

Firearm Safety Rules

- 1. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.**

This is the first of four **"Cardinal Rules"** of firearm safety. This rule means you, the firearm handler must read, understand and follow all safety rules and procedures when handling or shooting any firearm..... loaded or unloaded....
NO EXCEPTIONS!
- 2. ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.**

This is the second **"Cardinal Rule"** rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to **control** where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the **safest** direction, depending on different circumstances.
- 3. ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.**

This is the third **"Cardinal Rule"**. When holding a gun, rest your finger on the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Until you are actually ready to fire, **do not** touch the trigger.
- 4. Know your target, and what is beyond.**

This is the fourth **"Cardinal Rule"**. This means be **absolutely** sure you have identified your target **beyond any doubt**. Equally important, be aware of the area beyond your target. This means observing your prospective area of fire before you shoot. **Never** fire in a direction in which there are people or any other potential for mishaps. Simply put: **Think first; Shoot Second**
- 5. Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.**

Whenever you pick up a gun, immediately engage the safety device if possible, and if the gun has a magazine, remove it before opening the action and looking into the chamber(s) which should be clear of ammunition. **If you do not know how** to open the action or inspect the chamber(s), **leave the gun alone** and get help from someone who does.
- 6. Know how to use your gun safely.**

Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Know its basic parts, how to safely open and close the action and remove any ammunition from the gun or magazine. Remember, a gun's mechanical safety device is **never** foolproof. **Nothing can ever replace safe gun handling.** Be sure the gun is safe to operate. Just like other tools, guns **need** regular maintenance to remain operational. Regular cleaning and proper storage are part of the gun's general upkeep. If there is any question concerning a gun's ability to function, a knowledgeable gunsmith should look at it.
- 7. Use only the correct ammunition for your gun.**

Only BBs, pellets, cartridges or shells designed for a particular gun can be fired safely in that gun. Most guns have the ammunition type stamped on the barrel. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on the box and sometimes stamped on the cartridge. Do not shoot the gun unless you **know** you have the proper ammunition.
- 8. Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate.**

Guns are loud and the noise can cause hearing damage. They can also emit debris and hot gas that could cause eye injury. For these reasons, shooting glasses and hearing protectors should be worn by shooters and spectators.
- 9. Never use alcohol or over-the-counter, prescription or other drugs before or while shooting.**

Alcohol, as well as any other substance likely to impair normal mental or

physical bodily functions, **must not** be used before or while handling or shooting guns.

10. Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

Many factors must be considered when deciding where and how to store guns. A person's particular situation will be a major part of the consideration. Dozens of gun storage devices, as well as locking devices that attach directly to the gun are available. However, mechanical locking devices, like the mechanical safeties built into guns, **can fail** and should **not** be used as a substitute for safe gun handling and the observance of all gun safety rules.

11. Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

12. Cleaning

Regular cleaning is important in order for your gun to operate correctly and safely. Taking proper care of it will also maintain its value and extend its life. Your gun should be cleaned every time that it is used.

13. A gun brought out of prolonged storage should also be cleaned before shooting.

Accumulated moisture and dirt, or solidified grease and oil, can prevent the gun from operating properly.

14. Before cleaning your gun, make absolutely sure that it is unloaded.

The gun's action should be open during the cleaning process. Also, be sure that no ammunition is present in the cleaning area.