disregarding the stage instructions in order to obtain a competitive advantage and is not simply because a competitor “makes a mistake.” Applies only to non-shooting situations such as refusing to



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rope a steer, throw a stick of dynamite, or otherwise make an attempt to complete any other non-shooting procedure written within the stage instructions.

**Firing Line** – From first firearm placed on the loading table until all firearms are confirmed as cleared at the unloading table.

**Free Style** – shooter has the option of shooting Two-handed style or Duelist style. Allowed in Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Modern category.

**Hammer Down** – hammer fully down at its final resting position.

**Illegally Acquired Ammunition** – ammo NOT carried to the line or staged by the shooter in an approved manner or overloaded rounds that are fired.

**Loaded Firearm** – Any firearm with unfired round(s) in the chamber.

**Location** – a physical point on a stage (e.g., “behind the door....”)

**Major Safety Violation** – a safety infraction that has a high potential for personal injury.

**Minor Safety Violation** – handling or firing a gun in a manner that is unsafe but does not directly endanger persons.

**Miss** – a failure to hit the appropriate target type using the appropriate firearm type firearm.

**Pistol in Hand** – when the muzzle of the pistol clears the mouth of the holster, or breaks contact with a prop where it was staged.

**Position** – the posture and stance of the shooter (e.g., “the shooter starts with hands touching hat ...”).

**Power Factor** – Bullet weight (in grains) times the velocity (in feet per second) divided by 1000. The minimum standard in all Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting matches is not less than 150. Maximum velocity for pistols is 1000 fps. Maximum velocity for rifles is 1400 fps.

**Procedural** – an unintentional action where the competitor does not follow the Stage instructions and can include actions/omissions other than firing a round (e.g., failure to adhere to category requirements).

**Progressive Penalty** – Procedural for the first infraction; Stage Disqualification for the second infraction; Match Disqualification for the third infraction. Example: failure to adhere to category requirements.

**Reshoot** – score recorded, the competitor starts over clean, carrying accrued safety penalties. Both scores turned in.

**Restart** – no recorded score, shooter is given a clean restart.

**Shooting String** – shots from one type of firearm prior to use of the next type of firearm engaged.

**Squib**-Any part of a cartridge lodged inside the barrel of a firearm or a projectile that exits the barrel at an extremely low velocity.

**Stage** – synonymous with “Course of Fire,” from the beep of the timer once the shooter has signified “ready” to the last shot fired.



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**Two Handed Shooting Style** – The shooter holds and fires a pistol with two hands.  
This shooting method is allowed for Wild Bunch™ Action Shooting Modern competitors.

**Up Range** – 180 degrees from the shooter away from the targets of a stage.



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