National 4-H Shooting Sports
Quiz Bowl
Pistol Study Resources

These resources are for enrolled 4-H shooting sports members and coaches for their expressed use as study materials in preparation for the National 4-H Shooting Sports Quiz Bowl. They are not to be used to train a person or persons in the use, discharge, or handling of any firearms and archery equipment.

Lesson 1 Narrative

Instructor note: Since every facility is a little different from all the others, you will need to customize the introduction to that facility. Note locations of bathrooms and rules or regulations that are specific to the site. While we must establish clear ground rules for participation, we must not project an atmosphere of domination, fear or unfriendliness. Please remember that young people are here to learn from a qualified, caring and concerned leader. Anything other than that image will decrease your ability to communicate with the kids and assist them in learning. Personal introductions and introductions of sponsors, club or range leaders, etc., are both appropriate and appreciated. Try to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect that will minimize problems throughout the instructional process and provide the foundation for strong intergenerational friendships.

Welcome to the first session of the series on pistol shooting. Introduce yourself, any assistants, teen or junior leaders who are helping you and any sponsors or members of the club or facility. If time and numbers permit, have the kids (and parents) introduce themselves. In any event, plan on using name tents so you can personalize the discussions.

In this session we will learn about the facility and review a few of the rules and regulations for safety. We will begin learning the parts of a pistol and how they operate, what sight alignment is and why it is important and how to control the trigger. These things are vital if you are going to shoot a pistol safely and well. We will be meeting for about an hour today. We are guests of the people here, and we are all expected to behave as guests.

We want to keep the sessions as informal as possible, so please feel free to ask questions if you do not understand something.

A Few Rules of the Road

Shooting is a safe and wholesome sport. In order to keep it that way, all shooters must abide by some basic rules of behavior. You must pay attention and behave in an adult manner on the shooting line, in the classroom and at all other times you are involved in meetings. Unsafe, abusive or distractive behavior cannot and will not be tolerated. Should you choose to behave in such a fashion, the instructors will ask you to leave. If you repeat the offense, they may bar you from the program for the day or the rest of the year. These rules may seem harsh, but they are necessary if we all want to keep shooting safe, fun and fair. In most cases, self-discipline and courtesy can be related to safety. Shooting demands concentration. When shooters are learning, they can be distracted easily. If that results in a poor score or a missed shot it is unfortunate. If it results in an accident, it could be fatal. Safety starts with common sense. It also involves taking personal responsibility for your actions on and off the firing line. Bullets or pellets cannot be recalled and their flight paths cannot be changed. You must control them

before they leave the muzzle. Some of the procedures may seem odd or uncomfortable at first but they are designed to make you a safe and accurate shooter. We will all practice using them.

For personal safety, the use of shooting glasses is required any time live firing is taking place. You only have one set of eyes issued to you, and they must last for your entire life. Investing in a pair of shooting glasses and developing the habit of wearing them, when you shoot can protect your eyes from accidents.

Any time that you are using firearms other than air guns, you must use either earmuffs or earplugs. There are many styles ranging in price from a few cents (disposable foam plugs) to a few dollars (custom fitted plugs and some muffs). On the high end of the spectrum are electronic muffs that amplify sound until the high frequency sound of a shot being fired shuts off the microphones. You do not need to go to that extreme, but you must wear ear protection at every shoot. Remember that damage to your hearing is cumulative and it cannot be repaired. Wear your hearing protection to prevent the damage.

We will learn a number of range commands during the course. Range commands are to be obeyed immediately and without question. Every shooter must watch for any unsafe condition. Call "Cease fire" if you see one. The authority of the range officer is absolute. Everyone on the range and in the observation area must comply with his or her commands.

Only shooters and their coaches will be permitted on the firing line. No horseplay or foolishness will be tolerated. Firearms on the firing line must be handled only as directed by the range officer and they must be kept safe (empty with the actions open and lying on the mats) until the range is declared ready for live firing. All muzzles must be kept pointed down range and in a safe direction at all times.

The Basic Rules of Firearms Safety

Firearms safety should be stressed at all times. It is based on self- control and muzzle control. We will reinforce the three basic rules of safety throughout the project. You need to learn them, understand them and practice them at all times.

First, since the muzzle indicates the direction a projectile will travel, the muzzle must be controlled at all times. A firearm should NEVER be pointed at anything you do not want to shoot. In other words, the muzzle should always be pointed in a safe direction.

There are many stories of "unloaded" guns going off and injuring or killing someone. Unless the firearm falls on someone, that is impossible. Firearms that are assumed to be unloaded, however, can be extremely dangerous. All firearms should be considered loaded until you have seen for yourself that they are completely empty. In order

A firearm should NEVER be pointed at

to ease all tensions on the range, all actions will be kept open with the loading port exposed to view except during live firing. Make a habit of keeping the action open and the firearm unloaded except when preparing to fire a shot.

Make a habit of keeping the action open and the firearm unloaded except when preparing to fire a shot.

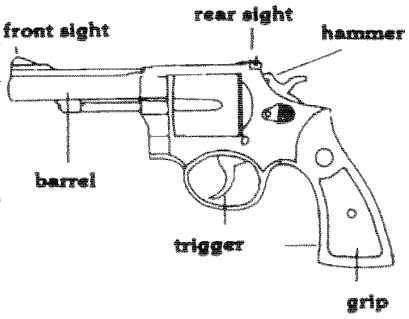
Finally, keep your finger off the trigger except when you are actually in the act of shooting. Develop the habit of resting your trigger finger on the frame above the trigger guard.

Safety is no accident. In fact safety is something that all of us must work to maintain all the time. Complying with these three simple rules will make the firing line and learning to shoot a safe and positive experience. Remember MAT (Muzzle, Action, Trigger)

1. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
2. Keep the action open and exposed so other shooters can see it is open.
3. Keep finger off the trigger until you are in the act of shooting.

Orientation to the Pistol

Like most firearms, pistols are composed of three major components. The **grip** of a pistol is equivalent to the stock on most firearms (although a few pistols have a forearm, too). Pistols also have an **action** and a **barrel**. Each part performs an important function. The stock or grip serves as a handle to hold or control the pistol. This ensures muzzle will remain pointed in the intended direction.



The action of the pistol includes those parts that load, cock and fire the arm. In other words, the action is the mechanical part of the pistol. The **bolt** or **breechblock** seals the rear of the chamber and holds the projectile in place for firing. In bolt-action pistols, the bolt may also cock the **trigger mechanism**. The trigger mechanism releases the **firing pin**, **hammer** or **air charge**. On some revolvers and semi-automatic pistols (double actions) the trigger may cock the hammer, too. Until the trigger is pulled, the firearm is under the conscious control of the shooter. Once it is pulled, the mechanical, chemical and physical forces take over very rapidly to deliver the projectile to its target.

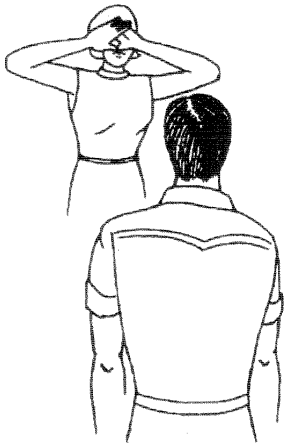
The **safety** mechanism is a device that aids the shooter in keeping the firearm from firing until he or she intends to do so. Like other mechanical devices, safeties do not always function properly. They are subject to failure at any time. As a result, do not depend upon them to prevent accidental firing. Instead, the shooter should be the ultimate safety by keeping the muzzle of firearm under control. The safety should be used as a supplement to proper firearm handling.

