



Guide to Getting Started in USPSA Practical Shooting



Getting Started in "Practical Shooting" (USPSA) - ***SAFELY***

Practical Shooting is "Safety in Action:" **SAFETY** is *THE* watchword of the entire USPSA program! Practical Shooters instinctively practice safe gun handling under pressure, and they demand the same of others: USPSA-affiliated clubs always check new shooters to insure that they have the skills needed for safe participation. Consequently, before you are allowed to compete in any USPSA practical shooting match or organized practice, a Practical Shooting Safety Check is always required - always. **SAFETY COMES FIRST AND FOREMOST - ALWAYS!**

Upon successful completion of your Safety Check, you will be issued a USPSA "Safety Check Card," and will be allowed to shoot as a "Coach-Through" for your first three matches. Upon successful completion (i.e., no unsafe gun handling) of your first three matches as a Coach-Through, a Range Officer (RO) or the Match Director (MD) will sign your card (make sure you ask!), allowing you to compete (as "unclassified") in Section/USPSA matches. You must join the USPSA to obtain a national classification. You must join the Northwest Section to be eligible for Section awards. You must join a Northwest Section club to be eligible for nationals slots. At your Safety Check, you will be expected to have -

- ✓ A **serviceable and safe handgun, minimum caliber 38 spl./9mm**. All of the critical safeties (slide safety, safety catches, half cock notch, disconnecter, hammer block, etc.) on your handgun must be functional. If your gun is fitted with a trigger shoe or extension, it may not protrude beyond the outer dimensions of the trigger guard.
- ✓ A **safe holster on a belt**; the muzzle of the handgun must point downwards to the ground within three feet of you when standing naturally relaxed, the trigger must be covered, and the belt upon which the holster and allied equipment are carried must be secured at waist level (*please* leave your shoulder holsters, S.O.B. holsters, fanny packs, manly "Tac Ops" thigh holsters, etc., at home!).
- ✓ **Magazines or speed loaders** (2 or 3 is plenty to start with), and carriers for same. Bring *at least 50 rounds of ammunition - 100 is better*. We suggest factory ammo for your safety check (unless you already know what's considered "safe" handloads under USPSA rules).
- ✓ **Ear and eye protection**. Shooting glasses must be industrial safety glasses or genuine shooting glasses; most sunglasses lack the strength needed to afford adequate protection. Foam ear plugs provide excellent ear protection, and they're cheap.
- ✓ Your **completed Safety Quiz**, for review and discussion.

At your Safety Check, we will expect you to demonstrate these **safe gun handling skills**:

- ✓ Check your gun
- ✓ Load and make ready
- ✓ Draw and fire from various starting positions
- ✓ Safely reload your gun (both standing and moving)
- ✓ Safe downrange & cross-range movement (180° rule)
- ✓ Safe strong- and weak-hand only shooting
- ✓ Safely clear a (semi-auto) jam
- ✓ Unload and show clear

All clubs in the Northwest Section, are considered a "cold" range: This means that **all guns must be unloaded, and holstered (or cased/ bagged) at all times**. Guns are *not* to be removed from holsters or cases, unless and until so directed by a Range Officer, or in a designated safety area. Guns must be empty (*inclusive of magazines, snap caps, and/or empty cases*), with actions closed and hammers down, when holstered or cased. **Gear up *only* in a Safety Area. Your car is *NOT* a Safety Area!! Do *NOT* handle ammunition in a Safety Area!**

Always arrive at the range with your empty gun secured in a suitable bag or case - including anything you might normally be carrying concealed.

Firearm safety is ultimately a matter of personal responsibility and self control, two key qualities stressed in Practical Shooting. **The shooter is always responsible for his or her actions and safe gun handling.**

The basic principles of safe gun handling are expressed in the Practical Shooting Code of Ethics -

- 1) I will treat every firearm as a loaded one!
- 2) I will never point a firearm at anything I am not willing to destroy!
- 3) I will be sure of my target and what is behind it before firing!
- 4) I will keep my finger off the trigger until my muzzle is pointed downrange!

Violations of this Code of Ethics, as defined in the USPSA Practical Shooting Rule Book, are considered gross safety violations, and will lead to disqualification from matches. The careless and/or immature will find other shooters intolerant of sloppy gun handling - they expect to compete under safe conditions. Like rock climbing, white water rafting, or sky diving, Practical Shooting contains a remote element of danger. Unlike virtually any other sport, though, ***the "disaster factors" are all under your direct control.*** That is why we demand that you accept full responsibility for your actions; it's **your** gun, **you're** shooting it, and **you** have full control of the "disaster factors."

If you can't or won't accept this responsibility, then this isn't the sport for you!

The Fundamental Safety Rules You Need to Know

From USPSA's Practical Shooting Handbook, 2008 Edition:

- 2.4) SAFETY AREAS – Other than on the line under RO direction, you may handle your gun only in a designated Safety Area. Any gun handling anywhere else on the range premises is considered unsafe gun handling, and will incur a match disqualification (10.5.1).

