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A JUNIOR SHOOTER'S GUIDE TO AIR RIFLE SAFETY

A guide for junior competitors on all aspects of air gun safety including safety rules, range procedures, air rifle range operations, proper storage and personal safety

A Gun Safety and Marksmanship Publication of the Civilian Marksmanship Program

This Guide is endorsed by the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council. Council Members are:

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Boy Scouts of America

Civilian Marksmanship Program

Daisy/U. S. Jaycees Shooter Education Program

National 4-H Shooting Sports

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U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit

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The Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force JROTC Commands

A Junior Shooter's Guide to Air Rifle Safety

A guide for junior competitors on all aspects of air gun safety including safety rules, range procedures, air rifle range operations, proper storage and personal safety.

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This guide is a gun safety publication of the Civilian Marksmanship Program. The guide was written by Gary Anderson, Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus, but it benefited from the advice and experiences of numerous junior shooting leaders who have taught gun safety and marksmanship and supervised range firing and competition activities for thousands of junior competitors. The CMP acknowledges and thanks each of these experts who contributed to the guide and reviewed guide copy prior to its publication. The CMP acknowledges, in particular, the review comments and guidance received from representatives of organizations that belong to the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council and from numerous JROTC Marksmanship Instructors.

The information in this guide was carefully researched and evaluated by expert marksmanship instructors and leaders. All reasonable efforts were made to ensure that the safety guidance and procedures described in the guide represent a consensus of experts as to the best, most effective and most thoroughly tested safety rules, procedures and guidelines that can be applied in any situation involving air rifle handling or target range firing.

The CMP is always happy to receive comments or recommendations regarding this safety guide. For questions or comments concerning the editorial content of this guide, please write to CMP Programs, P. O. Box 576, Port Clinton, OH 43452 or via email to info@thecmp.org. For more information about the CMP and its programs and activities for youth and adults, visit us at www.TheCMP.org.

Author: Gary Anderson, Director of Civilian Marksmanship Emeritus

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SAFE GUN HANDLING RULES

The sport of target rifle shooting is one of the safest of all sports. In 120 years of Olympic Games shooting, there has never been an accidental injury involving a gun. There are several thousand junior shooting clubs, JROTC unit rifle teams, 4-H Shooting Sports clubs, Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews, youth camps and junior shooting organizations that practice and compete in position air rifle shooting and other air rifle activities. These programs have more than 100,000 participants in the United States. These youth marksmanship activities have compiled an outstanding safety record where gun-related accidents are extremely rare. Rifle marksmanship is indeed among the safest of all youth sports.

Target shooting established its record as one of the safest of all sports because everyone who participates in it must learn and follow basic safety rules. Target shooting is a sport of control and discipline where everyone involved, including participants, instructors, coaches and range officers, is expected to know and apply the sport's safety rules at all times.

Rules for Safe Gun Handling

Three primary safe gun handling rules are the foundation for the safe handling and use of all types of guns, including the air rifles that are used in youth marksmanship programs. These safety rules focus on three primary gun parts that control when and where the gun can be fired. Those parts are the MUZZLE, ACTION and TRIGGER.

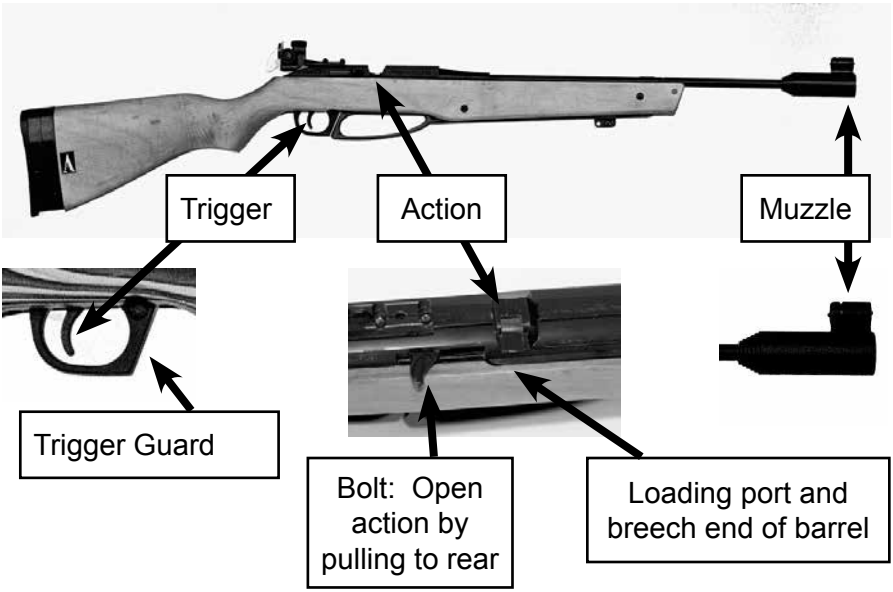
SAFETY FLAGS

Safety flags are now mandatory for use in target shooting to positively demonstrate that gun actions are open and barrels or chambers are unloaded. Safety flags used for air rifles were previously called Clear Barrel Indicators or CBIs, but now they are simply called safety flags, a term that everyone understands. Air rifle safety flags are cut from orange or bright-colored weed-trimmer cord (.065-.095" dia.). They must be long enough so that when inserted in the air rifle barrel 4-6 inches of the cord projects out of each end of the barrel.

