

Oregon Old West Shooting Society

COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING™



NEW SHOOTER ORIENTATION GUIDE

A guide for the new shooter getting started in Cowboy Action Shooting

- 1. Firearms and ammo requirements**
- 2. Clothing requirements**
- 3. Safety issues and range rules**
- 4. How a match is run**
 - a. Sign-up procedure and starting time**
 - b. Additional items you may need**
- 5. Misc. information**
 - a. Food and drink info**
 - b. Parking**
 - c. Mentorship**
 - d. Awards Ceremony**
 - e. Shooters Handbook**

1. FIREARMS AND AMMO REQUIREMENTS.

Rifles: Any pistol caliber cartridge lever action, tube-fed original or reproduction, of a Henry, 1866, 1873, 1892, or 1894 Winchester-type, or “Lightning”-style slide-action rifles. Marlin, Rossi and Henry Big Boy are also allowed. Caliber must be center fire, .32 to .45 colt, or any caliber in-between that was COMMONLY used during the old west time frame, 32.20, 32 H&R, .357, .38, 38-40, 44-40, 44 special or magnum etc. (.22 rim fire may be used in the Buckaroo class only.) Micrometer type receiver sights are not allowed – old style tang sights are OK.

Pistols: (TWO required per, or shared by competitors) Original single action revolvers manufactured prior to 1899, their approved replicas, and the SASS approved modern category revolvers. Fixed or adjustable sights of calibers as noted above of between .32 to .45 caliber. (.22 for Buckaroos.)

Shotgun: Any side by side or single shot shotgun typical of the era without automatic ejectors, with or without external hammers, with single or double triggers. Lever action, tubular fee, exposed hammer shotguns of the period are allowed (e.g., Winchester Model 1887). Must be at least 20 gauge and no larger than 10 gauge.

The ONLY slide action shotgun allowed is the Model 1897 Winchester, whether original or replica, in at least 16 and no larger than 12 gauge. Side-by-side, single shot and lever action center-fire shotguns in .410 are allowed within the Buckaroo Category only.

AMMO: Revolver ammo must have a velocity LESS than 1000 fps, and rifle ammo LESS than 1400 fps. Bullets must be ALL LEAD, and not jacketed, copper washed or hollow point, and round nosed soft point is the norm. Ten-X, Winchester, and several other firms offer “Cowboy Loads” in the box.

Shotgun: #4 or smaller NON plated, LEAD target type. Shot size used is generally #7 ½ and #8 TARGET type, of 2 ¾ Dram equiv.

2. CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS.

We realize that it takes time for the new shooter to acquire all of the clothing and fire arms necessary for this game. Having this in mind, the new shooter MAY be allowed to shoot a first match or two without fully complying with the clothing requirements.

A. Hats: Any cowboy-style straw, felt or leather hat, or sombrero, is allowed, but NO ball caps or Shady Brady feathered modern style hats.

B. Pants: Jeans of modern or repro design are o.k., but NO designer style jeans. Bib over-alls are allowed but not common.

C. Boots: Modern or old style cowboy boots of LEATHER construction are allowed, but NO combat or athletic-type shoes regardless of construction are allowed. Soles must be of leather or synthetic NON lug grip type.

NOTE: IF there is a valid MEDICAL reason a shooter must wear a type of shoe NOT normally allowed, he/she may obtain permission from the Match Director PRIOR to the match starting.

D. Gear & Gloves: are allowed if they are of NON modern grip enhancing Shooting-type, either leather or cloth. NO Velcro, plastic, or modern holsters, or other shooting gear are allowed ON the person. Any gun case or item in the shooters cart or equipment bag is ok.

E. Shirts: will be of long sleeve only. Women are the only ones that can wear short sleeves.

Many manufactures supply the needs of your attire. Visit our website for ideas. www.oowss.com Under the "Links" link.

3. RANGE SAFETY RULES

THIS IS A "COLD" RANGE! All firearms will remain UNLOADED except while you are under the direct observation of a Range Officer.