Handle ammunition anywhere but a Safety Area. It's OK (but really, really stupid) to have loaded magazines/speed loaders on your person while in a Safety Area, but don't touch them; don't even handle snap caps or empty cases (2.4.2, 10.5.12)! The best place to stoke clips/speed loaders is on the stage(s) while you're waiting to shoot. The best way to insure against "brain-fade" in a Safety Area is to put all of your magazines and speedloaders in your shooting bag before you go there! This is another good habit to cultivate.
- 5.1.6) SERVICEABLE & SAFE - Handguns must be serviceable and safe. All critical safeties (slide safety, safety catches, half cock notch, disconnect, hammer block, etc.) on your handgun must be functional (exceptions are allowed for grip safeties and magazine disconnects). Trigger shoes that extend beyond the width of the trigger guard are expressly prohibited (5.1.5).
- 5.2.7) HOLSTERS - The muzzle of the holstered handgun must point downwards to within three feet of the shooter when standing relaxed. When holstered, the trigger must be covered. The heel of the butt of the handgun may not be below the top of the belt.
- 5.4) EYE & HEARING PROTECTION – Eye and ear protection is mandatory. Loss of either during a course of fire will result in a reshoot. Deliberately displacing either during a course of fire to attempt to gain a reshoot is considered unsportsmanlike conduct, and will result in a match disqualification (10.6.3).
- 5.5.3) PERMITTED AMMUNITION - Metal-piercing, tracer, and incendiary ammunition is strictly prohibited.
- 5.5.4) UNSAFE AMMUNITION – Any ammunition which is, in the opinion of a Range Officer, unsafe (pierced primers, multiple squibs, et al) will be withdrawn from the competition.
- 5.7) MALFUNCTIONS – During corrective actions, your muzzle must be pointed safely downrange and your trigger finger must be outside of the trigger guard. Violations will incur a match disqualification (10.5.8).
- 8.2.5) RE-HOLSTERING - Re-holstering during a course of fire is discouraged, but permitted. If reholstering, the safety on single-action automatic pistols must be applied. Likewise, when re-holstering a revolver or double-action-only automatic pistol, the hammer must be down (Section 8.1). Violations will result in match disqualification (10.5.11). "Hot re-holstering" is strongly discouraged.
- 8.4) RELOADING – During reloading, your muzzle must be pointed safely downrange and your trigger finger must be outside of the trigger guard. Violations will incur a match disqualification (10.5.9).
- 8.5) MOVEMENT – During movement, your muzzle must be pointed safely downrange and your trigger finger must be outside of the trigger guard. Violations will incur a match disqualification
- 8.6.1) VERBAL SAFETY WARNINGS – A Range Officer *may*, but is not *obligated* to, for reasons of safety, provide safety warnings to a competitor at any time.

- 10.4) MATCH DISQUALIFICATIONS ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE – A Match Disqualification (MDQ) will be incurred for any of the following safety infractions:
- An accidental discharge (fired outside of the confines of the backstop or berms, striking the ground within 10 feet of the competitor, or fired in any other direction deemed unsafe by the host club, any discharge prior to commencement of the stage or while loading, reloading, unloading, or correcting a malfunction)
 - Any discharge during movement unless actually engaging targets
 - Any discharge following the “gun clear” range command
 - A shot which occurs while transferring a handgun between hands.
- 10.5) MATCH DISQUALIFICATIONS UNSAFE GUN HANDLING – A Match Disqualification (MDQ) will be incurred for any of the following safety infractions:
- Handling a handgun at any time except when in a designated safety area or on the line under RO supervision
 - Breaking the 180°, whether the firearm is loaded or not
 - Dropping a handgun or causing it to fall, unloaded or not, during a course of fire, or during loading or unloading
 - Holstering or drawing within the confines of a tunnel
 - Sweeping any part of your body – or anyone else’s – with the muzzle of a loaded gun
 - Allowing the muzzle of a handgun to point rearwards beyond a radius of 3 feet when drawing or re-holstering
 - Wearing or using more than one handgun at any point in time during a course of fire.
 - A finger in the trigger guard during malfunction/jam clearing, loading, unloading, or reloading, or during movement
 - Holstering a loaded handgun with the hammer cocked and safety off
 - Handling live or dummy ammunition in a Safety Area
 - Having a loaded handgun other than when specifically ordered to do so by a Range Officer
 - Retrieving a dropped handgun outside of a course of fire
 - Using metal piercing, incendiary and/or tracer ammunition and/or using any ammunition which has been deemed unsafe by a Range Official
 - A shot fired at a metal target from a distance of less than 23 feet.
- 10.6) UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – A MDQ will be incurred in the event of unsportsmanlike conduct. The Range Officials have complete authority over all persons on the range. Safety on the range is their prime concern, and their orders will be obeyed. Failure to obey instructions and directions, behavior and/or attire liable to bring the sport into disrepute (temper tantrums, apparel of dubious taste, etc.), deliberately shooting props and equipment, etc., will lead to disqualification and banishment from the range.
- 10.7) PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES – A MDQ will be incurred for misuse/being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Some General Information

Practical Shooting lets you test your *defensive* skills (USPSA is *not* SWAT or combat training, Rambo!) in a *sporting* atmosphere. It is open to all reputable persons. You can use any firearm meeting the minimum power factor (9mm/.38 spl.), as all types of firearms compete together without handicap (power is factored via USPSA target scoring zones).

Practical Shooting Matches are realistic and diverse. Course designers mix props such as walls, barricades, doors, and tables with full or partial targets, no-shoot targets, steel reactive targets, moving targets, and others. As **Practical Shooting is freestyle**, you provide the solution to the shooting problem, and **both score and speed are factored**.

Practical Shooting = Safety in Action. Safety is constantly stressed in the Rules and on the range. Whenever you're shooting, two Range Officers will be right behind you, alert for "brain fade."

U.S.P.S.A. stands for the "United States Practical Shooting Association," the IPSC governing body for the United States. I.P.S.C. (pronounced "ip-sick") stands for the "International Practical Shooting Confederation," the world body that governs the sport of Practical Shooting.

D.V.C. (*diligentia, vis, celiratis*) is the USPSA motto; it stands for "**Accuracy, Power, and Speed,**" and symbolizes the challenge of the sport. How fast can you shoot? How accurately? Can you find the right mix of speed and accuracy when using a powerful firearm?