The **barrel** is a launching tube for the firearm. The rear of the barrel is designed to fit a particular cartridge or pellet. Here the projectile and/or cartridge are held in place inside the chamber. When a round is in the chamber, the pistol is loaded. The opposite end of the barrel is the muzzle, which points in the direction that the projectile will go when the pistol is fired.

When both front and rear sights are present, the **rear sight** is normally near the chamber and the **front sight** is usually very close to the muzzle. The primary function of the sights is to serve as reference points that permit the eye to be aligned with the bore of the pistol. Once the eye, the sights and the bore of the pistol are aligned as a unit, the shooter can control the sight picture to direct the projectile to its target. The sights help the eye and the bore to be directed at the same point.

The inside of the barrel is bored to a specific diameter or **caliber.** Almost all pistols have rifled barrels. The **rifling** is a spiral set of ridges (or lands) and grooves. Rifling causes the bullet to rotate around its long axis, making it more stable in flight. The rotating bullet, like the spinning of a football in flight, tends to fly true to its course.

Eye Dominance



Learning to shoot well is much easier when the shooter uses the dominant eye for sighting. Nearly everyone has a dominant eye, just as they have a dominant hand and a dominant foot. Select a partner and stand squarely facing that partner two to three arm-lengths apart. One member of each pair needs to be an observer. The other member will be the "shooter." Shooters should extend their arms forward with the hands in front of the waist and place the thumb on top of the other one. Keeping the thumbs in place, cross the fingers of the top hand over the fingers of the bottom hand to form a small triangle. Now, with both eyes open, extend the arms to eye height and look at the observer's nose through the opening. The observer should note which eye they see looking back through the triangular opening. Then, keeping the nose centered in the opening, the shooter should slowly bring the hands back to his or her face. The opening will come to the dominant eye. The observer should watch for switching between the eyes as the hands move toward the face. The shooter should stand square to the observer without leaning, canting the head or squinting one eye. Try it a couple times to confirm your observation, then switch roles and repeat the process.

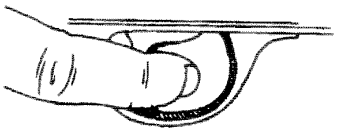
How many of you came to your left eye? Right eye? You should shoot with the dominant eye, regardless of whether it is on the same side as your dominant hand. Using the dominant eye reduces tension and eye fatigue and helps in seeing the target clearly and quickly. Keeping both eyes open increases depth perception as well. Those whose eye and hand dominance is on opposite sides are cross dominant. You should shoot from the dominant eye side, even though it feels clumsy and uncomfortable. Your hands and feet are much easier to train than your eyes. Even if you are already shooting from the "off-eye" side, you will improve more rapidly by switching to the dominant side.

A few people are ambidextrous. A similar number are ambi-eyed, that is, their eyes switch dominance when an obstacle is placed in front of them. Shooters with this situation can use a shield, a spot on their shooting glasses or some similar barrier to assure the same eye is used every time they shoot. Even persons with a specific eye dominance may find a barrier device helpful. Be sure you remember which eye is your dominant one so you can use that side in your shooting.

Sight Alignment

The basic function of the **sights** is to align the eye with the barrel. The sights must be consistently aligned with the eye before they can be adjusted to align properly with the barrel. We will be using **patridge-style sights**. They have a squared rear notch and a rectangular front sight. The front sight (where your eye should be focused) is centered in the rear notch. There should be the same amount of light showing through on either side of the front sight. The top of the front sight should be even with the top of the rear sight. If the front sight is above the top of the rear sight, the pistol will impact above the intended point. If the front sight drops into the square notch of the rear sight, the pistol will impact below the point of aim. Proper sight alignment is critical to consistency, sight adjustment and accuracy.

Trigger Control



Pulling a trigger seems to be a simple act. It can be, but proper trigger control means pressing the trigger to fire the shot without disturbing the sight alignment. To do that, the shooter must learn to control the trigger. The trigger finger must be positioned so that the pressure on the trigger comes straight back toward the center of the hand or hands holding the pistol. Apply pressure by flexing only the trigger finger. All other fingers maintain the same pressure and position on the grips of the pistol, so the barrel remains aligned with the target throughout the trigger pull. Practicing with a medicine dropper can be an effective way to learn trigger control, but we will use dry-firing techniques to do the job effectively.

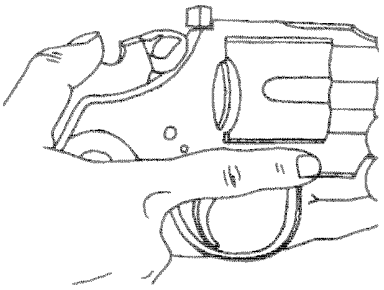
Range Procedures

The range officer is in control of the range at all times. The primary task of a range officer is to maintain order and safe operation of the range. All shooters share that responsibility. If any unsafe or potentially dangerous situation is noted, the shooter detecting it has the responsibility to call a cease-fire immediately. Having a designated range officer does not remove the personal responsibility for range safety. It only helps coordinate activity on the range and aids in avoiding accidents. Safe range procedures help make shooting safe for all participants.

Shooting is fun and among the safest of sports. The dedication to safety, concentration and responsibility of individual shooters keep it that way. Shooting responsibility must be taken seriously. We intend to demonstrate that responsibility on the range and in our personal shooting. We expect you to do the same. No foolishness or nonsense will be permitted on the range or in the observation areas. Minor infractions may bring a warning or the range officer may eject the offender from that shooting session. Repeated safety, behavior or other violations of responsibility will be justification for ejection from the program. That may seem harsh. It is not. It merely underscores the importance shooters place on safety.

Safety on the Range

Safety on the range starts in the mind of the shooter. It requires an appropriate attitude as well as knowledge. The three basic rules of pistol safety were stressed earlier. Muzzle control action, open and empty, and finger off the trigger rules will be enforced at all times. Obedience to range commands and orderly behavior on and near the range will also be stressed. Most other procedures relate to management of the shooters and the range facility.



Malfunctions or other equipment problems may occur while on the line. In that event, keep the muzzle pointed down range and raise one hand to indicate that assistance is needed. Since we are working in **coach-pupil** teams, the "coach" must watch the muzzle to be sure it is properly controlled. Intervene to keep it down range if necessary. That is part of your job. Let the range staff clear the problem. It is not necessary to call a cease fire unless a down-range safety problem exists.

If the pistol must be handed to the person responding to your request for help, first explain the problem. The instructor will grasp the pistol. When they have it under control they will indicate their control verbally by saying, "I have the pistol" or "thank you." Only after they have indicated that the pistol is under their control should you relax your own grip. That ensures that the pistol will not be dropped in the transaction.

Range Commands

We will use a standard set of range commands for most of our shooting. Observe the shooters on the line while they follow the range commands.

