

CPSA SAFETY GUIDE

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly popular sport of clay target shooting although having a healthy safety record, requires that shooters and shoot organisers have safety in mind at all times.

Not only newcomers to the sport, but all who shoot have a duty, to the public, fellow shooters and themselves, to treat shotguns and clay target throwing equipment (traps) with the respect due to any potentially lethal or dangerous equipment.

The purpose of this booklet is to highlight known possible hazardous conditions, but there will be occasions where a person's own sense will determine the need for some extra safety requirements. Shoot organisers must implement such measures **before** allowing shooting to start, or even interrupt shooting already under way immediately if there is a need for action.

2. EYESIGHT PROTECTION

Eyesight is precious. Particles of cartridge components or pieces of broken clay could easily damage the eye. The wearing of adequate and effective visible eye protection by shooters, trappers, officials and spectators at or around any shooting position at all registered shoots is mandatory. The C.P.S.A. recommends that this protection be to a minimum standard of BS EN 166F.

CPSA believe that eye protection should be compulsory and used by anyone involved in the running of all events. i.e: Referees, scorers etc. and to include spectators in close proximity to any shooting stand or layout.

3. HEARING PROTECTION

Hearing loss occurs naturally as one grows older and cannot be avoided but noise induced hearing loss will rapidly compound this loss if one is subjected to loud noises over a period of time. **Such loss is permanent** and cannot be rectified.

Shoot organisers are responsible for ensuring that a recognised and purpose made hearing protection is worn appropriately by all persons taking part in shooting events while in the act of shooting, refereeing, scoring, trapping, officiating in any capacity, or spectating near the shooting stands.

The wearing of visible hearing protection on both ears, as specified above is compulsory at all Registered shoots in all disciplines.

It is a good idea to remind all those present by displaying the approved signs.
AVAILABLE FROM C.P.S.A.

4. AFFILIATED CLUBS

- a) It is a requirement of affiliation for all new Clubs to meet the C.P.S.A.'s safety standards and to complete fully the C.P.S.A.'s CLUB AFFILIATION FORM.
- b) The C.P.S.A. has decided on the policy of requiring at least one named trained safety officer for each of its affiliated clubs. The nominated Safety Officer will be recorded as such on the Safety Officer's Register at the C.P.S.A. office and Clubs should replace any Safety Officer who is no longer active. Courses of instruction are organised as necessary. If there is a need for your Club to train a new Safety Officer please contact the C.P.S.A. office who will give details of forthcoming courses, dates and venues.

BUT REMEMBER

All clay shooting safety is really common sense. All shooters are their own Safety Officers.

5. THE SHOOTING SITE

i) Safety Distance

Although most shot (12g. 28gm. No. 6,7,8 & 9) in calm conditions falls within 185 and 210 metres) from the firing point, it should be noted that a following wind would increase this distance. The C.P.S.A. has therefore declared a **minimum safety distance, if no CPSA approved barriers are in place or topography of ground dictates, of 275 metres in EVERY direction in which shots can be fired from each firing point.**

(See Figs 1 & 2)

Watch especially the fallout areas. As well as lead shot, whole or fragments of clay target are dangerous. Keep shooters well away from fallout areas and make sure others do also. Small children, animals and irresponsible adults put themselves at risk through ignorance, foolishness or just plain stupidity.

Remember:

Throwing "driven clays" is inadvisable, as is the throwing of any target over a footpath.

Shooting over a footpath **MUST NOT** occur.

Public footpaths, bridleways, etc. have no place on clay club grounds. Right of public access must be checked and should never be within the 275 metre safety area.

ii) Firing Points (Sporting)

Shooters should only fire from a shooting enclosure. This is of prime importance in grounds having limited space. It should be impossible for the shooters to take driven targets behind them, or a target to the left or right unless there is an adequate safety zone available and it is intended that the target be taken in this way.