Here are some rules for the proper use of safety flags in air rifles:

1. Insert a safety flag before bringing your rifle to the range or when removing it from a gun case.
2. Remove the safety flag only on the firing line after the Range Officer instructs you to handle rifles and begin preparations for firing or dry firing.
3. When you finish firing, immediately open the action, insert the safety flag and ground your rifle.

When all firers are finished, the Range Officer can quickly and accurately verify that all air rifles have open actions and empty barrels by looking for safety flags in each rifle on the firing line.



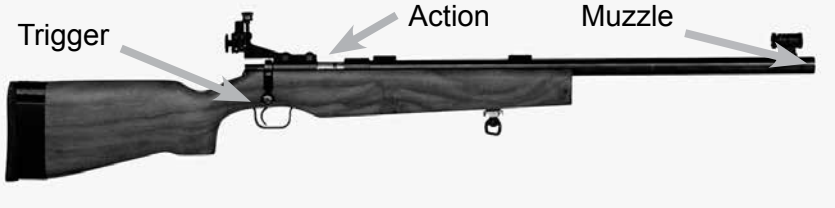
TIP: An easy way to remember the Rules for Safe Gun Handling is to use the key word MAT. MAT stands for Muzzle-Action-Trigger. MAT is also useful because that is the order in which the three safety rules must be applied. Whenever you handle a rifle always start by controlling the muzzle.

Everyone should know the primary parts of a gun, whether or not they will ever participate in target shooting, so that they can apply the rules for safe gun handling any time they are in a situation where a gun is present.

MUZZLE. The forward end of the barrel. The muzzle is the point where the pellet or projectile leaves the barrel when the gun is fired. A gun is aimed by pointing its muzzle at the target. Whenever a projectile is fired, it will strike exactly where the muzzle is pointed.

ACTION. The working mechanism of the gun. Gun actions typically have a bolt or cocking lever that is used to open and close the action so that the gun can be loaded and unloaded. A gun cannot ordinarily be fired unless its action is closed and locked.

TRIGGER. The trigger is part of the action or working mechanism of the gun. The trigger is a lever that projects out of the bottom of the action. A trigger guard protects the trigger. After a gun is loaded and the action is closed, the gun is fired by pulling or applying pressure to the trigger.

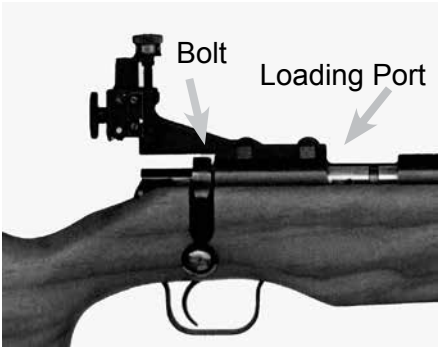


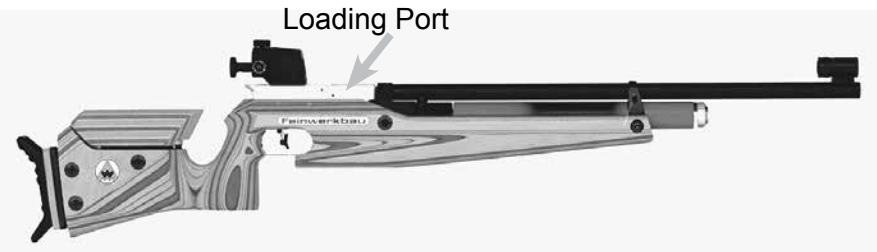
Many junior shooting programs conduct rifle marksmanship training with .22 cal. smallbore rifles like the one shown here. These rifles have bolt actions that are opened by lifting a bolt and pulling it to the rear (see illustration at bottom of this page).

The rules for safe gun handling follow a step-by-step sequence designed to prevent the unintentional firing of a gun. These rules ensure that even if a gun is unintentionally fired, it cannot cause personal injury. Follow these steps every time you handle a gun:

1. The **first step in picking up or taking a gun is to do this with all fingers outside of the trigger guard and to immediately control the direction the muzzle points**. Immediately point the gun in a safe direction where it is not directed at another person and would do no serious damage even if the gun were unintentionally fired. The first thing to do when picking up a gun or when taking a gun from someone else is to point it away from other people in the area. The safest direction to point a gun is usually upward with the muzzle held above head level. If a gun is on a range, the safest direction is to point it downrange towards the targets.