"*Shooters to the line"* Note that the pistols are carried with the muzzles pointed in a safe direction and their actions are open. The first thing the shooter does when reaching the firing line is to place the pistol on the mat with the action open and visible.

"*Is the line ready? Respond by firing point numbers."* Note that each shooter says "ready" or "not ready" and states their firing point number. After the shooters become more experienced, only those who are not ready need respond. For now we will wait for a positive response from every firing point until all shooters are familiar with range procedures.

"The line is ready" This means that the range officer has determined that all shooters are ready to prepare for shooting. The command also means that the range is live or hot. No one should be down range.

"*Fire when ready*" Shooters may fire at their own discretion as long as the range remains active. No ammunition is loaded until this command is given.

"*Cease fire!"* The cease fire command means that all shooting must stop *immediately.* Even a shot that is in the process of being fired should be held if possible. If the cease fire is an interruption for some range problem, shooters must wait for the range officer to give a fire when ready command before resuming.

"*Make your pistols safe*" If the shooter has not already done so, all ammunition must be removed from the pistol and the action must be locked open. Note that the muzzles remain pointed down range at all times.

"*Ground your pistols* " Once the pistols have been made safe, they are placed on the mat with the muzzle down range and the action open and exposed for inspection.

Shooting Procedure

In the beginning, we will use an expanded set of range commands. Doing that increases safety consciousness and reinforces proper shooting technique. Follow the shooters on the line through the shooting sequence.

"*Shooters (or relay number [*#1]) *to the line."* Shooters will proceed to the firing line with their coaches. Coaches will carry the pistols or the pistols will be grounded at the firing line.

"*Is the line ready? Respond by firing point number*" Each shooter or coach should respond by saying "firing point (#) ready" or "not ready." If any point is not ready, the range officer will check them again. Once all points are ready, he or she will open the range.

"The *line is ready."* This means that the range is open and preparing for firing. No one should be down range.

"*Pick up your pistol"* The shooters will pick up their pistols, keeping them pointed down range and wait for an additional command. Note that the action is open, the pistol is pointed down range and the safety remains in the "on" position.

"*Load your pistols*" A projectile or round is placed in the chamber, and the action is closed. Remember that any closed action means the firearm is loaded and ready to fire. If an air gun is being used, charging it with air is part of the loading sequence.

"*Assume your shooting position*" The coach will assist the shooter in taking a proper grip. Both arms are extended at an angle, allowing the muzzle of the pistol to touch the mat, bench or table.

"*Safeties off*" This helps to instill the use of the mechanical safety where one is present. Many instructors will have the coach load the pistol, switch the safety to the "off" position and place the pistol in the shooter's hands for the first few shots. When that is done, the shooter signals control over the pistol by saying "thank you." The coach signals when preparing to release it by saying "you're welcome."

"*Align your sights*" With the pistols still touching the shooting bench, align the front sight in the rear sight notch.

"*Raise your pistols*" Keeping the sights aligned, raise the pistol to its shooting position. The pistol and arms should rise as a unit, with the eyes locked on the front sight and the sight alignment maintained.

"*Fire when ready*" The shooter places the aligned sights on the target and presses the trigger without disturbing the sight alignment. Sight alignment is held until the projectile hits the backstop. This is known as follow through.

"Cease fire!" This command always demands immediate attention and an immediate response. It requires you to stop shooting and make your pistol safe immediately. Do not resume firing until told to do so by the range officer.

"*Make your pistols safe.*" Open the action and remove any ammunition while keeping the muzzle pointed down range. On pistols with a mechanical safety, the safety should be placed in the "on" position.

"*Ground your pistols* " With the action open, the pistol empty and the muzzle pointed down range, place the pistol on the mat with the open action exposed to view. If your relay is finished, step back one step from the bench to signal that your pistol is cleared and grounded.

This firing sequence will become a practiced process after a while. Once it has been mastered, the range officer will shorten the command structure and allow individual shooters more freedom and responsibility.

Summary

We have learned about the facilities here and reviewed the basics of firearms safety. We focused on self-control, muzzle control, keeping the action open and keeping the finger off the trigger except during a shot. We have seen that a pistol, like other firearms, is made up of a stock, an action and a barrel. We saw how the various parts operate. We saw why sight alignment is important, what proper sight alignment is and how to control the trigger during a shot so that the sight alignment is not disturbed. In addition, we practiced safe range procedures and dry fired pistols to develop shooting form more fully. Next time we will begin live firing.

Summary Activities

1. Review the parts of the pistols being used, having those who identify the parts explain what they do and the importance of those parts to pistol shooting safety and accuracy.
2. Review pistol safety and the three basic rules of shooting safety.
3. Using blocks or a sighting device, have participants demonstrate how the sights of a pistol should be aligned and discuss the errors associated with misaligned sights.
4. Discuss and review trigger control and its importance to proper shooting form.
5. Discuss the reasons for using range commands and appropriate responses to various hypothetical situations.

Sharing and Exhibit Ideas

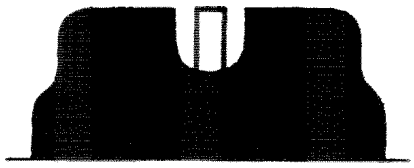
1. Illustrate the parts of the pistol you are using. Label the parts and describe their functions in your shooting journal or on a poster.
2. Develop a game board on identification of pistol parts or functions.
3. Enter the items you have learned in this session in your shooing journal, making them available for review during the course of this program.
4. Make a set of instructional posters illustrating the basic rules of pistol safety.
5. Make a set of posters or signs outlining range commands and proper responses to them. Post them near the firing line.
6. Make or illustrate something that interests you particularly in the content of this lesson.

Lesson 2 Narrative

Instructor's note: Review any specific rules and regulations related to using the facility and note the locations of bathrooms and other needed facilities.

In the last session, we learned about the parts of pistols, how they operate and how to handle them properly. We also discussed and practiced proper behavior on the range and the set of range commands we will be using. We learned about the importance of personal protective gear for the eyes and ears. Most importantly, we learned about personal responsibility for safety. What are the basic pistol safety rules? *Always* keep the muzzle under control and pointed in a safe direction. *Always* keep the pistol empty and the action open except when actually firing on the range. *Always* keep fingers off the trigger except when actually firing a shot. All the other rules we could put together for safe pistol shooting build on these three.

What are the basic parts of a pistol and what do they do? Pistols are built around a frame, which serves as the **receiver** of the pistol. The **stock** or **grip** provides an area for holding and controlling the pistol. The **action** includes all the moving parts that load and fire the arm. The **barre1** contains and directs the projectile and the propellant gases. Common pistol actions include hinge, bolt, revolver and semi-automatic actions.



What is meant by sight alignment, and how should pistols sights be aligned? **Sights** are aligned by placing the front and rear sights in a consistent relationship to one another. The most commonly used type of pistol sights, **partridge-style sights**, includes a square notch rear sight and a flat-topped post or blade front sight. With the eye focused on the front sight, the shooter aligns the top of front sight with the top of rear sight and centers the front sight in rear notch. Precise sight alignment is necessary for accurate shooting.

Trigger control refers to firing the pistol without disturbing the sight alignment. This is accomplished by pressing the trigger straight back without changing the grip applied to the pistol with the rest of the hand or hands.