The Principals of Practical Shooting

- 1) Practical competition is open to all reputable persons, without regard to occupation; it may specifically not be limited to public servants.
- 2) Accuracy, power, and speed are equal elements of practical shooting, and practical competition must be conducted in such a way as to evaluate these elements equally.
- 3) Firearm types are not separated; all types compete together without handicap. This does not apply to the power of the firearm, as power is an element to be recognized and rewarded.
- 4) Practical competition is a test of expertise in the use of practical firearms and equipment. Any item of equipment, or modification to equipment, which sacrifices practical functionality for competitive advantage contravenes the principles of the sport.
- 5) Practical competition is conducted using practical targets, which reflect the general size and shape of such objects as the firearms may reasonably be called upon to hit in their primary intended use.
- 6) The challenge presented in practical competition must be done with the utmost safety in mind. Courses of Fire should follow a practical rationale and simulate hypothetical situations in which firearms might reasonably be used.
- 7) Practical competition is diverse. Within the limits of realism, problems are constantly changed, never permitting unrealistic specialization of either technique or equipment. Courses of fire may be repeated, but no course may be repeated enough to allow its use as a definitive measure of practical shooting skill.
- 8) Practical competition is freestyle. In essence, the competitive problem is posed, and the participant is permitted the freedom to solve it in the manner he considers best, within the limitations of the competitive situation as provided.

Your Gun, Gear, and Accessories; Getting Started

First, shoot a few matches. You can actually get started with very little equipment: A safe gun and holster, ammo carriers, a belt, and several hundred rounds of ammunition. Eye and hearing protection are mandatory. Most all magazine/speedloader carriers work - some are more elegant than others. You can start with two magazines (or speed loaders), but most shooters carry four or more (courses of fire requiring up to 30 rounds are not uncommon). A bag for spent brass is handy.

Don't rush out and spend - you'll be sorry later. Study what experienced shooters are using and ask them about their guns and gear; they're always happy to help new shooters. Get a number of opinions (no shortage of opinions exist in this sport!) and ask where the best buys are before you do any major spending. Frequently, you can arrange to borrow equipment to try.

Wear adequate clothing. **Practical Shooting is an outdoor sport practiced in all weather.** Pouring rain, a foot of snow, whatever - the match goes on. Dress to stand around while you're waiting your turn to shoot. Pants should allow you to freely bend and stretch. Shirts should fit closely so loose fabric doesn't snag your draw. Stop holster wiggle with a good gun belt (if you ever shoot a match with a holster on a thin "street" belt, you'll quickly find out what holster wiggle is and how it badly it slows down your draw!) - in fact, the selection of a good gun belt is every bit as critical as the selection of a good holster and firearm! Good running shoes (cleated football shoes are popular) are a plus. Sunscreen and umbrellas are nice to have, as are gloves and handwarmers for standing about in the cold. A small first aid kit (USPSA's Sport Safe is ideal) is nice to have.

Gun store commandos and Rambo wanna-be's have absolutely no place in our sport; so leave your camouflage clothing and your shirts with those clever and/ or obscene sayings at home. USPSA is a sport - not SWAT training, not combat training, not militia apprenticeship!!! Un-sportsmanlike appearance and/or behavior will get you barred from the range (rule 10.6). This sort of stuff gives us image headaches - we're sure you understand!

Your gun must be serviceable and safe - not fancy, trick, or custom. Start with the gun you selected for personal protection - your first few matches with it will tell you a lot! Remember - it needs to make minor (.38/9mm) to compete for place and/or prizes. Got a Glock? A 1911? Great! *Need* a \$3,000+ race gun to be competitive? Not! In fact, "Production Division" (stock guns) has outstripped "Open Division (race guns), very much favoring newer shooters with "entry-level" armament.

A progressive reloader is virtually a necessity for this game. Most Practical Shooters reload - not only to cut costs, but to tune their load to their gun. An automatic powder measure that flares the case mouth and drops a metered charge into each case is a good safety feature; it helps prevent squib loads. A squib load consists of a primed case and a bullet, but no powder charge; they go "pop" instead of "bang" when fired, and usually leave a bullet stuck in the barrel. ***Don't fire the next round - if the gun goes POP, you STOP! I inspect each case for powder before seating the bullet, and inspect each finished round.*** Primer present (and anvil side up)? Case in good shape? Fits the chamber (semi-auto shooters often remove the barrel and use it as a go no-go gauge - the round should drop easily into and out of the chamber)? Check **all** your ammo before the match and catch the mistakes before they catch **you** in the middle of that big stage!

Your First Match

Nervous about your first “public performance?” Most people are! Hey - **Relax** and enjoy it! This sport is **fun!** You'll find that both experienced shooters and Range Officers are friendly and helpful with new shooters. We all enjoy Practical Shooting, and want to get you started right! Matches are as much social gatherings as shooting contests.

Forget speed! Walk through the match - it's the smart move. Don't try to imitate the "hosers" that zip through a course in flying cleats and a shower of brass. To be good at this (or any other) sport, you have to pay your dues, learn the fundamentals, and be able to apply them on demand. **Forget speed - think safe and smooth! Forget the time, and concentrate on getting all "A" hits.** Forget winning - think about your front sight. Practical Shooting is very much a mental game. Shooters who are obsessed with winning rarely do - they distract themselves.

Above all, concentrate on controlling your gun! Nobody **wants** to see you get DQ'd on your first time out because of a safety violation, but it **will** happen if you try to run before you can walk, or try to miss fast before you can hit anything slow. Concentrate on learning safe gun handling practices - speed will come with practice and experience (or, put another way, it'll happen by itself or it won't happen at all - **don't “try” to go fast!**). **Always, always, always pay attention to your muzzle direction and to where your trigger finger is!**

The hallmark of the Master is not blinding speed - it's smoothness. All wasted motion, all fumbles, all flourishes, have been stripped away until only the bare essentials remain. You can develop smoothness with lots of **dry fire practice** in front of a mirror (leave your ammo in another room, please!). Do it in slow motion, and think about what you're doing. This way you can correct mistakes, **build good safety habits**, and program the "muscle memory" that will allow you to shoot smoothly - **and safely** - under pressure. Watch other shooters and notice how they execute the course of fire (engagement order, where they make reloads, etc.) - you can learn a great deal by watching, listening, and questioning. Try to squad with “M” and “GM” shooters while you're learning.