2. As soon as the gun muzzle is pointing in a safe direction, **the second step is to check the action of the gun and open it, if it is not already open**. Since the gun's action contains its firing mechanism, it cannot be fired unintentionally or accidentally if the action is open. All guns, except muzzle loading guns, have a bolt or lever on the action that opens the action. Be sure to learn where the bolt or cocking lever is on any gun you handle. With the action open, it is possible to visually check most guns to see whether the gun is loaded and has a cartridge or pel-





Many junior shooting programs have precision air rifles like this air rifle that rifle team members use in competitions. Pulling, lifting or pushing a lever on the action opens the loading port and action.

let in the breech end (rear end) of the barrel. If you check a gun action and see that the gun is loaded with a cartridge or pellet, the cartridge or pellet must be removed to make the gun safe.

3. With the muzzle pointing in a safe direction and the action open so that the gun cannot be fired, **the third safety precaution is to continue to hold or carry the rifle with all fingers held outside of the trigger guard and not on the trigger**. The trigger guard is a protective band around the trigger. Its purpose is to prevent the trigger from being pulled unintentionally. By keeping the fingers outside of the trigger guard, it is impossible to accidentally pull the trigger should the action somehow become closed.

The index finger must remain outside of the trigger guard at all times until the rifle is in the firing position and you begin to look through the sights and start to aim in preparation for firing a shot.

RULES FOR SAFE GUN HANDLING:

1. **MUZZLE**. Always keep gun muzzles pointed in a safe direction. Gun muzzles must never be pointed at other persons under any circumstance. On a range, the safest directions to point a gun muzzle are usually upward or downrange towards the target.
2. **RIFLE ACTION**. When handling any rifle or firearm, the action must be open with a safety flag inserted. Gun actions must remain open except when the gun is on the firing line and preparation or firing periods have begun. When shooting is finished, the action must be open and a safety flag must be re-inserted, even when the gun is on the firing line. The gun action may be closed when it is placed in a gun case or storeroom, but must be opened and a safety flag inserted as soon as it is picked up again.
3. **TRIGGER**. Keep your finger off of the trigger until after shouldering the gun and preparing to fire a shot. It is especially important to keep the finger outside of the trigger guard when loading the gun and placing it in the shooting position.

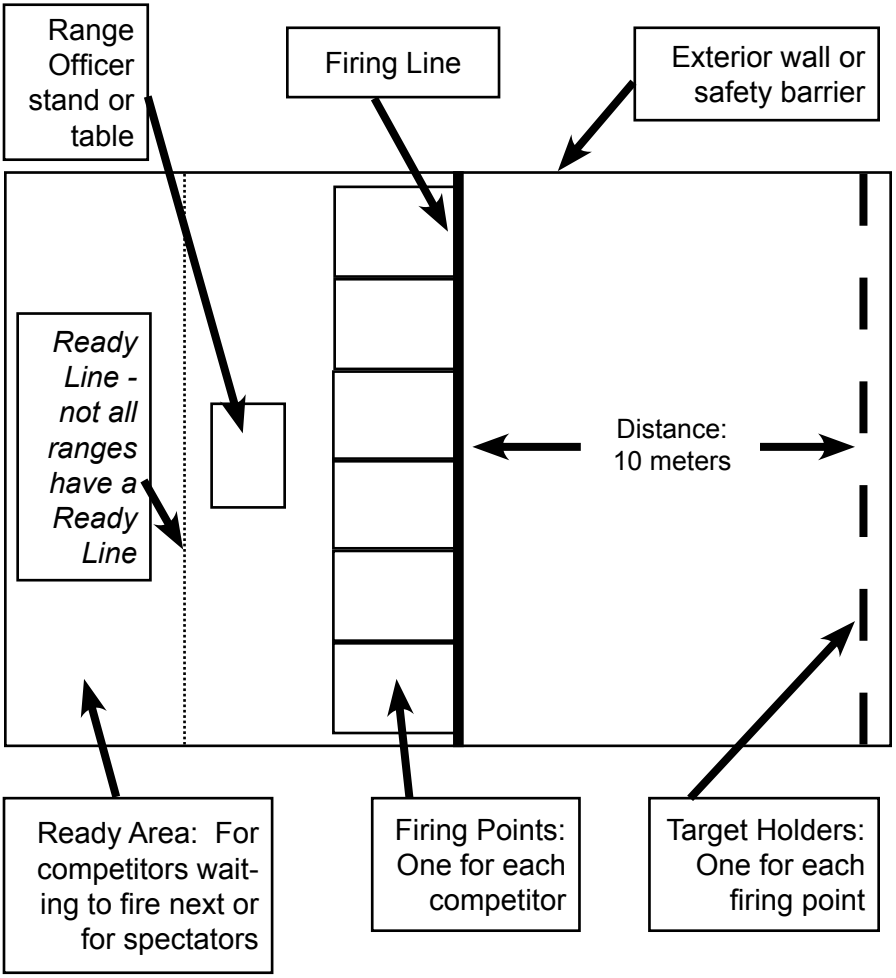
SHOOTING RANGES

Everyone who comes in contact with a gun needs to know the three basic rules for safe gun handling. Individuals who use rifles in junior marksmanship or other target shooting activities also need to know and practice additional rules for the safe operation of target shooting ranges. To understand these safety rules it is first necessary to know something about how target ranges are

Air gun ranges have a firing line from which firing is done and a row of targets, target holders and backstops 10m away.

designed and laid out. Study the diagram of the range that is shown above so that you understand how the firing points and targets are positioned on a typical range. This diagram is for a 6-point range, but target ranges can have as few as three or four and as many as 80 or even 100 firing points.