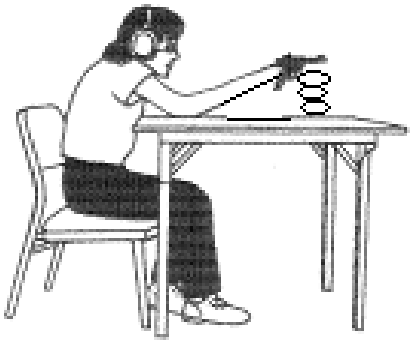
Range operations are under the control of a range officer, but safety is the responsibility of every shooter. We practiced a formal shooting process without actually firing projectiles. We established protocols for malfunctions and for passing a pistol form one person to another safely. Today we will start by dry firing. Then move to shooting live ammunition.

Pistol Shooting Positions

Before we do any shooting, each shooter needs to learn how to hold the pistol properly. A one-handed shooting form is used for most formal target shooting

with handguns. We will use a supported position to help develop the basics of pistol shooting form. Once they have been developed, you will be ready to move to a two-handed standing position, then a one-handed position. Watch carefully as these positions are demonstrated. You may want to sketch each one in your journal or notebook with comments to help you remember how to use each of them

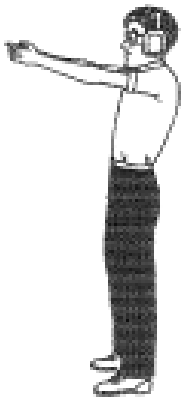
Supported Position



The supported position is steady and relieves the shooter of supporting the pistol. Many shooters use it to adjust their sights. Hunters often use it to ensure clean, killing shots on game.

The shooter is seated at the shooting bench, facing the target squarely. The arms are extended with the elbows resting on the bench or table. The butt of the pistol and the hands rest on the table surface. The barrel is supported by sandbags or a rest. All supports should be adjusted so the pistol points to the intended point of impact without having to use muscle power to move the pistol. Be sure the muzzle clears the forward support. Move to the firing line and practice the supported position without your pistols.

Two-handed Standing Position



Two-handed shooting positions are quite varied. We will use a square stance. The shooter stands facing the target, nearly touching the shooting bench or table. The feet are planted a comfortable distance apart approximately shoulder width. The weight is equally balanced on the feet. As the arms are extended and raised to shooting position, the back is arched slightly to balance the body. When shooting from a standing position, shooters are spaced adequately to keep them from interfering with each other. Practice this position without your pistols.

Two-handed Grip

Two basic types of two-handed grips are used by pistol shooters; the **thumb-lock grip** and the **palm-rest grip**. In both grips, the pistol is grasped in a handshake fashion with the heel of the grip (the back- strap of the frame) firmly in the web of the shooting hand. The index finger is extended along the frame above the trigger guard. The remaining fingers grasp the grips firmly, but without excessive squeezing. Rest the thumb along the opposite side of the grip.

When using a thumb-lock grip, position the supporting hand so the fingers grip the fingers of the shooting hand. The supporting index finger overlaps the middle finger of shooting hand, and the little finger tends to wrap around the butt of pistol grip. The thumb of supporting hand rests on the thumb of shooting hand. When shooting semi-automatic pistols, be careful to keep thumbs clear of the slide.

Experienced pistol shooters grip the pistol with a “firm, but relaxed” grip. That translates to a very firm grip. Apply even pressure with both hands until muscle tremors cause the pistol to quiver, and then reduce the pressure evenly until they stop. That is what “firm, but relaxed” feels like. Develop your own level of grip pressure, but be sure that the pressure is consistently firm.

Extend the arms evenly with the elbows rotated downward. Hold arms at shoulder height by rotating them upward from the shoulders. Flexing the forearms at the elbows should bring the hands toward the center of the face. During shooting, the upper arms should be relaxed, allowing the forearms to be supported by the elbow joints. Adjustments in height are made from the shoulders. Practice this grip without a pistol.

When using a palm-rest grip the supporting hand is cupped under the butt of the pistol and the shooting hand. The thumb of the supporting hand is on the lower fingers of the shooting hand. The fingers of the supporting hand grip the base of the fingers and the back of the shooting hand. The shooting arm is pushed forward slightly. The supporting arm is slightly pulled backward to balance the forward push of the shooting arm. The shooting arm is straight, and the supporting arm is bent slightly at the elbow. Try this grip without the pistol.

The palm-rest grip is not recommended for use with semi-automatic pistols. A firing malfunction may result in high-pressure hot gasses blowing down past the magazine and resulting in severe injury to the hand cupped under the grip.

The thumb-lock grip involves fewer muscles, making a consistent hold somewhat easier to achieve. The palm-rest grip is preferred by many shooters. Try them both, if you like; but stick to one type of grip for each string of shots. Once you have found a grip that feels good to you and produces smaller groups, stick with it and learn to use it well.

Dry Firing

Dry firing is an excellent way to practice shooting form. It involves going through the entire shooting sequence without ammunition in the firearm. It allows the shooter to practice the fundamentals of proper shooting without the tension and noise of live firing. That allows greater concentration on learning how to shoot. The shooter can develop a feel for the trigger, experiment with finger placement for better control and develop a smooth, consistent trigger press. Dry firing allows the shooter to concentrate on sight alignment and follow through. With rim fire or center fire handguns, many shooters use dummy (inert) ammunition or snap caps to protect the firing mechanism.

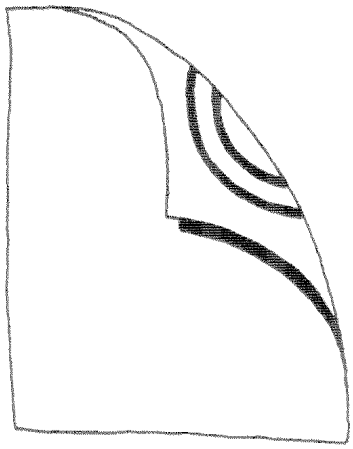
We will begin by dry firing at target backs. The blank target provides less distraction and forces the shooter to focus on the front sight and concentrate on sight alignment. It also aids in trigger control development. Coaches and range assistants will be watching for safety

and form during the dry-firing exercises. Remember, muzzles must always point down range. Your eyes should be focused on the front sight. Your sights must be carefully and consistently aligned. Point the aligned sights at the middle of the target back and press the trigger, keeping the sights aligned through the shot. We will let each shooter dry fire several shots, first on command, then on their own.

Live Firing at Target Backs

Let's review the fundamentals of good two-handed pistol shooting form. The stance is a comfortable and erect one with the head relaxed and normally upright. The feet are square with the firing line and a comfortable distance apart. The elbows are nearly vertical, and the arms are fully extended. The two-handed grip features the fingers of the off- hand overlapping those of the shooting hand (with the exception of the trigger finger), and the off-thumb resting on the dominant thumb.

With the arms extended and the muzzle resting on the padded shooting bench, the sights are aligned properly. Focus on the front sight. Once the sights are properly aligned, the pistol is rotated into shooting position from the shoulders. The sights are centered on the blank target, and the pistol is fired.