All loading and unloading will be conducted ONLY in the designated areas.

Long guns will have their actions open immediately at the conclusion of each shooting string and while being carried on the range, unless enclosed in a case or scabbard.

Handguns are to be kept holstered except when on the firing line, at the loading/unloading tables, in a safety area, or at the shooter's vehicle.

ALL competitors & spectators are required to wear eye and hearing protection.

The following acts are considered UNSAFE GUN HANDLING and are subject to DQ penalties:

1. A dropped gun on the firing line (from the loading table until guns are cleared at the unloading table). The shooter will NOT pick up a dropped gun. A Range Officer will recover it, examine it, clear it and return it to the shooter
2. Any discharge striking anything within 10 feet of the shooter; any discharge at the loading or unloading areas; or any other discharge that is deemed unsafe. (Exception for "expendable props" if specified)
3. Violation of the 170° safety rule/Failure to manage appropriate muzzle control. (Please practice safe muzzle control at all times, especially with crossdraw holsters at the loading table)
4. Returning a revolver to leather with the hammer not fully down on a spent round or empty chamber.
5. A cocked revolver leaving the shooter's hand.
6. An unfired round left in the chamber of a long gun.
7. Changing location with a live round under a cocked hammer or a gun with the hammer down on a live round.
8. Failure to comply with loading and unloading procedures.
9. Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm. Any use of illegal items.
10. Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round.
11. SWEEPING anyone AT ANY TIME with the muzzle of any firearm.
12. Dry firing at the loading table. (Dry firing is allowed at designated safe areas.)
13. De-cocking a revolver, rifle or hammered shotgun with a live round under the hammer.
14. Any other unsafe gun handling such as fanning.

Dropped or ejected ammo is considered "dead" and will not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. Staged ammo dropped back to where it was staged or ammo safely placed on a prop by the shooter is NOT considered "dead".

The use of Drugs or Alcohol will not be tolerated this range.

Interpersonal conflicts, belligerent behavior and/or unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for MATCH DISQUALIFICATION and possible ejection from the range.

PENALTY OVERVIEW

5-SECOND PENALTIES

• Rifle, revolver, 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.
- To help understand this concept, a “MISS FLOW CHART” is found in Appendix C. 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) * Reference “Shooters Handbook” page 11

Minor Safety Penalties

- Not leaving a long gun action open at the end of the shooting string or before the next firearm is fired.
- Leaving empty or live rounds in magazine or carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded.
- Not returning revolvers to leather unless otherwise specified.
- Open, empty long guns that slip and fall but do not break 170° safety rule or sweep anyone.
- Retrieving a dropped “dead” round, or a dropped loaded cylinder.
- Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45 degrees downrange.

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

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. *Note: Exception under item 13 Appendix A*
- Violation of the 170° safety rule/ Failure to manage appropriate muzzle control.
- Returning a revolver to leather with hammer not fully down on spent round or empty chamber.
- A cocked revolver leaving the shooter's hand.
- A live round left in the chamber of a long gun.
- Second offence, 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.
- Unsafe firearm handling, such as fanning.
- Loading at other than the designated loading position or firing line.
- Use of an illegal or illegally modified firearm.
- Use of illegal items.
- Holstering or staging a revolver with the hammer down on a live round.
- Sweeping anyone with an unloaded firearm.
- Failure to adhere to loading and unloading procedures.
- Dry firing at the loading table.
- De-cocking a revolver, rifle or hammered 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).

MATCH DISQUALIFICATION

- Two accumulated Stage Disqualifications or Two Spirit of the Game 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, any discharge at the loading or unloading areas, or discharge that is deemed unsafe .
- Note: Exception for declared expendable props.
- Sweeping anyone with a loaded firearm.

- Third offence, in the same match, for failure to adhere to the guidelines of the category in which the shooter is competing.
- Interpersonal conflicts.