The Range Commands

On each stage, a shooting order will be established. If you're not "on deck," you'll be helping to tape targets or retrieve brass. When you're "on deck," you will follow the next shooter (*don't* tape or pick when you're on deck - you won't have time to prepare yourself to shoot). When the shooter ahead of you is finished, the range is clear, and everyone is downrange picking brass and taping targets, this is your opportunity to walk through the course, play on the props, and finalize your game plan in your mind (**do not, of course, touch your gun!**). Be sure you finish your "practice" and come to the line ready to shoot when it's your turn!

When you are called, step into the shooting box (or initial shooting position), stand, and **await the Range Officer's commands: DO NOT touch your gun until you're told to!**

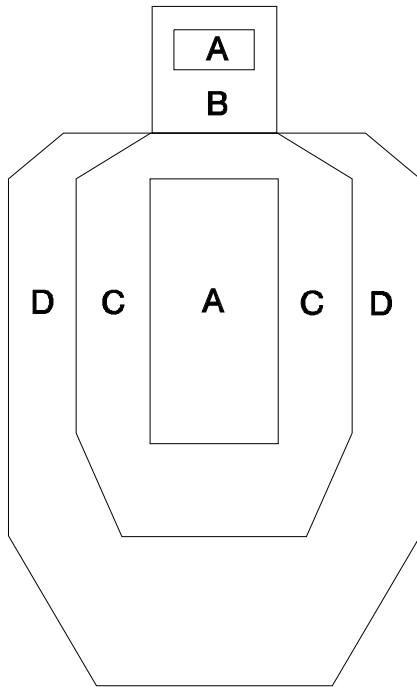
The Range Officer will then issue these “Range Commands:”

The Range Commands; Here We Go.....

- Do you understand the course of fire?*** Optional - *most* R.O.'s ask this (or something like it), but some don't. Now's your chance to ask any last-minute questions. If you *don't* respond, *or* reply in the affirmative, the next command you hear will be;
- Make ready!*** **This is your "OK" to handle your gun.** You may (usually) take a sight picture (BEFORE YOU LOAD!), apply sight black, and load and holster your gun (remember to put that safety on - hammers down, DA's & revolvers!). When you have assumed the mandated starting position, the next command you hear will be;
- Are you ready?!*** If you are NOT ready, shout "NOT READY!" If you react in any other way (nodding, etc.), or don't react at all, the R.O. will proceed with "the countdown." The next command you hear will be -
- Stand by!*** This means the audible start signal is imminent. DO NOT "creep" towards your gun or change your starting position after you hear this command! Within two to five seconds, you'll hear a "beep," signaling you to commence shooting. Once you have completed the course of fire, stop in place, and await further commands. You will hear -
- If you are finished, unload and show clear.*** *With your finger out of the trigger guard and the muzzle pointed safely downrange*, drop the magazine, empty the chamber, and lock or hold your slide back (revolvers, open and empty the cylinder); allow the R.O. to examine the now-empty gun (chamber and mag well). The next command you hear will be -
- If Gun clear - hammer down,*** *With the muzzle pointed safely downrange*, close the slide, and DROP the hammer - this means *pull the trigger as though you were firing a round* (revolvers, just close your empty cylinder). This does NOT mean *decock* the gun (for you double-action auto aficionados!); carry an empty magazine along if necessary to drop the hammer using the *trigger* – the RO wants to see the firing pin struck!
- And holster.*** Holster your *empty* gun.
- The range is clear!*** This signals the end of the course of fire. The tapers and pickers - and you - may go forward. Stay with the Range Officer and check your targets. Stay at least three feet from your targets, and *don't* touch them! Verify your score (scored correctly, hits totaled) and sign the score sheet. Don't worry about picking up after yourself: Someone will collect your spent brass and dropped magazines.

If, at any time, the R.O. blows a whistle or shouts "hold it!," "stop!," or the like, cease firing, point the muzzle safely downrange, remove your finger from the trigger guard, apply the safety, and await further instructions.

USPSA TARGET SCORING ZONES



SCORING USPSA TARGETS

<u>pts.</u>	<u>Major</u>	<u>Minor</u>
A	5	5
B	4	3
C	4	3
D	2	1

POWER FACTOR

$$\frac{(\text{bullet wt. gr}) * (\text{muzzle velocity, fps})}{1,000}$$

"Major" = 165 or greater

"Minor" = 125 - 164.99

Sub-Minor = < 125 - scores zero

HIT FACTOR

$$\text{total points} \div \text{total time} = \text{"hit factor"}$$

HIGHEST HIT FACTOR WINS THE STAGE

and receives max. points for the stage. Other shooters are scored against the stage winner ratioed on their hit factors.

STEEL/ REACTIVE TARGETS

Knockdown = 1 "A" hit. Sometimes, a steel target will count 10 pts. (2 "A" hits).

There are three types of stages/scoring used in USPSA practical shooting -

COMSTOCK

Most common: **Rounds & time unlimited.** Usually, only your best two hits on a target are scored, but you may "shoot all you want!"

VIRGINIA COUNT

Limited rounds (i.e.: you cannot make up misses as you can on a Comstock stage), but **unlimited time.** Extra shots, extra hits, and misses are penalized. The secret to V.C. stages is to take the time to get your hits. Time won't hurt you, but misses will kill you on a Virginia Count stage (since you can't fire extra shots to make up misses)!

FIXED TIME

Both the **number of rounds and time are fixed**; extra shots, extra hits, and overtime shots are penalized (but misses are not). "Fixed" or "Timed" Fire courses are not factored; you are scored on your target points only. The secret to T.F. stages is to try for only the scoring hits that you can make in that time. *Don't* "spray and pray," trying to get all your shots off - you'll be disappointed.....