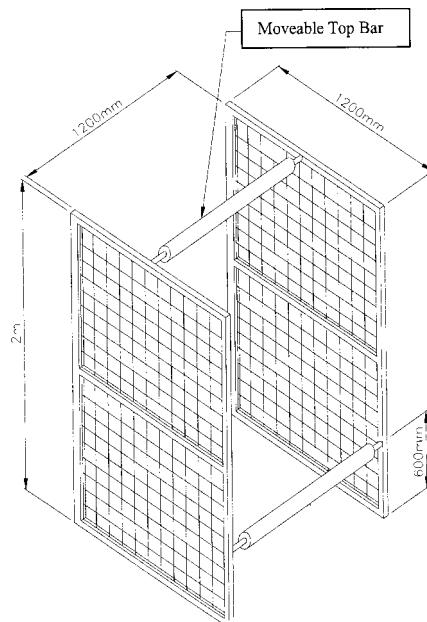
Firing points at the more formal disciplines (D.T.L., Skeet, Olympic Trap, etc.) are probably already safe if the installation is permanent or has been used for some time. In such cases there is usually no need for concern, (but if in doubt **CHECK**) and even here there is a necessity for keeping the firing point surfaces and approaches in good repair so that nobody trips or slips.

As Sporting, Pool Shoots, practice or temporary stands, firing points must be placed with great care.

There is the obvious minimum safety distance requirement, of course, but thought should also be given to the left hander, the fast shot, the very slow shot, the junior shot and the complete novice. Considering each of these carefully sometimes alters the shooters viewing areas and safety requirements vary significantly. (**Obvious too, is the necessity to cater for all these types of shooters when considering trapper protection.**)

When a problem exists, in any of the foregoing, give serious consideration to the "open" shooting enclosure, which controls gun movement without restricting either the shooter's vision of the target nor indeed the Referee's view of the shooter.

Fig. 3



Recommended shooting enclosure design

If a restraining bar across the front of the shooting enclosure is required to ensure that a shooter stays within bounds, care must be taken when determining the height. The bar must be positioned so that it will always allow guns to be lowered quickly to a safe position without hindrance.

The firing points for the less formal types of shooting should be about 1m square (but see relevant discipline rules) reasonably firm and flat and should clearly designate the area in which the shooter must stand and never so close to the traps that any of the trappers are placed in any danger.

iii) Traphouse Construction/Trapper Protection

ONLY THE SHOOTING GROUND STAFF OR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RUNNING OF THE SHOOT SHOULD APPROACH ANY TRAP AND THEN ONLY FROM THE SAFE SIDE.

Any part of a traphouse, including a temporary position, must be of sufficiently sound construction to easily withstand a full shotgun charge without any possibility of any danger to any person within.

Bear in mind that trapper protection, which is suitable and safe at, say, 20 metres from the firing point (when the pellet load has started to spread), may at shorter distances be almost useless. A shotgun cartridge, when discharged at an object at very short range, is to all intents and purposes a solid lead projectile weighing in excess of 28 grams and travelling at a speed of over 300 metres per second. In this state, it would often be capable of passing through all but the most solid of barriers as if it didn't exist.

If an "easy" short-range stand is required then make sure that the trapper protection is sufficiently strong, or better still place the trap behind the line of fire.

If there is any doubt at all about the safety of any person working in a trap house or behind any temporary protection, then safely test fire at the trap house or protection (obviously without any person in position) from the actual firing point to determine their safety. **GREAT CARE MUST BE EXERCISED IF THIS COURSE OF ACTION IS USED.**

6. SHOTGUNS

A Shotgun (in Law) is defined as a smooth bored gun – not being an air gun – with a barrel length in excess of 24" and an overall length of over 40" with a non-detachable magazine incapable of holding more than two cartridges, and is not a revolver gun. Section 2 1968 Firearms Act.

The shotgun generally is a tool designed specifically for KILLING. The shotgun used for breaking clay targets also has this same capability and therefore must be treated with the same care, caution and respect.

Remember:- any bird, animal or person coming into line within the lethal range of any discharged shotgun – accidentally or on purpose – could be **KILLED** or **MAIMED**.

The normal 12 bore cartridge at close quarters can blast a human being into **OBLIVION – bloodily, messily and extremely rapidly**.

The C.P.S.A. rules that **all** the disciplines are explicit in requiring that all shotguns be **OPEN & EMPTY** except when the shooter is on the shooting stand and the Referee has given permission for shooting to commence.

Except when properly secured in a slip or case all guns should be seen to be visibly safe and empty.

Over & Under and side-by-side shotguns shall be carried open and empty.

Semi-automatics shall be seen to be either flagged or open at the breech and the muzzle pointed straight up in the air or at the ground.

