

The 170° rule – Common Sense Approach

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The 170° rule, by definition, **DOES NOT** always apply to/from/at the loading/unloading tables. This is due to the wide variations in range/stage setups...it does on some ranges, if they are on a common firing line with the stage itself (e.g. LT / STAGE1 / ULT...LT / STAGE2 / ULT...).

(Note: The 170-degree safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight **down range** +/- 85 degrees in any direction. If a competitor “comes close” to breaking the 180-degree safety plane, the 170-degree safety rule has been violated, and the competitor is at fault.)

SHB p.25/RO1 p.18

170° Safety Rule - means the muzzle of the firearm must always be pointed **down range** +/- 85 degrees in any direction.

RO1 "Glossary of Terms" p.29

J) Once the stage begins, the Timer Operator stays within arm's length of the competitor until the stage is finished. The Timer Operator then immediately announces the stage time to the shooter. Only after revolvers are holstered and long guns are action opened, **muzzles pointed in a safe direction**, and the shooter is heading towards the unloading table does the Timer Operator, declare “Range is Clear” and conveys the time to the Score Keeper in a loud, clear voice.

RO1 p.7

4. “**Muzzle up**” Please move to the Unloading Table” should be stated at the end of a shooting sequence. Often the competitor stops thinking—after all, his shooting problem is finished! He simply needs a gentle reminder of what to do next.

RO1 p.11

2. Long guns will have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and **muzzles pointed in a safe direction** when being carried to and from the designated loading and unloading areas for each stage.

...The muzzles of all long guns must be maintained **in a safe direction** (*generally “up” and slightly down range*), **even when returning to the unloading table.**

RO1 p.14

The "*problem*" seems to be the parenthetical "*generally “up” and slightly down range*" as a **definition of suggested "safe direction"**... **It should be obvious that the reference to "slightly down range" applies primarily DURING the stage engagement...if the muzzle of a firearm is pointed straight UP during the 'course of fire' (i.e. @ 180°), the shooter is in violation of the 170° rule. Once the stage has ended & the shooter is headed to the ULT, there are often personnel DOWN range (e.g. setting targets/picking brass)...at that point, "*slightly downrange*" might not necessarily be a "best practice" (depending on range/stage layout).**

COMMON SENSE should be used to determine the safest direction to point muzzles when moving from the LT to the stage & from the stage to the ULT. UP has already been determined to be considered acceptable. The **PRIMARY** consideration is to avoid **SWEEPING** anyone with the muzzle of **ANY** firearm at **ANY** time.