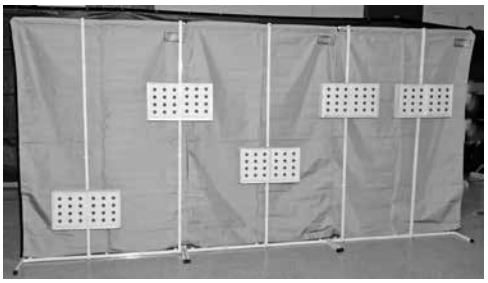
Typical Air Rifle Range Layout



Air rifle ranges have these primary features:

- **Safety Barrier**. Ranges must have an outer wall or some means of preventing unauthorized persons from entering the range area while firing takes place. During firing, the entire safety barrier forward of the firing line must be secured so that no one can enter the range from the outside.

- **Target Holders**. At the front end of the range there are a series of target holders and backstops. Most target holders have a metal plate behind the targets that serves as a backstop to stop and collect the pellets that are fired at the targets. The target holders are designed so that targets can be hung on them at heights appropriate for the three shooting positions.



A portable 10-meter air rifle range with target holders, pellet catchers and backstop. Targets can be placed the proper heights for firing from the prone, standing and kneeling positions.

- **Firing Line**. At a distance of 10 meters from the targets, a firing line is marked on the floor of the range. The firing line is normally a red or colored stripe or tape that is two or three inches wide. Competitors must take their positions on their firing points so that no part of their feet or body touches the back edge of this firing line.

- **Range Officer**. Immediately behind the line of firing points, a table, stand or working area for the Range Officer is located. The Range Officer is in charge of firing on the range and gives commands and instructions for the firers. Range Officers use standard range commands to control the conduct of shooting.

A Range Officer or instructor is in charge of the firing on every range. The commands and instructions of the Range Officer must always be followed.

- **Firing Points**. The firing line is divided into firing points. Firing points are rectangular spaces located immediately behind the firing line. Firing points are approximately 1 meter wide by 2 meters long. The width of each firing point corresponds to the distances between the targets. Only one competitor may occupy one firing point at a time.
- **Ready Area**. Most ranges also have an area behind the firing line that is designated as a preparation or ready area. If there are other competitors who are waiting their turn to fire, this is the area where they should remain. If there are spectators, this also is the area where they should stand or sit. Individuals in the ready area must remain in that area and not go forward to the firing line until instructed to do so by the Range Officer.

SAFE LOADING PROCEDURE

To safely load an air rifle, follow these steps:

Pneumatic Air Rifles (must be charged with a charging lever):

1. Open the action (bolt). Do not charge an air rifle with a closed action.
2. Open and close the charging lever to charge the rifle with air.
3. Insert a pellet in the loading port or breech end of the barrel.
4. Close the bolt (action).
5. Shoulder the air rifle to prepare to fire the next shot. Keep the index finger on the outside of the trigger guard while shouldering the rifle.

Pre-Charged Air Rifles (compressed air or CO_2):

1. Open the action (bolt) or pull the charging handle all the way to the rear. This cocks the firing mechanism.
2. Insert a pellet in the breech end of the barrel or place a pellet on the loading port.
3. Close the bolt (action).
4. Shoulder the air rifle to prepare to fire the next shot. Keep the index finger on the outside of the trigger guard while shouldering the rifle.

SAFETIES

A safety is a mechanical device that blocks the trigger or firing mechanism when it is engaged (safety is on). Many air rifles used in junior marksmanship programs have safeties, but many other target air rifles do not have safeties. Safeties are made for general purpose guns where there is a possibility that a gun may be carried loaded. For example, hunters use safeties when they carry a loaded rifle or shotgun in the field or woods. Safeties are not normally used in target shooting because the primary 'safety' in target shooting is the open action and the safety flag. More importantly, rifles on target ranges are loaded only on the firing line and only when they are to be fired at a target so there is never any reason to carry a loaded rifle to any other location on a range.

Even though engaging and disengaging the safety is not part of normal air rifle loading procedures on target ranges, your instructor may wish to have you practice engaging and disengaging the safety so you will be familiar with safeties and how they work. If you do this, you must understand that engaging a safety does not relieve you of the responsibility for following any rules for safe gun handling.

RANGE COMMANDS

Whenever a range firing activity takes place, a trained Range Officer must be in charge of the range. The Range Officer conducts the firing activity on a range and is responsible for giving range commands and instructions. To begin a range activity, the Range Officer designates the persons who will use the firing points and instructs them to move their equipment to the firing line and take their shooting positions. The group of persons who shoot at the same time is called a "relay" of competitors.