It is a good idea to carry your gun from stand to stand at sporting events, in a gun slip. It's easy, convenient and safe. Nobody should touch any gun that does not belong to them without first getting the owner's permission.

It is also VITAL that the correct behaviour required be given in instruction and training so that safety becomes instinctive and habitual. Treat all guns as if they are loaded.

Pump Action Shotguns

Although these shotguns are quite rare at clay target shooting events they are still legally useable (unless a ground has put a bar on their use at their ground) when restricted to hold no more than two cartridges in the magazine as Semi-automatics are. However due to their mechanical action when loading and unloading cartridges, extra care must be taken to ensure that the gun is completely empty before leaving any firing point.

Remember:-

'GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE ON THEIR OWN'

7. CARTRIDGES

C.P.S.A. Rules also require that:-

- i) No more than 2 cartridges shall be placed in any part of the gun at any one time.
- ii) Guns shall be emptied of any cartridge or cartridge case(s) before turning from or leaving the firing point.
- iii) In the event of a **MISFIRE** or **MALFUNCTION** the person holding the gun should remain on the firing point keeping the gun closed and pointing out over the shooting area until the referee/instructor instructs the shooter to do otherwise.
- iv) **"Hang Fire"** This is the term used when due to a problem within the components of the cartridge, it does not fire immediately. Although with today's modern components it is almost unheard of, theoretically it can happen. If there is no instant detonation of the cartridge when the trigger is pulled, the gun should not be opened immediately, wait a short while (at least 20 seconds) keeping the gun closed and pointing out over the firing range before opening.

- v) For clay shooting the maximum shot sizes allowable by the C.P.S.A. is English Size 6, with a pellet diameter of 2.6mm. At C.P.S.A. registered shoots, cartridges shall not exceed a 28g load except for Helice, (ZZ), and FITASC Sporting where 36g loads are the maximum allowed. In the ISSF events of Olympic Trap, Olympic Skeet and Double Trap, the maximum load is 24g.
- vi) For safety reasons the C.P.S.A. do not advocate the general use of snap caps.
- vii) Ground owners/managers or those organising shooting events, should audit their layouts for potential hazards created from the potential ricochet of **steel shot**, and apply corrective measures such as deflectors or absorbing materials where appropriate.

Any lapses in safety conduct should result in the offenders immediately being reminded emphatically and publicly. Expel any who do not comply.

8. TRAPPERS

i) CPSA'S Policy Statement on Employment of young persons at Shooting Grounds

It is the CPSA's recommendation that young persons employed at shooting grounds be over the minimum school leaving age (M.S.L.A.) Specific risk assessments for the tasks Young Persons (i.e. those under eighteen years of age) are given at shooting grounds must be conducted.

Regardless of the above, the laws governing the Health & Safety Act 1974; Employers Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969; and Children (Protection at Work) Act 1998; and subsequent amendments, must be fully adhered to by those that it affects.

ii) Instructions to Trappers and Loaders

Trappers and loaders must be fully briefed and understand the inherent dangers of the traps they are working with. Always remind all staff (even experienced persons) of the safety rules before the start of any shoot.

- a) They must be instructed and made aware of the 'safe' and 'danger' sides of the type of manual trap being used, or the correct isolation and de-cocking procedures for automatics.

(**Note:** some traps throw on the opposite side to which they are cocked. Some throw on the same side.)

- b) They must be briefed as to the necessity of leaving a manual trap safe when unattended and made aware of the consequences of not doing so. (Never leave a manual trap cocked or with a clay on the trap arm).
- c) They must be shown the correct positioning of the clay target(s) on manual trap arms, and shown the safe side of the trap on which clays can be stacked.
- d) Trappers should be aware of the intended flight paths of the clays and shown the remedial action required if the flight paths alter due to extreme conditions, etc.
- e) Finally and most importantly every trapper must be told that whatever the reason they must **not leave a trapping position until collected**. In the event of a trap breakdown they should be able to safely raise the red

flag provided for this purpose and remain with the trap until collected.
(The 'STAY PUT' Rule.)