SAFETY FIRST

Take the **Safety Quiz** below and confirm that you understand the fundamental safety rules of USPSA:

	True or False?	Why or Why Not?
1) Any holster that covers the trigger is legal for USPSA.		
2) I can clean my gun, cycle, and dry fire it in the Clubhouse or at my car.		
3) I may take a sight picture upon stepping into the starting box.		
4) If I realize I forgot a target, it's OK to turn around and run uprange to re-engage it.		
5) When I'm on deck and my squad is taping and picking, I can run through the course and take sight pictures.		
6) If my empty gun falls out of the holster when I'm not on a stage, I should find a Range Officer.		
7) The best thing to do if I fall is to drop or throw my gun to get rid of it.		
8) When the R.O. says "make ready," I can take a practice draw/sight picture.		
9) It's OK to point the muzzle into the air while clearing obstacles or jams.		
10) If I drop my gun during a course of fire, I should pick it up and continue shooting.		
11) If the course of fire requires that I go prone, it's OK to go prone then draw.		
12) The best place to load magazines is a Safety Area.		
13) It's OK to have my finger on the trigger when moving from position to position.		
14) When preparing to shoot, it's OK to top off my magazine and insert it into my holstered handgun.		
15) If my gun goes off while I'm clearing a jam, it's OK, as long as the round impacts the berm.		
16) I can lube my gun on a stage while waiting to shoot.		

	True or False?	Why or Why Not?
17)		If it makes me feel safer, I can re-holster my gun during a course of fire before I move downrange.
18)		If I re-holster my loaded gun, the safety must be applied (single action autos), or the hammer must be down (double action autos and revolvers).
19)		Eye and hearing protection is mandatory.
20)		While reloading, my trigger finger must be outside of the trigger guard.
21)		When I'm told to unload and show clear, I should clear the gun and drop the hammer.
22)		I don't need to watch the muzzle when I draw - it can point anywhere.
23)		When told to drop the hammer, I can just decock my double-action auto.
24)		If I think I can hit the target, it's OK to shoot through props to make the shot.
25)		If my gun goes off while I'm moving between positions, it's OK as long as the round doesn't leave the range.
26)		If I need to check, clean, or repair my gun, I need to go to a Safety Area.
27)		It's OK to use snap caps while dry firing in a Safety Area.
28)		If I show up for a stage with a loaded chamber - even a snap cap - I will be disqualified.
29)		If my gun goes off anytime other than when I'm actually engaging targets, I will be disqualified.

How'd you do? You should have answered "true" to 6, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 28, & 29, and "false" to everything else.....read on to see why.....

- 1 **FALSE** The muzzle must also point downwards to within 3 ft of the shooter when holstered. Remember, too, that, on the draw, the muzzle can point backwards no further than 3' behind the shooter - this is impossible with some holsters.
- 2 **FALSE** This will get you DQ'd - do this in a Safety Area only.
- 3 **FALSE** Handling your gun before you're told to by the RO will get you DQ'd! You may take a sight picture only after the "make ready" command.
- 4 **FALSE** Remember the 180 rule - you may usually *back up* (*please* warn the R.O.!), if not specifically prohibited in the course description, but, turn around and break the 180, and you're done for the day!!
- 5 **FALSE** Do *not* handle your gun until you're ready to start and the RO tells you to!! Nothing upsets pickers, tapers, and RO's more than to turn around and see a muzzle pointed at them - whether or not the gun is empty!
- 6 **TRUE** If *you* pick it up and reholster it, you've committed unsafe gun handling (you're not in a Safety Area, nor are you on a stage under RO supervision), a "DQ'able" offense. Find an RO, who will retrieve your gun for you, accompany you to a Safety Area, and assist you with re-holstering.
- 7 **FALSE** If you *drop* the gun, you're done. If you hang onto it, not only is it safer (you can, hopefully, control the muzzle), but you can get up and continue shooting!!
- 8 **TRUE** "Make ready" is your clearance to handle your gun. Keep it to one sight picture, though - the shooting box is *not* the place to practice multiple draws!!
- 9 **FALSE** Pointing the muzzle in an unsafe direction (say, into the air/over a berm) can get you DQ'd. Remember - pretend it's going to go "bang" when you don't want it to - where would that round end up?!
- 10 **FALSE** If you drop your gun during a course of fire, sorry - you're done for the day. Stop in place and await the RO's instructions.
- 11 **FALSE** Draw *before* you go prone - if you go prone first, your muzzle is pointed at the expectant crowds, who will first scatter, then groan in sympathy when you are DQ'd upon drawing and breaking the 6' safety zone behind you!!
- 12 **FALSE** **WRONG-WRONG-WRONG!!** Handle ammo anywhere *but* a Safety Area. Do not handle snap caps or empty cases in a Safety Area, either. Get into the habit of removing all of your magazines/speedloaders from your person and putting them in your shooting bag *before* you enter a Safety Area!
- 13 **FALSE** A finger in the trigger guard during movement = Match DQ. Remember: Finger on the trigger *only* when you're addressing a target!!
- 14 **FALSE** No, it's OK to drop the mag, holster the loaded gun (is that safety on?!), top the mag off, take the gun out of the holster, *then* insert the loaded mag, and re-holster. Never, never, **never** insert a magazine into a holstered handgun!
- 15 **FALSE** No, it is not. You've just "AD'd" - your finger was probably where it shouldn't have been (i.e. - in the trigger guard). Stop and await further instructions.
- 16 **FALSE** No, you may not - you're handling your gun outside of a Safety Area, and you're not under RO supervision. Sorry - you've just DQ'd.
- 17 **TRUE** Hot-re-holstering is strongly **discouraged**, but it is not **prohibited** - see #18 following. Also, remember that if the gun subsequently falls out of your holster, you're finished - it is usually best to keep the gun in your hand under control!