The trigger is pressed straight back without disturbing the sight alignment, and the pistol is held on the target until the projectile hits the backstop. Holding your position on the target until the shot strikes is called "follow through."

Coaches and range assistants need to watch for all of these elements during the shooting sequence. Be particularly aware of any potentially dangerous situations as we fire this first group step-by-step. Coaches will control the ammunition and switch the safety off during this activity. We will use the same firing sequence used in the dry-firing exercise with the exception of leading the pistol. Be sure the muzzle remains pointed down range at all times.

Is everyone ready? First relay to the line. Coaches, verify that the pistols are safe. Is the line ready? Respond by firing point numbers. The line is ready. Pick up your pistols. Load one round. Charge your pistols. Set the safety off. Assume a proper and firm grip. Align the sights with the muzzle resting on the padded bench and the eyes focused on the front sight. Raise the arms to shooting position with the sights remaining aligned. Center the sights on the blank target. Press the trigger, keeping the sights aligned until the bullet hits the backstop. Open the action; set the safety on and lower the pistol to the bench. Go ahead and fire three or four more shots. Coaches, if your shooters show signs of fatigue, have them stop shooting. Remember, we are trying to shoot groups at the target back, not hit some precise point on the target. Make your pistols safe. Ground your pistols. Reverse roles between the coaches and pupils and repeat this exercise. Several repetitions should be made.

Summary

Sight alignment is an essential element in good shooting. It involves focusing the eye on the front sight and placing the front and rear sights in a consistent relationship to one another. We keep the tops of the front and rear sights even and allow equal amounts of space on either side of the front sight in the rear notch. Sight alignment can be practiced with an empty pistol, and practice aids proper sight alignment.

Trigger control is also a practiced skill. The trigger must be pressed until the pistol fires without disturbing the sight alignment. Holding the sight alignment after the shot is fired is vitally important. That after-hold is known as follow through. Like sight alignment, trigger control and follow through can be practiced by dry firing.

We practiced range procedures with two exercises. First, we dry fired the pistols at blank targets. That allowed us to check form and practice in an environment where concentration on form was easy. Then we fired several groups at target backs using live ammunition.

Next time we will continue shooting at target backs, learn some different stances and grips and develop more consistency in shooting groups with the pistol.

Summary Activities

1. Have shooters discuss the differences between the groups they "shot" while dry firing and those fired during the live firing session. Ask why those groups differ in size and discuss some of those reasons.
2. Review the elements of good shooting form, having participants discuss parts they find easy or difficult. Challenge them to practice the form at home without firing.
3. Suggest a series of dry-firing exercises to practice at home. Ask the shooters not to shoot any live ammunition, but to concentrate on dry firing to develop their shooting form.

Sharing and Exhibit Ideas

1. Record your experiences and the new things you learned in this session in your shooting journal or notebook.
2. Demonstrate proper pistol shooting form for your parents or another interested adult.
3. Illustrate basic pistol shooting form in a series of posters to be used in pistol instruction.

Lesson 3 Narrative

This shooting session continues development of the basics of sound pistol shooting. Safety is always important to shooters. Remember, you are responsible for safety with your pistol. Muzzles will always be pointed in a safe direction - down range when on the firing line. Pistols will be kept empty with the actions open and exposed to view except when actually firing. The trigger finger is only placed inside the trigger guard when the shooter is getting ready to fire. All persons on or near the range will use adequate eye and ear protection. We expect responsible and adult behavior. No nonsense will be tolerated.

Sound pistol shooting begins with a proper stance and grip. We will use either two-handed standing position or a supported shooting position for all shooters. The stance should be comfortable and relaxed, square to the target. The head should be erect and relaxed. The grip should be firm in either the thumb-lock or palm-rest positions.

Proper sight alignment involves focusing the eye on the front sight and consistently aligning the front and rear sights. Trigger control allows the shooter to squeeze the trigger and fire a shot without disturbing the sight alignment. Holding the sight alignment through the shot achieves a proper follow through. These are the principles we have practiced in dry firing and live firing in earlier sessions. We will continue to use them today. Remember that practice alone does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.

We will continue to use the same basic range commands and firing procedures practiced in the last session. Does anyone have a question about those commands or what they mean?

Dry-firing Review

Check your pistols to make sure they are safe, bring them to the shooting line and ground them with the muzzles pointed down range. Assume a suitable shooting position. Is the line ready? Respond by firing point number, please. The line is ready. Cock your pistols. Dry fire the pistol to refresh your memory of the trigger feel. Align the sights and dry fire once more. Align the sights; raise the pistol to firing position and dry fire again. Finally, point the aligned sights at the center of the target back and dry fire one more time. Make your pistols safe. Ground your pistols and step back from the firing line.

Live-firing Review

Now, let's review the live-firing process by firing a shot on command. Coaches will load the pistols and hand them to the shooters. Remember to keep the pistol under control and pointed down range at all times.

Do not relax your grip on the pistol until the other person gives verbal acknowledgement that he or she has it under control. Blank targets are used to increase concentration on proper shooting form and shooting groups. Those objectives require three elements: proper and consistent sight alignment, good trigger control (including follow through) and a consistent hold on the center of the target back. “Coaches” will control all ammunition, and everyone will be watching both form and safety. Are there any questions?

First relay to the line. Is the line ready? Respond by firing point number, please. The line is ready. Shooters, pick up your pistols, verify that they are safe and pass them to your coaches. Coaches, load and charge the pistols with one round. Place the safety in the "on" position, and pass them to the shooters. Remind them that the safety is on and wait for a verbal signal before releasing the pistol.

Instructor note: Instructors differ on the use of the safety in this context. Some feel it is an unnecessary distraction since the pistol is being single loaded for each shot. Others feel it is essential as preparation for field use of the firearm.

Shooters, switch the safety to the "fire" position. With the proper grip and the muzzle resting on the table, align the sights, keeping the front sight sharply in focus. Raise your arms to the firing position and center the aligned sights on the target back. Press the trigger, taking care to keep the sights aligned and centered on the target. Follow through with that hold until the projectile hits the backstop. Switch the safety to the "on" position and; lower the muzzle to the table or bench. Make the pistol safe and ground it.

Call the next relay to the line and repeat the process. This exercise should be repeated several times with each shooter. Correct all form faults, taking multiple faults one at a time and in priority. Stress what needs to be done, not what is being done wrong. BEWARE of excessive shooting. Stop for reviews or discussion to give shooters a break, and quit for the day before group sizes start to expand because of fatigue. Analyze a series of groups for each shooter. If group sizes are inconsistent or erratic, review the fundamentals of good form or repeat the triangulation and trigger control exercises. Address obvious form faults as needed. This requires high ratio of adults or accomplished teen leaders to young people.

Summary Exercise

Good shooting requires consistency. The stance and grip must be consistent. The sight alignment must be precise. Trigger control must not disturb the sight alignment throughout the shot. The hold on the target must be consistent. We shot quite a bit in this session. Let's shoot one more group of five shots, concentrating on shooting a good group. Remember to follow the basics of good shooting as you fire

Coaches and instructors should analyze each of these groups. Shooters firing fairly small groups have demonstrated adequate mastery of the basics to move on to shooting at standard targets. Those who are still shooting large or inconsistent groups may need to use a supported shooting position, repeat the triangulation or trigger control exercises or practice with the target backs in another session. If time permits and frustration is not evident, that may be done now. Otherwise, this lesson should be repeated until the shooter is comfortable with the basics. Pushing them on to standard targets may hurt their progress.