FAILURE TO ENGAGE/SPIRIT OF THE GAME

30-Second Penalty

- Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage.
- Shooting ammunition that does not meet the power factor, minimum velocity. The penalty is applied for each stage a competitor is checked and their ammunition is found not to meet the power factor or minimum velocity.
- Willfully 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.
- Note: Two Spirit of the Game or Failure to Engage penalties will result in a Match Disqualification.

ILLEGAL ITEMS

The following are examples of SASS “illegal” items. The current version of the SASS Handbook should always be used as an additional reference for illegal items. The use or presence of any outlawed item is a Stage Disqualification.

- Holsters departing from the vertical by more than 30 degrees when worn
- Two main match revolvers worn on the same side of the body
- Modern shooting gloves
- Short sleeve shirts (Male competitors only)
- Short sleeved tee shirts, long sleeved tee shirts, and tank tops for all competitors. (Long sleeved Henley type shirts with buttons are allowed.)
- Modern feathered cowboy hats
- Designer jeans
- Ball caps
- Tennis, running, jogging, aerobic or other modern athletic shoes, combat boots
- Apparel displaying manufacturer’s, sponsor’s or team logos. Manufacturer’s labels on such apparel or equipment are acceptable.
- Nylon, plastic, or Velcro accouterments.

4. How a Match is run.

A. Show up and unload Gear: Every match starts out with shooters arriving early in order to unload their gear, and sign up at the North Range scoring building, typically from 8:30 - 9:45, with a Mandatory Safety Meeting attended by ALL SHOOTERS at 10:00. If you miss the meeting you may NOT shoot the Match. We encourage everyone to also show up early and help set up stages if possible. Nobody is paid to be here. We all have to pitch-in when we can and help out.

B. Sign in and Register: During the sign up process you will register and indicate which category you will be shooting in, and fill out a lunch form, if you are wishing to purchase a lunch for the day. Club provides hot water for cocoa, hot cider, and instant coffee in the snack room at NO charge.

C. Posse up: Each shooting match requires that the number of shooters be broken down into a POSSE of equal numbers, and a Posse Marshal will have a clip board for you to sign on to. This Posse will be the one you shoot with the entire match. Your Mentor will answer any questions you have and make sure you have all the guns you need that day.

A shooter will need two revolvers, a rifle and a shotgun, plus 50 rounds of pistol and 50 of rifle ammo, and 25+ rounds of shotgun shells. (This is the minimum amount. Always bring more just in case you might need them.)

D. Saddle up! : The Mandatory Safety Meeting will be held outside the score building by the flagpole at 10:00 where the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited, Posse starting bays determined, any announcements read, and final questions asked. Your Posse will then proceed to the appropriate bay and the stage description read, and shooting will begin!

HAVE FUN!

5. Misc. information.

A. Food and drink info: At larger annual matches and the State match ice water is provided, but if you need something to keep hydrated during the monthly match, bring your beverage of choice (non alcoholic). A refrigerator and microwave are available in the snack room area of the score building. The club provides hot water for cocoa, cider, and instant coffee at NO charge in the snack room. If you sign up for lunch, the form is self explanatory, and will be served after the match at around 2:00pm in the score building. BE SURE if you are diabetic, or get the mid-morning munchies during the shoot to bring something to snack on between sign in and lunch time. We also encourage people to donate items to the prize table as well as bring goodies to share with everyone else.

B. Parking: Parking is along the bays at the North range and is a first come first served basis. If you park from bay 1 down to the 3rd or 4th bays, you'll have LESS distance to push your gun cart, or tote your gear.

C. Mentors: An experienced and friendly shooter will be assigned to assist you during your day to ensure a SAFE & HAPPY shoot.

D. Awards Ceremony: Immediately following the match we have an awards ceremony in the north range classroom. We also give away prizes at a random draw.

E. Shooters Handbook: We also require you to read the SASS Shooters Handbook. You can download a copy from our website. www.owss.com Under the "RO Corner" link.

If you have ANY questions or problems feel free to ask a club member. We were ALL new shooters at one time, and we believe in treating you the same way we were treated, in a warm and friendly manner. That's The Cowboy Way!

Most of all, be safe and have FUN !!