- 18 TRUE** Violate this safety rule and get DQ'd. Remember - it is almost always best to *not* re-holster, and keep the gun in your hand under your direct control!
- 19 TRUE** For you, and (at all NWS clubs) for spectators.
- 20 TRUE** Remember - finger on the trigger *only* when addressing a target(s).
- 21 FALSE** No, you should clear the gun, lock or hold it open, point the muzzle into the berm, and allow the RO to inspect it for empty.
- 22 FALSE** It cannot point over the berm, it cannot sweep you, the RO's, or others, and it must point backwards no further than 3' behind you.
- 23 FALSE** You must drop the hammer with the *trigger*. The intent is to dry *fire* the gun, and thus guarantee that the chamber is indeed empty. Bring along a spare, empty magazine if need be.
- 24 FALSE** Deliberately shooting props will get you DQ'd under 10.5 (unsafe gun handling - would you *really* shoot blindly through a wall in a defensive situation?!) and/or 10.6 (gross un-sportsmanlike conduct; you're destroying a club's property, as well as blatantly circumventing the intent of the course design). You may deliberately fire rounds through designated *soft* cover - only.
- 25 FALSE** No, sorry - this is an accidental discharge (where was your trigger finger?!). You're done for the day.
- 26 TRUE** *Don't* do this at your car, or in the Clubhouse, or.....
- 27 FALSE** Nor is it OK to use empty cases. Both are considered ammo, and will get you DQ'd.
- 28 TRUE** Your hammer must be down on an *empty chamber* at all times unless you are on a stage and have been told to load and make ready.
- 29 TRUE** Unless it can be conclusively proven that the accidental discharge was due to an actual breakage of the firearm, you will be DQ'd for any AD.

BUCKBOARD BOOGIE (sample "field course")		Designer: Floyd Shoemaker, CSC
		Rules: USPSA Rulebook, 2008 Edition
Scoring : Rounds/Points :	COMSTOCK 24 / 120	10 USPSA targets, best 2 hits each, 4 pepper popper, K/D = 1 "A"
Procedurals & R.O. Notes	Standard procedural penalties apply. Engaging steel downrange of 23 feet RO warning line = MDQ. Paint steel no-shoot between shooters if and as needed; <i>any</i> bullet mark on steel no-shoot = -10 pts.	
Starting Position	Standing naturally erect inside wagon "A," facing downrange, with wrists above respective shoulders in surrender.	
Start Signal :	AUDIBLE	Stop Signal : LAST SHOT FIRED

STAGE PROCEDURE

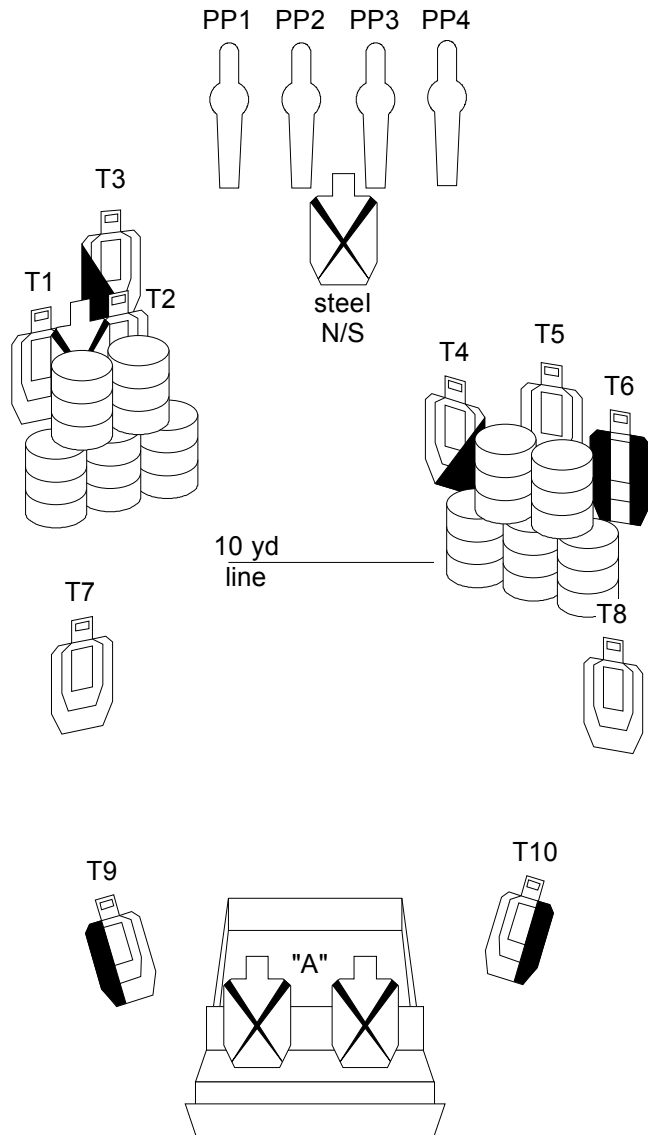
On start signal, from within the wagon (only), engage T9-T10 and PP1-PP4 (only).

T7 and T8 may be engaged from wherever visible (i.e., from the wagon, or en route to T1-T6). Watch your 180 if engaging T7-T8 en route to T1-T6.

Exit the wagon, proceed downrange, and engage T1-T6 as they become visible.

You may not retreat to a preceding shooting position once you have engaged any target at a subsequent shooting position. Targets in each array may be engaged in any order.

Engaging or re-engaging poppers downrange of the wagon will incur a procedural penalty for each shot so fired. You may not engage or re-engage steel downrange of the 23 foot RO warning line (MDQ).



The Need for Speed (sample "Speed Shoot")		Designer: Tom Langdon, MRCPS, w/mod's.
		Rules: USPSA Rulebook, 2008 Edition
Scoring : COMSTOCK	6 USPSA targets, best 2 hits each, 2 poppers & 2 - 8" plates, K/D = 1 "A"	
Rounds/Points : 16 / 80		
Procedurals & R.O. Notes	Standard procedural penalties apply. Failure to perform mandatory reload when changing boxes = -10 pts/shot fired in this condition.	
Starting Position	Standing in box "A" or "B", <i>shooter's choice</i> , facing downrange, both hands touching wall	
Start Signal :	AUDIBLE	Stop Signal : LAST SHOT FIRED

STAGE PROCEDURE

You may proceed "A" to "B", or "B" to "A", your choice.....