When rifles are brought to the range, muzzles must be pointed upward with the muzzles held above head level. When the rifles are on the firing line, muzzles must be pointed upward or downrange towards the targets, never to the rear of the line or towards other persons on the line. Rifle actions

must be open and guns must be unloaded and safety flags must be inserted. After competitors get into their shooting positions and are ready to begin firing, the Range Officer will give a series of commands to start and stop firing.

- ***LOAD***. No one may load any rifle until the Range Officer gives the command ***LOAD***. Then competitors may charge their rifles, insert a pellet in them and close the actions. It is a serious offense to load a rifle on a range before the command ***LOAD*** is given.

- ***START***. The next command tells competitors that they can begin to aim and fire at their targets and that they may continue loading and firing until the firing exercise is finished. No one may fire a shot until this command is given, even if the command ***LOAD*** was given. Whenever competitors finish their firing exercise, they must open their air rifle actions, ground their rifles and insert safety flags.

- ***STOP***. When shooting is finished, the Range Officer commands ***STOP***. If the command ***STOP*** is given during firing, every competitor must immediately stop firing, open the actions on their rifles and wait for further instructions. No one is authorized to fire a shot after the command ***STOP*** is given. The Range Officer or any other person on the range can command ***STOP*** if they become aware of a dangerous or unsafe condition.

- ***UNLOAD***. If anyone on a range has a loaded air rifle after the command ***STOP-UNLOAD*** is given, they must notify the Range Officer by raising their hand and calling out "***loaded rifle***." The Range Officer will then give instructions for unloading that rifle.

After firing is completed, the Range Officer will check each rifle to be sure it is grounded with a safety flag inserted. When that check is completed, the Range Officer will declare that the line is clear and instruct competitors to change or retrieve targets or to leave the firing line so the next group of competitors can move up to the firing line.

OTHER RANGE COMMANDS

The basic range commands, ***LOAD***, ***START***, ***STOP***, ***UNLOAD***, were adopted by the International Shooting Sport Federation (international federation that governs Olympic shooting) as international standard range commands. These commands, which must be given in the English language, are used on ranges throughout the world because they are clear, simple and readily understood by virtually everyone regardless of their own language. These commands were also adopted by the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council, Civilian Marksmanship Program and USA Shooting (Olympic shooting governing body in the USA) for official use in air rifle competitions. The range commands, ***LOAD***, ***START***, ***STOP***, ***UNLOAD*** are the most commonly used range commands for air rifle shooting in the USA, but some ranges and Range Officers may still use other range commands such as COMMENCE FIRING and CEASE FIRING. If you are on a range where these commands are used, just remember that COMMENCE FIRING means ***START*** and CEASE FIRING means ***STOP***. Other range commands that are more detailed are often given with these commands (i.e. IS THE LINE READY, READY ON THE RIGHT, READY ON THE LEFT, READY ON THE FIRING LINE, etc.). If you hear these commands, regard them as instructions from the Range Officer, which of course, must always be obeyed.

RANGE AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

There are other rules that are used on shooting ranges to assure the safe and orderly conduct of the shooting activity. Every competitor must be familiar with these rules and any special rules that apply to the range you are using.

1. **PROPER AIR RIFLES FOR THE RANGE**. Only 4.5 mm (.177 cal.) air rifles designed for target air rifle shooting can safely be used on most air rifle ranges. Target air rifles may be pneumatic (air cylinder is charged by hand), CO_2 or compressed air rifles. These rifles are designed to fire soft lead pellets weighing 0.50

grams (8 grains) at velocities of 500 to 600 feet per second. Pellet or air rifles that fire larger or heavier pellets, steel projectiles or pellets at velocities in excess of 600 feet per second are not appropriate for use on most target air rifle ranges. Air rifles must fire 600 fps or below to fire in a CMP sanctioned match or clinic. It is also unsafe to fire BB guns at any target holder or backstop that is not expressly designed for BB gun target shooting.

2. **TARGET**. Shoot only at the target designated for you (your assigned firing point). Be sure your target is placed in front of a safe backstop. Shooting at any object on a range other than your own target is strictly forbidden.

3. **LOADING**. Rifle muzzles must remain pointed downrange or upward with the muzzle held above head level whenever the rifle is charged and loaded. Special care must be taken to be sure that a rifle muzzle is never pointed at a neighboring competitor or towards any area behind the firing line during charging and loading. A loaded rifle must remain in your hands; never lay a loaded rifle down.

4. **MALFUNCTIONS**. If at any time during a firing exercise, your air rifle fails to fire or does not function properly, stay in position, keep the muzzle pointed downrange and raise your hand so the Range Officer can see it. The Range Officer will give instructions on what to do with the air rifle. If the air rifle is loaded with a pellet, the pellet must be cleared from the barrel before the air rifle may be removed from the firing line. The Range Officer may use a .177 cal. cleaning rod to remove the pellet from the barrel before the air rifle is taken off of the firing line.

