

Gun Range Etiquette

1. Follow the 4 Rules of Gun Safety

We would hope that these would be followed at all times, but need to give it the #1 spot on this list. Always, without exception, follow these rules.: The 4 rules of gun safety were put in place to ensure that no accidents happen. If these rules are followed 100% of the time, you can rest assured that you will never have an accident with your firearms. These rules vary depending on the source, but the below list happens to be our favorite.

The 1st Rule: The Gun Is Always Loaded

Imagine you're at the range and a buddy of yours has a new gun that he just picked up. He asks if you want to shoot it and you say "Well, obviously!". Even if he shows you that the gun is clear and sets it down, the first thing you should always do when you pick it up is to safety-check it. This also applies to setting it down again. Whenever the gun is out of your control, even if you set it on a table for 30 seconds, you ALWAYS want to safety-check it when you pick it up. There is no exception to this rule.

The 2nd Rule: Never Point The Gun At Something You Are Not Prepared To Destroy

If you've done your safety-check and are absolutely sure that your gun is unloaded, that does not give you the go-ahead to be careless with it. Remembering the first rule, The Gun Is ALWAYS Loaded, you should never point it toward anything that you are not prepared to destroy.

The 3rd Rule: Always Be Sure Of Your Target And What Is Behind It

Bullets can go through – and beyond – your intended target. Knowing what's behind your target is an essential step to safety and responsibility.

The 4th Rule: Keep Your Finger Off The Trigger Until Your Sights Are On The Target

This 4th rule, arguably the most important one, should be practiced 100% of the time (as with all of these rules). With any modern firearm, as long as your finger is away from the trigger guard, your firearm will not discharge. Knowing this, there should be 0% chance of a negligent discharge. Notice we didn't say 'accidental discharge', because there is no such thing. It's negligent, period. Every single time that you pick up a firearm, you should be doing it as shown in the image to the right. With this mindset each and every time, it will become second nature. Should you have to draw your firearm one day, you will instinctively place your trigger finger along the frame and slide instead of directly on the trigger or inside the trigger guard.

2. Listen to the Range Officer

Most ranges, if there are more than one person there, will have a Range Officer assigned. The duties of the RO are to tell you when it's ok to shoot, and when to cease fire. The RO is there for a reason; to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Always pay attention to them and do as they say to ensure the safety of everyone there.

3. Don't touch any firearms during a cease fire

If the range isn't hot, don't touch your firearms. Leave them be until it's time to shoot again. During a cease fire, you may have others doing tasks such as changing targets. The last thing anyone wants to see while they're down range is someone playing with a firearm at the line. Don't do it.

4. Don't bother active target shooters

If someone is actively shooting, don't tap them on the shoulder or try to talk to them. There is one exception to this rule: If you see that they (or someone else) could be in immediate danger, such as a malfunction you notice with their firearm, then it is alright to say something.

5. Don't shoot firearms that go against the range rules

Let's say you're shooting at a 50ft indoor range. Don't bring your high-powered rifle and think it's ok to shoot. You're sure to do damage down range, as most of them aren't equipped to handle those types of impacts. Many indoor pistol ranges allow you to shoot .22 rifles, but always check before you shoot them.

6. Don't coach or correct

Unless someone is pointing a firearm at you, it is common courtesy not to interfere with the shooting techniques of a fellow shooter. If they are doing something dangerous, that's another story. Use your best judgement in that case.

7. Don't hover

There is nothing more annoying at a range than having someone RIGHT behind or next to you while you shoot. If you're observing, give some distance between yourself and the shooter. This is not only annoying, but could also pose a safety risk.

8. Never pick up someone's firearm without asking

You see a beautiful 1911 that a fellow shooter brought to the range, and the only thing you want to do is feel it in your hands. We get it! And if you ask to do so, most people will oblige. They will probably be happy that you are taking interest in one of their prized possessions. Always ask, "That is a nice looking firearm, may I hold it?" If the request is granted, as always, safety check the firearm AS SOON AS YOU PICK IT UP.

9. Shoot one firearm at a time

We don't mean AT the same time, like the image to the right. By 'shoot one firearm at a time', we mean: Only have one firearm out and on the line at any given time.

10. Clean up after yourself

When you're done shooting, be sure to pick up your brass and anything else left behind before you leave. It's rather frustrating to get to the range and have the floor covered with brass. Be respectful and clean up.

11. HAVE FUN!

You're at the range to ultimately have a good time doing what you love to do. Embrace it and enjoy it...safely.