iii) Organiser's Responsibilities to Trappers and Loaders

- a) The shoot organiser should provide adequate hearing protection and any personal protective equipment (P.P.E.) necessary to the trappers, such as gloves, eye protection and helmets where necessary. Staff should be instructed to wear all such protective equipment whilst shooting is in progress.
- b) Sufficient clays should be stacked next to the trap to last the duration of the competition.
- c) Trappers must be fully protected from shot and clay debris. **Remember out of sight is not necessarily out of shot.**
- d) The employment of trappers and loaders must conform to all Health and Safety and Employment regulations.
- e) The equipment provided must be in a proper working condition and safe to use. (PUWER regulations 1998).
- f) All trappers and loaders must be properly instructed as to correct and safe trapping and loading procedures and should be made aware of the inherent dangers in failing to rigidly comply with these.
- g) Only one trapper per trap should be permitted at any trapping position.

iv) Traphouse

It follows that the traphouse must be large enough to comfortably house the trap, clays and trapper, and that the traphouse or stand shall be fully protected from a full accidental discharge of shot or clay debris. The traphouse should be adequately lit if required for trappers or loaders to operate in safety.

The use of straw bales alone for the construction of trapper protection is insufficient and **unsafe**.

Fig. 4

It is recommended that a 'sandwich' of steel sheeting and straw bales be used instead (see Fig. 4) or a framed cladding of sound corrugated sheet steel.

If in doubt double the cladding.

Where the protective wall is lower than about 2 metres it is recommended that some sort of roof be placed over the head of the trapper so they cannot stand up into danger.

v) **A Special Note for Skeet**

Protective chutes of sufficient size and strength should be placed on the inside of any traphouse over the trap opening in such a way as to allow the emergence of the clay whilst still protecting trappers working inside both the high and low houses from stray shot. In the event of automatic traps being used these chutes will protect anyone filling the traps whilst shooting is in progress.

It is advisable to have a chute on the outside of the high house but one must be fitted on the low house to protect a shooter on station 7 from injury due to a target emerging broken.

Shooters on this station should be aware that pieces of broken clay from the high house target very often land in this vicinity.

9. SHOOTERS

- i) Shooters have an obvious safety responsibility and the shoot organisers should inform, in no uncertain terms if necessary, those shooters who behave in an unsafe manner.
- ii) Organisers of events have the power to refuse entry to those who behave unsafely or may eject or disqualify unsafe shooters already entered.
- iii) Novices, those who have not used a shotgun before or where experience is so limited that their competence in handling a shotgun is in question, require special attention with particular emphasis on safety in all aspects of gun handling.

A notice should be displayed requiring novices to announce this fact at entry. The Club Safety Officer or any club official or member should advise the shoot management where it is obvious that a visitor appears unsure in gun handling.

It is recommended that a 'learner' trap be set up for initial instruction and when the novice is considered SAFE and competent only then to be allowed access to other stands under the supervision of an experienced shooter who shall remain with the novice throughout. It is advisable that only one instructor per pupil at any one time is used, differing (even though well intentional) advice is confusing and complicated.

Notes

- a) The C.P.S.A. organise courses of instruction leading to the award of a competence certificate for successful candidates.
- b) Club Coach courses are run from time to time – enquire at C.P.S.A. Head Office for details.

10. THE PUBLIC

- a) There is a **275 metres Safety Zone** for all C.P.S.A. affiliated grounds.

- b) Shot or clay fallout must not land on any public footpath or right of way.
- c) It is recommended shooting should not take place in any area that is less than 15.4 metres (50ft) from the centre of a carriageway.
- d) Shoot organisers must not leave equipment in a condition likely to cause injury to the public (even trespassing public!) such as a cocked clay trap, or access to elevated platforms or towers.
- e) Display warning notices where there is a need. If you foresee any danger; cordon off areas as necessary.
- f) Insure against accident. C.P.S.A. Affiliated Clubs can enjoy discounted insurance; contact C.P.S.A. Head Office for further details.
- g) Engage qualified C.P.S.A. coaches carrying appropriate coaching indemnity insurance personally or through the grounds business insurance, to supervise novices and newcomers to the ground.
- h) Adopt the C.P.S.A. Child Protection policy and have all personnel at the ground who come in contact with children at the ground entered onto the C.P.S.A. database as cleared through the National Criminal Records Bureau. Please enquire at C.P.S.A. HQ for this service.
- i) Hold, if appropriate, a Section 11(6) permit under the 1968 Firearms Act to allow non-shotgun certificate holders to shoot at the ground under appropriate supervision.