5. **FIRING COMPLETED**. Immediately after you fire your last shot in a firing exercise or when the command **STOP** is given, you must open the action on your air rifle, place the rifle on the ground or bench and insert a safety flag. The Range Officer will check the rifle.

6. **LOADED RIFLE**. A loaded air rifle is an air rifle that has a pellet in the barrel. Any pellet that is in the barrel must be removed before the air rifle may be grounded or removed from the range.

If you still have a loaded air rifle after the command **STOP** is given, stay in position, keep the muzzle pointed downrange, raise your hand and announce “loaded rifle”. The Range Officer will give you instructions for discharging your air rifle to unload it. This may be done by instructing you to fire into an open target backstop or to fire into a pellet discharge container (PDC).

An air rifle pellet discharge container (PDC) is filled with paper or other soft material. When an air rifle remains loaded after the command STOP is given, the Range Officer will instruct that the rifle be unloaded by firing it into the container.

7. **GROUNDED RIFLE**. A grounded rifle is an unloaded rifle that is lying on a shooting mat or bench with its action open and a safety flag inserted. When you bring your rifle to the firing line, you will be instructed to “ground” it. You must also ground your rifle after you finish firing and insert a safety flag so the Range Officer can check it.

8. **LINE IS CLEAR**. When conducting firing, the Range Officer will alternately describe the firing line as being “clear” or “not clear”. A firing line is clear when all personnel on the range are behind the firing line and the line is prepared for live firing. Further instructions or commands will then be given to actually begin preparation and firing. A firing line is clear when all firing is completed and all rifles are grounded with safety flags inserted. No one can move forward of the firing line until the Range Officer announces **THE LINE IS CLEAR**.

9. **GOING DOWNRANGE**. Whenever it is necessary for someone to go forward of the firing line (downrange) to place or retrieve targets or for any other purpose, all rifles must be grounded with safety flags inserted and checked by the Range Officer. No one may go forward of the firing line until authorized to do so by the Range Offi-

All rifles must be grounded and checked before anyone can go downrange.

cer. No one may handle rifles while anyone is in front of the firing line. After everyone returns from downrange and is behind the firing line, the Range Officer will announce **THE LINE IS CLEAR** and give instructions to handle your rifles again.

10. **PERSONAL HYGIENE**. Lead is a toxic substance that must not get into your body. Medical research and testing conducted at the U. S. Olympic Training Center confirms that simple hygiene precautions effectively prevent individuals who shoot air rifles from ingesting harmful amounts of lead. The rules are simple: Do not bring food into the range or consume food on the range. Do not bring any drinks into the range unless they are bottled and can be closed. Wash your hands after handling air rifle pellets (preferably in cold water). Cleaning the target backstops of spent lead pellets must be done by the instructor or another adult.

11. **GUN CASES**. Air rifles are often brought to ranges in gun cases that can be locked for security and are used to transport the rifles. When the Range Officer gives instructions to take air rifles and equipment to the firing line, take your gun case with the rifle in it to the firing point with the case oriented so the muzzle points downrange. As soon as you open the case, open the rifle action and insert a safety flag in the rifle. You can then take the rifle from the case to ground it on your firing point and remove the gun case from the firing line. When firing is completed the Range Officer will give instructions to discharge air downrange and replace the rifle in the case. When placing an air rifle in its case, it is authorized to remove the safety flag, close the action and release the trigger.

Orient your gun case so that the muzzle is pointed downrange when it is removed from the case. Air rifle actions must be opened and safety flags inserted as soon as the case is opened.

12. **EYE AND HEARING PROTECTION**. Regulations on some ranges require the wearing of eye protection for air rifle shooting because of the remote possibility that a lead pellet fragment could bounce back from the backstop. Because of this possibility, you

are encouraged to wear eye protection while on an air rifle range. Safety glasses with polycarbonate lenses or regular prescription eyeglasses, especially if they have polycarbonate lenses, provide adequate protection. Some competitors elect to wear hearing protection (ear plugs or ear muffs) while shooting air rifles, although this is normally done by individuals who wish to reduce the effects of noise in the range to improve their ability to concentrate. Air rifles do not generate enough sound to cause hearing loss.

Eye protection worn by air rifle competitors can either be safety glasses, shooting glasses or regular eye glasses. Eye glasses provide adequate protection for air rifle shooting.

13. **AIR RIFLE STORAGE**. After a shooting session is completed the air rifles must be stored in secure, locked storage. When firing is completed, you may be instructed to bring the rifle to a storage area where your instructor will be in charge of accounting for and locking up the rifle. Whenever you carry your rifle from the range to the storage area, be sure to keep the muzzle pointed upward and in a safe direction.