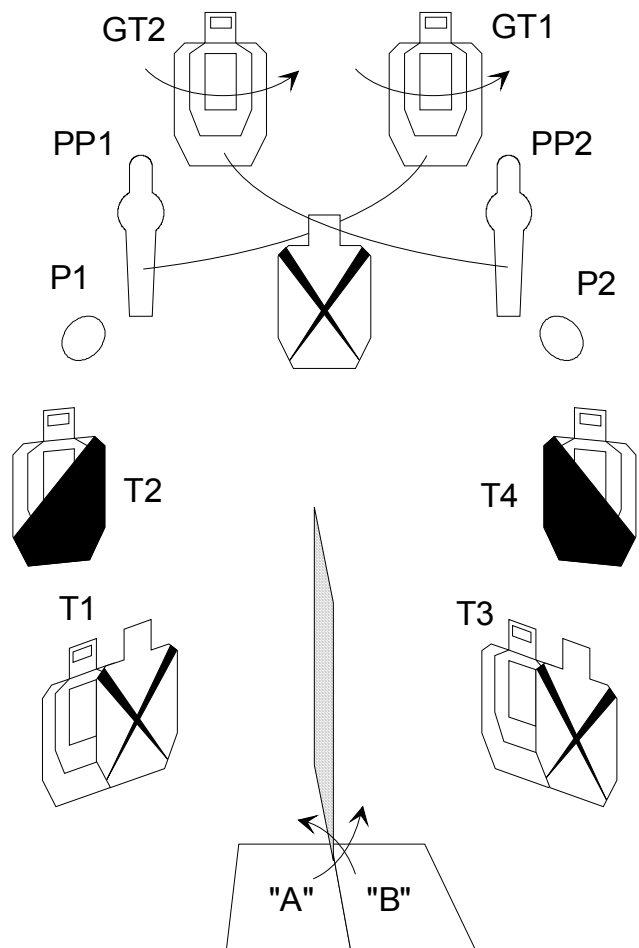
On start signal, draw, and -

- From within *right-hand* box "B" (only), engage *left-hand* array T1-T2, P1, and PP1, and (optionally) GT1 (only), **or**
- From within *left-hand* box "A" (only), engage *right-hand* array T3-T4, P2, and PP2, and (optionally) GT2 (only).

Perform a (single) **mandatory reload**, step into the remaining shooting box ("B" or "A", depending upon which box you started in), and engage **only** the targets appropriate to that box as described above.

GT1 and GT2 are activated by knocking down PP1 and PP2, respectively, and disappear. Misses and FTE's on GT1 and/or GT2 will not be penalized.

You may return to your "starting box" to pick up misses **only** after completing the stated course requirements (min. 8 rounds from one box, reload, and min. 8 rounds from other box). You need **not** perform a second (or subsequent) reload(s) if you are returning to your "starting box" to pick up misses.



(sample "Standards Exercise," from USPSA's National Classifier Book)



CM 98-11

Tuff Enough Standards

RULES: Practical Shooting Handbook, Latest Edition **COURSE DESIGNER:** Adapted from Kent Oram, NV.

START POSITION: Standing naturally in shooting box with hands relaxed at sides.

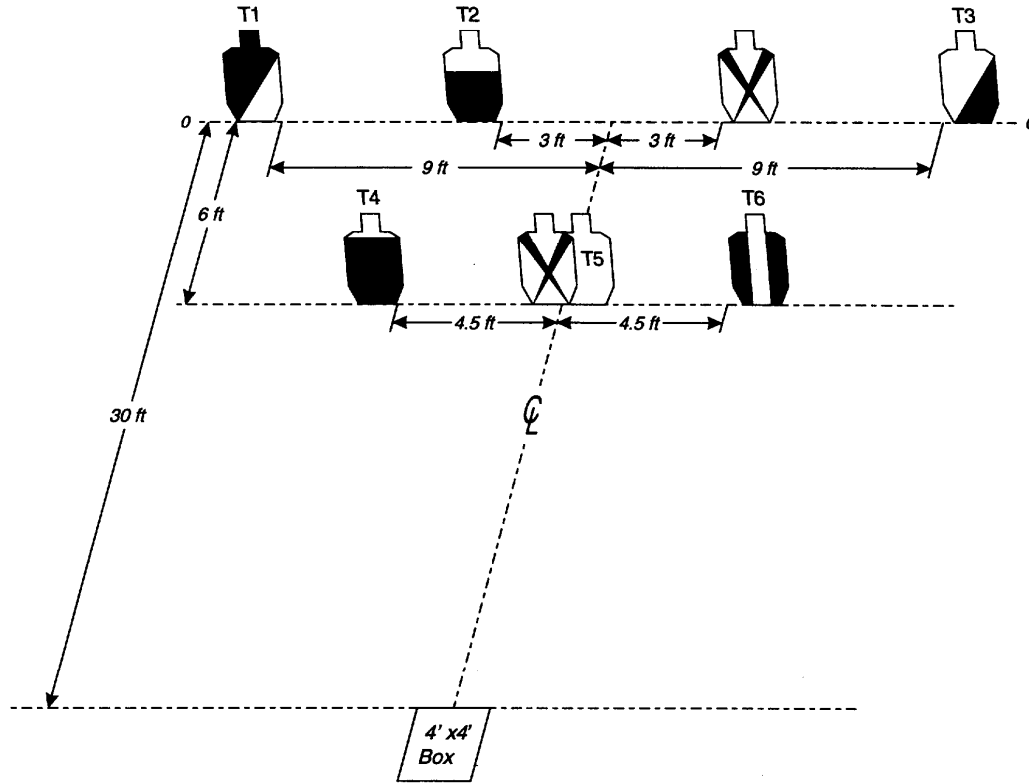
STAGE PROCEDURE

- String 1. 5 sec. Freestyle. On signal, engage T1-T6 in any order with one round each.
- String 2. 6 sec. Strong hand only. On signal, engage T1-T6 in any order with one round each.
- String 3. 7 sec. Weak hand only. On signal, engage T1-T6 in any order with one round each.