Summary

In this session we reviewed shooting positions, the fundamentals of sound pistol shooting and safety. We reviewed sight alignment, trigger control and the requirements for shooting good, consistent groups. These elements were practiced during dry firing and live firing. Continue practicing the dry firing exercises at home. Next time we will continue live firing.

Summary Activities

1. Fire a final five-shot group for analysis. Determine if shooters are ready to work on sight pictures and standard targets or if they need to repeat this session to tighten groups further.
2. Question participants to see what they learned. Try to involve all shooters in the process. Give teens and range assistants an opportunity to comment.

Sharing and Exhibit Ideas

1. Demonstrate the position and grip options learned in this session to an interested adult.
2. Construct instructional posters on the positions and grip types for use with later classes.
3. Compare your group sizes using different grips or positions. Note the results in your shooting journal or notebook and discuss the reasons you can see for those differences.
4. Develop a poster of range commands or another type of safety poster for use on the range.
5. Make something that can be used in the supported shooting position.
6. Make, demonstrate or display something that you found interesting or useful in this lesson.

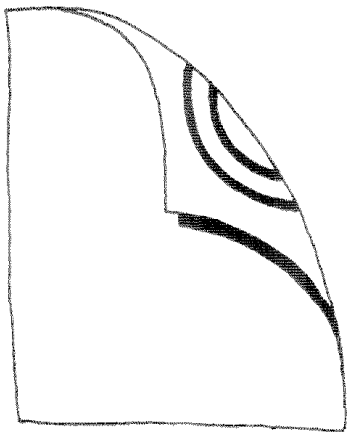
Lesson 4 Narrative

Before moving on to the new material in this session, let's review some of the things we learned earlier. Eye and ear protection is essential to personal safety. Three basic pistol shooting safety rules are:

1. *Always* keep the muzzle under control and pointed down range.
2. *Always* keep the action open and exposed with the pistol empty except when it is actually being fired.
3. *Always* keep the finger off the trigger except when actually firing the pistol.

Basic range commands and shooting procedures are familiar to you now. You know your personal responsibility for shooting safety and the role of the range officers and instructors.

You have learned that good shooting involves consistent practice of a few fundamentals. You have established a sound stance and grip, and you are developing more stamina and strength in your shooting form. You have learned how to align sights properly and consistently and how to control the trigger. You have practiced these things both on the range and at home by dry firing and live firing on target backs. Adding sight picture and the ability to adjust sights is the objective of this session.



Shooting at Target Backs

Before we start shooting at target faces, let's refresh our shooting form and feel by firing a series of shots at a target back. Concentrate on your form and remember that perfect practice makes perfect. Focus on the front sight and align the sights precisely. Hold on the center of the target back, using the same hold each time. Press the trigger through the shot, trying not to disturb the sight alignment. Hold the aligned sights on the center of the target until the pellet strikes the backstop. Do not worry about shot placement; concentrate on shooting a nice, tight group. [Use the standard shooting procedure.]

Sight Picture

Sight picture is the next step in good shooting. It includes sight alignment and the position of the aligned sights relative to the target. The eyes should remain focused on the front sight, with both the target and the rear sight slightly blurry.

Two types of sight pictures or "holds" are commonly used by pistol shooters. The center-of-mass hold places the point of impact at the top center of the front sight. The sight is held where the shooter intends the point of impact to be. The six o'clock hold centers the entire bull's eye on the top of the front sight, like a pumpkin sitting on a post. Many shooters like to see a hair's breadth of white between the bottom of the bull and the bottom of the bull and the top of the sight. The point of

Impact is the center of the bull when the bull is sitting on the sight. Both types of sight pictures are acceptable, but you should stick with one to avoid confusion. Practice developing sight pictures with the models or sighting devices provided.

Shooting at Target Faces

With the concept of sight picture firmly in mind, let's move to the range and shoot some bulls eye targets. Each shooter will fire about ten shots, using the same sight picture. Do not worry where the group is located on the target. We will learn how to adjust the sights shortly. On command, fire the first shot using our standard shooting procedures. You may fire the remaining shots at your own discretion. (The firing procedure should be repeated several times, alternating roles between the pupil and the coach. Be prepared to use supported shooting positions for those shooters who need the extra support.)

Improving Sight Alignment

Precise shooting requires precise, consistent sight alignment. Errors in sight picture are less critical than errors in sight alignment. Alignment errors are magnified by the distance from the pistol to the target. Concentrate on keeping the sight alignment crisp.

A triangulation exercise is an excellent way to practice and improve sight alignment. Make a pistol safe and leave the action open. Firmly fix the pistol in place so it points at a blank target or piece of paper. Align the sights, and direct the person down range to move a marker until it forms a proper sight picture with the aligned sights. The other person will mark through a tiny hole in the center of the marker. Repeat the procedure at least three times. The size of the group indicates the combined precision of your sight alignment and sight picture. Consistent sight alignment will result in a small group. If the group is too large, review the principles of sight alignment and sight picture before going on to shooting at regulation targets.

Sight Alignment

Sight alignment is the process of moving the sights into an alignment with the bore so the point of aim and point of impact are in the desired relationship. The sights are moved into alignment with the bore and the trajectory curve of the projectile.

Most pistols allow the shooter to adjust the rear sight. The basic rule for adjusting the rear sight is to move the sight in the direction you want the hits to move. If the group is to the right of the point of aim. The rear sight must be moved to the left. The center of a group is used as a reference point for sight adjustment because it is an average for all of the shots fired. The distance and direction from the desired point

Of the impact is measured on both the vertical (elevation) and horizontal (windage) directions.

An example may help to clarify the point. On this target a nice, tight group is centered a little over 7.6 centimeters (3 inches) to the left and about 5 centimeters (2 inches) low. Raising the sight two full turns and moving it to the right three full turns, moved the group center to a new location 1 centimeter (0.4 inch) low and 3.6 centimeters (1.5 inches) to the left. The windage adjustment for this range seems to move the group about 1.3 centimeters (0.5 inch) per turn. Moving it three more full turns to the right should put the group center on the center of the bull. The elevation adjustment moved the point of impact 4 centimeters (1.6 inches) for two turns. Raising the sight an additional half turn should put the group center where you want it. Shoot another group to confirm the setting and make any minor adjustments that may be needed. Be sure to record the sight setting changes for your pistol at this range in your shooting journal. Recording those numbers eliminates a lot of trial and error.

Target pistols normally have adjustable rear sights, but some pistols have an adjustable front sight. Adjusting the front sight is based on the same principle as the rear one. The main difference is that the front sight should be adjusted toward the point of impact. Experienced shooters refer to this as “chasing the hits.”

Let’s adjust our sights, based upon the group locations we have been shooting. Make the amount and direction of adjustment you think you need when the make-ready period is announced. As usual, we will be using our standard shooting procedures. You may fire as many rounds as necessary to accomplish your corrections as long as the range remains hot. Raise a hand if you and your coach need assistance. When you are satisfied with the sight setting, make your pistol safe and ground it. Reverse roles and repeat the process. When both shooters have finished and the pistols are safe and grounded, step back off the line.