14. **AIR OR CO_2 CYLINDERS**. Many air rifles now used in junior marksmanship activities have compressed air or CO_2 cylinders. These cylinders are safe if handled properly. When screwing filled cylinders into air rifles, do not over-tighten the cylinders. When filling cylinders from a master tank, always stand to the side of the cylinder; do not allow its end or base to point at you or another person. Tighten cylinders only enough to prevent gas leakage; do not over-tighten air or CO_2 cylinders. High pressure air or gas cylinders come with factory recommendations for periodic inspections; these must be followed.

The cylinders used on compressed air and CO_2 rifles hold gas under very high pressure. Handle these cylinders with special care, do not over-tighten them and do not point the end of the cylinder at yourself or another person while filling or placing them in your rifle.

The Goal—No Gun Accidents

In addition to learning to follow safe gun handling rules, range commands and established range and safety procedures, there are two additional safety goals that must become part of your continuing efforts to be safe with guns.

- **Everyone is a Safety Officer**. In an emergency when a safety hazard occurs or when someone in your presence does something unsafe with a gun, you can and must become an "Emergency Safety Officer." If you see someone close the action on a gun or fail to open the action of a gun while handling it, it is necessary for you to step in and make sure the action is opened.

- **Self-Discipline and Focus**. Gun safety is not a matter of learning safety rules and then assuming you will always be safe with guns. Gun safety requires that you consciously practice safe muzzle control, check for open actions and keep your fingers outside of the trigger guard every time you handle a gun. That requires self-discipline and focus. You must discipline yourself to always pay attention to safety—for yourself and for those around you.

Everyone who completes marksmanship and safety training learns how to be safe while handling any type of air rifle or firearm. By learning and following the rules of safe gun handling and by practicing those rules during target rifle practice, you will ensure that your rifle marksmanship training and competition experiences or your activities with any other types of firearms will be is safe and enjoyable.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Many of these items are free and each are easy to order through the CMP E-Store or by completing a downloadable Publications Order Form, http://thecmp.org/wp-content/uploads/publications.pdf. Shipping and handling may be charged separately depending upon the item's source.

Coaching Young Rifle Shooters. A 186 page instructional and teaching guide for coaches and parents who work with beginning and intermediate junior rifle competitors. Covers shooting history, gun safety, the firing positions, shot technique, training systems and much more. NLU #758, $20.95 each.

CMP Rifle Instruction Guide. A 48-page book with detailed text and illustrations on rifle positions, shot technique and training. **NLU #740**, $5.20 each.

Advanced Shooter's Journal. The CMP created the ***Advanced Shooter's Journal*** as a resource for the CMP Three-Position Rifle Summer Camp program. The material in this journal has been designed to address the needs of athletes who want to take their shooting beyond the beginner level, with a focus on daily and long-term goal setting. This 104-page journal will make a great addition to any junior's toolbox. **NLU #749**, $2.00 each.

ON THE MARK. ***ON THE MARK*** is a quarterly newsletter dedicated to assisting junior shooting leaders and coaches in the continued success and improvement of their young competitors, regardless of skill level. A typical issue of ***ON THE MARK*** includes technical articles about junior rifle and pistol marksmanship, junior shooting program information as well as news about junior events, instructional tips and coaching information. Most issues include reports on recent junior shooting competitions. One year Subscription, $8.00. Visit the ***ON THE MARK*** web site, http://thecmp.org/communications/on-the-mark/, for an OTM Order Form and to download previous issues.

National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rules. The official rules for air rifle competitions are issued by the National

Three-Position Air Rifle Council. See the "***Safety Rules for Air Rifle Ranges***" that are printed on the inside front and back covers. Section 2 of the rulebook titled **2.0 SAFETY** and Section 7, titled **7.0 COMPETITION PROCEDURES** provide detailed rules covering the safe conduct of firing during formal competitions. **NLU #775**, $4.95 each.

Air Rifle Safety Rules. This 11x17 poster is made for display on ranges and in club rooms. The poster shows basic safety rules that focus on muzzle, action and trigger, plus eight important, additional rules that must be followed on all air gun ranges. **NLU #701**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

CO_2 Air Rifle Cylinder Filling Procedure. A poster produced by the CMP for display on air rifle ranges. The poster illustrates the proper way to fill a CO_2 Air Rifle Cylinder. **NLU #742**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

Guide to Lead Management for Air Gun Shooting. A 20-page booklet produced jointly by USA Shooting and the CMP that summarizes test data and recommendations for best practices regarding lead management for air gun ranges. **NLU #747**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

Shooter's Journal. An 48-page shooter's journal suitable for use as a shooters diary to record information about personal scores and training or competition activities. **NLU #703**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

Air Rifle Marksmanship For Youth Brochure. This brochure provides comprehensive, factual information for youth organization leaders and school administrators to consider when deciding whether to establish or approve rifle marksmanship programs. This document may also be used by youth and their parents to learn more about air rifle marksmanship. **NLU # 718**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

Teaching Rifle Positions to New Junior Shooters. A 12-page pamphlet with text and photos detailing the newest methods for teaching the standing, prone and kneeling positions to new shooters. Published by the CMP. **NLU# 748**, copies are available free of charge from the CMP.

