



CLINTON Fish & Game Club Inc.
ON LUMBARD ROAD · SOUTH OF THE VILLAGE OF CLINTON, N.Y.
P.O. Box 122 · Clinton, New York 13323-0122



Thursday, August 28th, 2008

Gun Safety Rules

Safe Handling

In simplest terms, safe handling of your shotgun is whatever prevents you from firing accidentally, or prevents injury or damage if such a discharge does occur:

- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Never point the muzzle at any person, or an animal or object you don't intend to shoot. The safest directions: upwards, or toward the ground (but not toward your foot).
- Keep your finger off the trigger. Fight the natural tendency to put your finger on the trigger when you hold a shotgun. If you must curl it around something, use the trigger guard. The only time your finger should touch the trigger is when you're ready to shoot.
- Keep the gun **unloaded**, with the **action open**. Make it a reflex to open the action and check the chamber whenever you pick up a shotgun. Keep the gun empty and open until you're ready to use it.
- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- When putting a firearm away for the day, make absolutely sure it is empty. I have been shooting for 30 years and after hunting one day I thought my automatic shotgun was empty, because the bolt remained open after I ejected all the shells. When I got home and broke the gun down for cleaning I found a shell in the magazine tube that got hung up. If I had slide the bolt closed and open a few times I'm sure that shell would have worked free and found its way into the chamber. If you put two shells in your gun make sure you count two coming out as you unload it.

Safe Shooting (Rifle/Shotgun)

Like safe handling, safe shooting depend on – you guessed it – common sense:

- Know your shotgun. Familiarity with your gun's basic parts and how they function is a prerequisite for safe shooting. Know how to open and close the action, for example, and how to remove ammunition.
- Don't depend on the safety. This may be the cardinal rule of safe shooting. Remember, the safety is a mechanical device and it can malfunction. The safety is not a replacement for safe handling and shooting practices.
- Make sure gun and ammunition match. If there is any question about compatibility between shot shell/cartridge and gun, don't fire! The gauge/caliber of the shell must match the gauge/caliber of the gun. The gauge/caliber of the gun is likely to be stamped on the barrel. The gauge/caliber of the shell/cartridge will be indicated on the box, and on each shell/cartridge.
- Don't carry shells of mixed gauge. Whenever you're through shooting, immediately remove unfired shells from your clothing. It's a good way to avoid mixing ammunition.
- Be sure before you shoot. If you're not absolutely certain that you've identified your target, don't shoot! And be equally aware of what's beyond your target. If it's another person, or an object that shouldn't be hit -- no matter how far – don't shoot!





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- Protect your eyes and ears. Guns make noise. Noise affects your hearing. Guns also emit debris and gases that can injure your eyes. Ear protectors and safety glasses are a must.
- If your senses are impaired, don't go shooting! Among the world's worst combinations are firearms and alcohol, and firearms and drugs.
- Don't run the risk of a clogged barrel. Barrel obstructions can cause gun bursts. If you've stumbled and jabbed the barrel into the ground, or crawled to surprise your quarry, unload and check the barrel for mud or snow.
- Don't rest your gun on your feet to keep it out of mud or snow.
- If your firearm fails to fire correctly, PAUSE, do not open the gun right away. Give it 30 plus seconds, primers can and do delay fire, this is known as 'hang fire'.
- Never look down the barrel of a loaded firearm. Leave that to an episode of the Three Stooges.

Eye & Ear Protection

Think, for a moment, of how much your vision and hearing mean to you. Then consider the effect on your life if either of these senses was impaired. How many activities that you take for granted would you have to curtail? How many daily pleasures would you have to forsake? As a shot gunner, you owe it to yourself to protect your eyes on every shooting occasion.

Etiquette

Etiquette is just good manners. In shooting, etiquette also introduces another element of safety. Practice shooting etiquette and you'll be a safe and popular shooting companion.

- Never shoot across another shooter.
- Never shoot someone else target.
- Do not talk to a shooter while they are trying to shoot a target.
- Never load or work the action of a gun behind someone trying to shoot.
- Never walk to the side or in front of someone trying to shoot.

These are just a few of the basic safety rules you should follow when handling any firearm.

Remember common sense, if it looks unsafe it is unsafe. Any gun is only as safe as the operator.

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