Assistants and teen leaders should circulate throughout this exercise assisting all shooters who need help. If approximate sight adjustment values are known, share them before the shooters start working on the sight settings. Shooters must be shooting good groups before this exercise can be effective.

Shooting for Scores

Standard pistol targets have concentric bands of score values that surround a central scoring circle. The innermost circle is scored as a “10”. Each successive ring has a value one less than the one inside it. The outermost scoring band is scored as a “4”. Shots that fail to touch any of the scoring bands are scored as “0”. Lines dividing the scoring

Bands are part of the higher value band. Shots that touch the line receive the higher score. Shots that are hard to interpret are evaluated with a scoring gauge. The gauge "plugs" the bullet hole and references its location to another ring. It is essential when those close shots are scored. A different gauge is used for each caliber of pistol used in competition.

We are going to shoot a 10-shot match and score the targets. Write your name on the target and hang it on the carriers. Each relay will shoot a 10-shot string following the range officer's commands. Score your targets and have your partner check the scoring. If you have questionable shots, ask one of the teen leaders or assistants for help. We will continue shooting for improved scores over the next several meetings.

Summary

In addition to reviewing previous instruction, we learned how to develop a consistent sight picture. We fired groups, then learned how to adjust the sights to set the point of aim and the point of impact in the desired relationship. We also shot a 10-shot match and learned how to score our targets. Next time we will look at other kinds of handguns and handgun ammunition. We will also continue to shoot for improved scores.

Summary Activities

1. Display a series of groups or illustrations of groups with a variety of group sizes and locations. Ask participants whether the shooter should adjust the sights, and if so, how much adjustment is needed in which direction.
2. Have the entire group score a set of pistol targets, using either projected visuals, enlarged posters or a set of actual targets.
3. Review all shooting journals and assist shooters with entries for this session. Be sure information on sight adjustment is entered.

Sharing and Exhibit Ideas

1. Shoot a series of groups adjusting the sights a given amount and direction. With each group illustrate how sight adjustment can move the point of impact relative to the point of aim.
2. Post a series of targets, showing improvement in shooting skill. List the dates and the things you learned or practiced to improve.
3. Display your shooting journal or notebook.
4. Show someone how to score a pistol target using a scoring gauge.
5. Look up the rules of any pistol shooting game and describe the game to the club or another interested person.

Lesson 5 Narrative

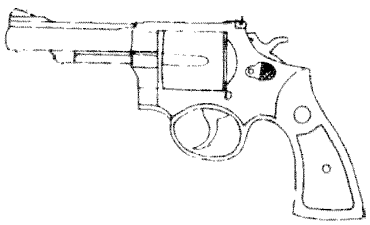
Learning the basics of pistol safety and proper pistol shooting have been the main objectives of this program. In this session we will introduce other kinds of handguns and ammunition. We will also spend time considering selection of handgun for various uses.

Handguns include muzzleloading pistols, revolvers, semi-automatics, bolt-action pistols and hinge-action pistols. Their characteristics and uses differ. They also vary in safety features and in some handling or use features. For example, a load that is completely safe in one of the strong, hinge-action or bolt-action pistols may be extremely dangerous in a revolver. A pistol shooter needs to be aware of the types of arms available and their characteristics.

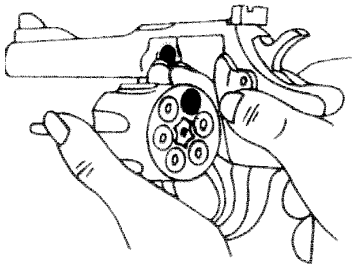
Revolvers

Like other handguns, revolvers have a **frame, barrel, grip** or **stock** and an action. The action includes all the parts that load, fire and unload the gun. They are unique in having a revolving set of **chambers** placed in a cylinder. The chambers are indexed to align with the barrel when the revolver is fired. Revolvers may be either single action or double action.

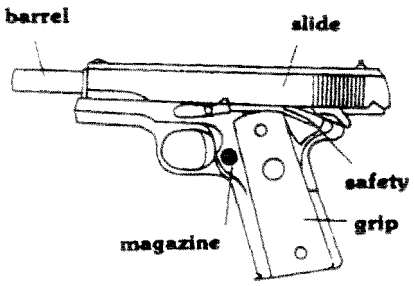
Single-action revolvers require the shooter to cock the hammer manually before each shot. The trigger releases a sear to drop the hammer and fire the pistol, but it does not cock the hammer spring. Some single-action revolvers have an internal safety mechanism that prevents the hammer from striking the firing pin unless the trigger is pulled. Others do not. When the handgun is carried in a holster, many shooters carry the revolver with the hammer resting on an empty cylinder. Usually this provides the only safety device on a single action.



Single-action revolvers are loaded and unloaded through a loading gate, a hinged plate opened to expose the chambers in the cylinder. An extractor rod aligns with the gate for easy removal of the cartridge from the chamber.



Double-action revolvers may be used in a single-action mode, cocking the hammer manually before each shot. The trigger is also capable of cocking the hammer spring and indexing the next cylinder in the process of firing. Double-action revolvers usually have an internal mechanism to prevent them from firing without the trigger being pressed. However, many shooters still carry them with an empty chamber under the hammer for safety. The cylinder of a double-action revolver normally swings to the side for loading and unloading. A cylinder release unlocks a latch that holds the cylinder in place in the frame, permitting it to be swung out for loading or unloading. A central **ejector rod** usually clears all chambers with a single stroke, and speed loaders are available to permit loading all chambers at once.



Semi-automatic or Self-loading Pistols

Semi-automatic pistols use energy from a fired round to eject the spent round, cock the firing mechanism and load another round from the **magazine**. Most models use a clip magazine that is housed inside the frame of the grip. A magazine release allows it to be removed. In addition to a frame, barrel, fire control mechanism and grip, semi- automatics have a slide. The **slide** is the moveable part of the action. It may be external to the barrel or housed in the rear portion of the receiver. Slides usually lock open when the pistol is empty unless a slide release is operated to close it.

Semi-automatic or self-loading pistols are used extensively in target shooting. They may be either single-action (hammer cocked manually) or double-action (pulling trigger cocks the hammer) on the first shot. They normally have one or more mechanical safety devices. Some of them are internal. Others are located on the frame, usually just under the slide. Still others are moveable parts of the grip, requiring pressure on the safety to unlock the firing mechanism. Like all mechanical safety devices, these are used only as an adjunct to proper firearm handling.

Bolt-action Pistols

Bolt-action pistols are very much like shortened bolt-action rifles. Each one has a receiver. All other parts (action, barrel and stock) attach to it. Bolt-action pistols are extremely strong and may be chambered for high-pressure rifle cartridges as well as standard pistol cartridges. Most bolt-action pistols are single-shot designs, and they feature rifle-styles sliding safeties.

Most bolt-action pistols are used in silhouette shooting or hunting. High velocity cartridges are often used in hunting varmints. Big bore cartridges are used in most big game hunting. These pistols are not suitable for standard pistol target shooting because their rate of fire is too low for the timed and rapid firing stages.