Individual Junior Shooter Safety Pledge

This Individual Junior Shooter Safety Pledge should be reviewed and affirmed by every junior shooter who uses an air rifle in youth marksmanship programs.

KEY WORDS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
1. Obeying Commands and Instructions	A Range Officer will be in charge of all range firing activities. I will listen to and immediately obey all commands and instructions given by the Range Officer.
2. Muzzle	Whenever I handle an air rifle, or guns of any kind, I will always maintain control of the muzzle so that it points in a safe direction. I will take special care to be sure I never point any gun muzzle at another person or myself.
3. Action	Whenever I handle an air rifle, or guns of any kind, I will immediately open the gun action (bolt or operating mechanism), or visually check to be sure the action is open with a safety flag inserted. I will close a gun action only when I am on the firing line of a range and am authorized to do so by the Range Officer or instructor.
4. Trigger	Whenever I handle guns, I will do so without placing my finger on the trigger. I will place my finger on the trigger only when I am on the firing line, after I have placed my air rifle in a firing position and have begun to aim at the target.
5. Range Commands	I understand what the range commands **LOAD**, **START**, **STOP** and **UNLOAD** mean. I will respond to those commands whenever they are given.
6. Safe Loading	I will close the action of my air rifle or charge and load my air rifle only when I am on a designated firing point and have been given instructions or commands to do so. When I charge and load my air rifle I will take special care to keep the muzzle pointed upward or downrange towards the targets.
7. Target	When I am firing on a range, I will fire only at my designated targets. I will not fire at anyone else's targets or at any other objects on the range.
8. Malfunction	If, when I am on the firing line attempting to load or fire my air rifle, my air rifle fails to fire or malfunctions, I will keep the muzzle pointed downrange and raise my hand so the Range Officer can see it. I will wait for the Range Officer to give me instructions to clear the malfunction.

KEY WORDS	PERSONAL ACTIONS
9. Firing Completed	Whenever I have fired my last shot in a firing exercise, I will immediately open the action on my air rifle, insert a safety flag and ground the rifle so the Range Officer can check it.
10. Loaded Air Rifle	If I still have a loaded air rifle after the command **STOP**, or even if I think there may still be a pellet or gas charge in my rifle, I will keep the muzzle pointed downrange, raise my hand so the Range Officer can see it and announce "loaded rifle." I will wait for the Range Officer to give instructions for unloading the rifle.
11. Going Downrange	I understand that whenever anyone must go downrange to hang targets or for any other reason, that my air rifle action must be opened, my rifle must be grounded with a safety flag inserted and I may not handle my air rifle while anyone is forward of the firing line.
12. Hygiene	I will protect my health by not bringing food or open drink containers to the range. I will always wash my hands immediately after I finish firing on the range.
13. Emergency Safety Officer	I am also responsible for making sure everyone around me handles guns safely. If I observe someone pointing a gun muzzle at another person, handling a gun with a closed action or handling a gun with their finger on the trigger, I will immediately and courteously advise or assist that person to safely control the muzzle, open the action or place the finger in a safe position.
14. Self-Discipline and Focus	I recognize that gun safety is possible only if I and my fellow competitors apply the self-discipline and focus to continually think safety every time we handle guns or shoot on the range.
15. Safety Goal	The safety goal for our junior shooting program is zero accidents. I want to be part of achieving that goal.

I understand and will follow each of these 15 personal commitments to gun safety. I accept full responsibility for making sure that my actions never cause a gun-related accident. I will always pay attention to safety when I handle guns and I will not tolerate unsafe gun handling actions by others.

_____ _____ _____

Name Signature Date

Notes:

Notes:

RULES FOR SAFE GUN HANDLING:

1. **MUZZLE**. Always keep gun muzzles pointed in a safe direction. Gun muzzles must never be pointed at other persons under any circumstance. On a range, the safest directions to point a gun muzzle are usually upward or downrange towards the target.

2. **RIFLE ACTION**. When handling any rifle or firearm, the action must be open with a safety flag inserted. Gun actions must remain open except when the gun is on the firing line and preparation or firing periods have begun. When shooting is finished, the action must be opened and a safety flag inserted, even when the gun is on the firing line. The gun action may be closed when it is placed in a gun case or storeroom, but must be opened and a safety flag inserted as soon as it is picked up again.

3. **TRIGGER**. Keep your finger off of the trigger until after shouldering the rifle and preparing to fire a shot. It is especially important to keep the finger outside of the trigger guard when loading the gun and placing it in the shooting position.

Air Rifle Target Shooting

Air rifle target shooting is one of the most popular and safest of all youth sports. Its outstanding safety record was established because the safety rules and range procedures for target shooting on air rifle ranges have been very effective in assuring the safety of participants in this sport. Three-position air rifle target shooting is safe because all program participants must learn and demonstrate the self-control and discipline needed to ensure everyone's safety.

For more information about air rifle target shooting for youth, contact CMP Programs: info@thecmp.org