11. OFFICIALS

Referees and Button Pressers

It must be understood that no club or ground can operate effectively without full co-operation from efficient Referees and Button Pressers. It is vital therefore that organisers should understand the problems of these officials. The following are extracts from various clay shooting rule books:-

- i) Clay shooting of whatever discipline shall be conducted by a Referee with wide experience of clay target shooting and a sound knowledge of shotguns.
- ii) He must be fully conversant with the rules for Range Control and competent to ensure these rules are observed.
- iii) A rulebook should be made available for the type of shooting taking place. These will contain the rules for Range Control and can be obtained from the C.P.S.A.
- iv) The Referee should have the rulebook relevant to their particular discipline **in their possession** when performing their duties.
- v) Before the start of a shoot the Referee (together with the Jury at registered shoots) will check that traps are in order, throwing the correct targets and operated by fully briefed and competent trappers or loaders.
- vi) Remote release of clay targets: this can be done acoustically or by pressing a button. There are different types of button operations; some need holding

down until the clay appears, and some need immediate release after pressing. The Referee or Button Presser should know how to correctly handle all buttons prior to the start of any shooting.

- vii) When, and only when, the Referee is satisfied that it is safe to shoot will they give the order to the shooter or squad to load and commence shooting.
- viii) During the progress of a shoot the Referee will exercise complete control over all shooters, calling their decisions clearly and quickly. In the event of any interruptions in the shooting the Referee will ascertain that any instructions of theirs regarding the unloading and loading of guns is observed immediately.
- ix) At the end of a shoot the Referee will again instruct shooters to empty their guns before turning to leave firing points. Finally the Referee will instruct trappers to uncock their traps and stand down.
- x) At all times the Referee should liaise completely with the Safety Officer, suspending any person deemed guilty of unsafe control and reporting the incident at once to the Safety Officer.

12. INSURANCE

- i) Very importantly, organisers of all clay shooting events, even the most informal, are strongly advised to take out a minimum of Third Party Liability insurance cover of at least £2,000,000 for any single accident. If you cannot arrange this with your own insurance agent then contact the C.P.S.A.'s own Insurance Adviser who is an expert in such matters and he will arrange cover to suit your needs. Contact C.P.S.A. HQ for details.
- ii) All current C.P.S.A. members are automatically covered for civil liability and for those members between 10-75 years of age, a personal accident insurance is included as part of their membership subscription. Discounted ground insurance rates are available to affiliated clubs.
- iii) Employers' Liability is a legal requirement where any form of labour is involved. The most common form of this is undoubtedly that of trappers and loaders, but any form of labour requires the insurance cover. It is a serious offence to employ any kind of labour without insuring for the Employers' Liability risk, even for such an occasion as a One Day shoot.

13. RECOMMENDED CHECK LIST

Is adequate protection of trappers provided?

Is there provision of Personal Protective Equipment including protective clothing, head gear, waterproofs, gloves, eye and ear protection?

Are traphouses kept in a clean condition?

Are red flags provided?

Is the trapper fully protected?

Is the direction of clays safely sited?

Is there a large enough fall-out area for clay or fragments, to eliminate any possibility of danger to individuals in the vicinity?

Are they any footpaths within fall-out distance?

Are the shot sizes of cartridges kept to the official limit?

Are all shooters aware that they must cease shooting on hearing a given audible signal?

Consider all above and remedy if necessary.

REMEMBER –

GOOD SHOOTING IS NO ACCIDENT

14. NOTES OF THE TREATMENT OF INJURIES

It is strongly recommended that each shooting ground has a qualified first aider in attendance whilst shooting is taking place, and contact numbers for the emergency services clearly displayed in the clubhouse. All clubs are advised to have an Emergency Action Plan to efficiently call emergency services if required.

HOW ARE THEY CONTACTED, WHERE IS THE NEAREST LAND LINE TELEPHONE? WHAT IS THE CLUBS EXACT LOCATION?

The First Aid Kit should be checked on a regular basis and kept up to date and well stocked. An accident book should be maintained. A **First Aid Appointed Person** should be named whose responsibility it is to maintain the first aid kit.

15. ALCOHOL/DRUGS

Anyone appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs should not be allowed on the shooting grounds.