Hinge-action or Break-action Pistols

Like bolt-action pistols, these models are essentially shortened rifles (or shotguns). The frame or breechblock acts as a receiver and the other parts attach to it. Rather than using a top or tang lever, hinge-action pistols use an extended trigger guard as a lever to release the breech- locking mechanism. All these pistols are single-shot designs. They are extremely strong and versatile. Chamberings can be altered by mounting a different barrel fitted to the same frame. A rebounding or half cock hammer acts as a mechanical safety.

These handguns are used extensively in silhouette shooting and in hunting situations. Many are also included in survival gear.

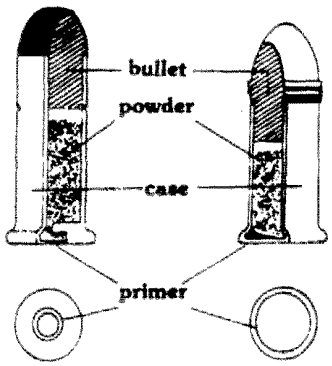
Muzzleloading Pistols and Cap-and-Ball Revolvers

Muzzleloading pistols feature either single-shot or multiple-barrel designs. They are loaded in the conventional muzzleloader fashion by pouring a measured powder charge into the barrel, then seating a patched ball on the charge. Both flintlock and cap lock pistols are available. Most use a half-cock feature as a safety device.

Cap-and-ball revolvers provided a transition between muzzleloading pistols and those firing fixed ammunition. The cylinder is essentially a series of "muzzleloader" chambers, each with a percussion cap, powder charge and ball. Each cylinder is loaded from its muzzle end (not through the pistol's muzzle), just like a muzzleloader. A ram on the pistol is used to seat the balls on the powder. The chambers are sealed with cup grease or some similar sealant before being fired. That prevents the flash from igniting the other charges and setting off a chain reaction.

Ammunition for Pistols

Pistol ammunition ranges in size from .177 BBs and pellets to .458 bullets in a .45-70 case. BBs are nearly spherical steel balls. They are used in air guns with smoothbores, but using them in high quality rifled barrels may result in damage to the rifling. The alternatives in air pistols are soft lead pellets. Most pellets are hollow-bodied projectiles. The most common sizes are .177 caliber, 5 mm and .22 caliber. Air rifle and air pistol events permit the use of only .177 caliber pellets, but others are useful for practice or shooting pleasure.



Fixed ammunition may be either rim fire or center-fire. The .22 caliber long rifle cartridge is the most commonly used rim fire ammunition in pistol shooting. It is composed of a metal case with a folded rim, a priming compound between the rim folds, a powder charge and a bullet. Some types of .22 rim fire ammunition contain a shot charge or capsule rather than a .22 caliber bullet. The .22 rim fire is used in all small-bore pistol shooting and in the international or Olympic pistol events.

The array of center-fire pistol cartridges is much larger. Bullet diameters from .224 to .458 caliber are available. The chambering and caliber are selected to meet the intended use. Most big bore paper target shooting is done with pistols having bore diameters between .357 caliber (such as the .38 Special) and .45 caliber (such as the .45 ACP). Service cartridges like the 9mm and 10mm are also used in some types of target shooting, particularly in combat shooting events.

High power silhouette shooting uses a wide range of pistol chamberings. For consistent results, most shooters use bullets in the 7 mm to .44 caliber class. Many of those cartridges were developed as wildcats (non-commercial chamberings) specifically for long-range silhouette shooting or handgun hunting.

Hunting pistols also show a great deal of variety. On the small side are a number of center-fire .22 caliber rounds. The upper limit in commercially available American handguns is the .45-70 chambering. Cartridge and firearm selection varies with the game being hunted, distance and the regulations applied to handgun hunting.

The basic anatomy of center-fire cartridges applies to pistols as well as rifles. Cases may be rimmed, where the rim of the case is larger than the diameter of the case body. They may also be rimless, with the rim diameter equal to the diameter of the case at the head and an extractor groove milled into the case. Some cases are even rebated, meaning that the rim is slightly smaller than the diameter of the case at the head. The cartridge also includes a primer, a powder charge and a bullet. Center-fire cartridges frequently contain jacketed bullets. Lead bullets may include a half jacket or a gilding metal gas check at the base. The jacket or gas check material is harder than lead and helps to prevent lead fouling in the bore of the pistol.

Fitting Handguns to Your Use

Selecting a handgun is a complex decision-making process. The intended use is a primary consideration. Hunting or silhouette handguns can be single-shot models, but those intended for serious target shooting or international competitive shooting need to be capable of shooting several rounds in rapid succession. Semi-automatics dominate that field. Revolvers are reliable tools that may be used in either type of shooting with some sacrifice in efficiency for both purposes.

The intended use also influences the chambering that should be selected. Olympic competition uses only .22-rim fire ammunition, so no center-fire cartridges may be sued. American target shooting uses only a selected array of pistols from .22 rim fire to .45 ACP. Handgun silhouette shooters use .22 rim fired for small-bore events and a wide array of handguns for big-bore events. Rapid fire is not a consideration, but accuracy and adequate down-range momentum are vitally important.

Handgun hunters need to meet the energy and bullet mass demands of quick, clean kills on the intended game. They also must meet the rules and regulations that might be set forth by the wildlife agency. Reliability, accuracy, dependability and down-range energy are much more important considerations than rate of fire.

Handgun design is a critically important feature to consider. A handgun that does not fit or an action types that is not comfortable or suitable for the purpose is a poor investment. A prospective purchaser should use all the information available from manufacturers, the sporting press and other shooters in selecting a handgun for his or her purposes.

Summary

In this session, we focused on the nature of handguns and ammunition. We discussed some considerations for selecting a handgun for personal use. As we continue with handgun shooting, we will reinforce the basics of good marksmanship, safety, range behavior and sportsmanship that have been established. Becoming a good pistol shot is a challenging goal that requires good shooting form. Shooting safety resides in the mind of the person behind the firearm. What you do with this experience, your success as a shooter and sportsman and your safety on the range and in the field are up to you.

Summary Activities

1. Allow shooters to fire all the types of handguns available with a variety of chamberings if adequate range space is available.
2. Hold a “fun shoot’ where a variety of novelty targets are used to stimulate both accurate shooting and fun with pistol shooting.
3. Arrange to have shooters observe or participate in a formal pistol-shooting event.
4. Hold a consumer-judging event where the participants select from a series of handguns and/or chamberings based on several sets of criteria. Have them give reasons for their placings and selections.
5. Hold an identification quiz where participants try to identify the handguns, components, ammunition and other equipment used throughout the program.
6. Keep providing an opportunity to shoot and to develop handgun-shooting skills.

Sharing and Exhibit Ideas

1. Design a set of posters that illustrate types of handguns and handgun ammunition.
2. Share your understanding of handguns and handgun shooting with another interested person.
3. Start a collection of handgun ammunition.
4. Study the handguns available for some purpose. Select one that would fit your needs and interests, and then explain why that combination of make, model, action type and chambering was selected.
5. Display your shooting notebook or journal, indicating the things you have learned about handgun shooting.
6. Study a handgun shooting game. Outline the rules and the procedures used in that game. Share that information with the rest of the handgun-shooting group.