RANGE OFFICER NOTES: Shooters may use both hands to clear jams without penalty. Allow .3 seconds for the horn on all timing. Example: 6 second string—6.30 is NOT overtime; 6.31 is overtime.

SCORING

- SCORING:** Fixed Time, 18 rounds, 90 points
- TARGETS:** 6 IPSC
- SCORED HITS:** Best 3
- START - STOP:** Audible - Audible
- PENALTIES:**
 - Procedural. -10
 - No-shoot hit. -10
 - Extra shot. -10
 - Extra hit. -10
 - Late shot. -10



SETUP NOTES: Set paper targets to five feet high at shoulders. Hard cover on T2 begins at bottom of target and extends upward 15 inches from the bottom scoring line. T4 is hard cover below the top scoring line of the



lower A zone. Hard cover on T6 is parallel with A zone scoring lines. Edge of no-shoot at T5 is even with edge of A zone. Left edge of T5 is on centerline.

Information About Shooter Classifications

As with most shooting sports, "USPSA" has "classifications," categorizing shooters into different skills strata. Not only does this mean that you only have to compete against those in your class (of equivalent skills), it provides an incentive (and, let's face it - a thrill) to advance in class as your skills and capabilities increase!

USPSA maintains a National Classification System for its members; you must maintain a membership in USPSA to become - and remain - classified. The National Classification System is based on your scores on National Classifier Stages (like the one on the preceding page). USPSA publishes a selection of standardized "Classifiers" that every club in the country uses. Your initial classification as a newer shooter (assuming, of course, that you've joined USPSA) is based on your first four scores on *different* Classifier Stages. Thereafter, your scores on Classifiers are forwarded to the national office by the hosting club; these are reviewed quarterly, and, if you've shot well enough, you'll be re-classified upwards.

The highest hit factor (nationally) on any given classifier constitutes a 100% score; your percentage is based on the ratio of *your* hit factor to that fired by the "100% shooter" that quarter. The average of your highest six most recent Classifiers establishes your National Classification, as follows:

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Grand Master	95 - 100%
Master	85 - 94.9%
A	75 - 84.9%
B	60 - 74.9%
C	40 - 59.9%
D	< 40%

More detailed explanations of USPSA's National Classification System are available in the Practical Shooting Handbook, and/or from USPSA's website, [http:// www.uspsa.org](http://www.uspsa.org). You may request a copy of the Practical Shooting Handbook and/or Rulebook by calling USPSA at **360-855-2245**, or by mailing them at **USPSA, Inc., P.O. Box 811, Sedro Woolley, WA, 98284**.

Information About USPSA's NORTHWEST SECTION

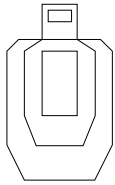
Section clubs host regular USPSA matches on the 1st Saturdays & 1st – 4th Sundays of every month. The six clubs of Team Northwest range from Puyallup in the south, to Custer in the north.

You can get complete information on the Clubs of Team Northwest from our Section website:

[http:// northwestsection.org](http://northwestsection.org)

Some Miscellaneous Last-Minute Stuff.....

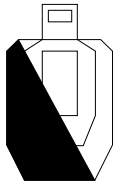
You've already seen the standard USPSA metric paper target (and its scoring zones) on a preceding page. USPSA stages of fire ("stages") can contain full or partial USPSA metric targets, steel reactive targets, swingers, turners, appearing and disappearing targets.....the only limitations being the stage designer's imagination and the applicable Safety Rules in the USPSA Handbook. Let's look at the targets you'll most commonly encounter:



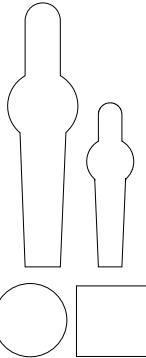
(full) **USPSA metric targets.** The targets are tan/buff in color. Scoring zones are delineated by pressed in or punched scoring lines that are invisible except at very close range.



No-Shoot target. These are white, and may or may not have a black "X" across them. Hits on no-shoot targets are always penalized 10 pts each



Hard-Cover targets (various configurations). The obstructed (black or otherwise colored) portion of the target represents hard cover that is impenetrable to a full bullet diameter. Hits in hard cover are deemed misses, and are penalized 10 pts for each missing hit in the scoring portion of the target. This is important in *Comstock* stages: You may fire extra shots to make up for hits in the hard cover.

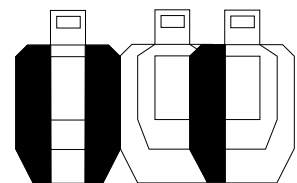
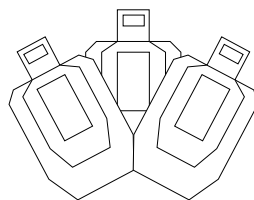
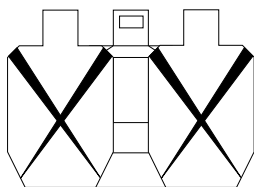


Large ("pepper") and small ("US") "**poppers.**" These are steel reactive targets that must fall to score (can be either 5 pts/1 "A" or 10 pts/2 "A" for knockdown). Stages may include no-shoot poppers. Pepper poppers and US poppers are commonly used to activate moving targets when they're knocked down. They are calibrated with minor power factor 9mm ammunition prior to the match to insure that they'll fall if properly struck.

8" round and 6" square ("B-zone") steel **plates.** These are steel reactive targets that must fall to score (knockdown = 1 "A" hit). These, along with regulation poppers, are the only legal steel targets for USPSA.

Almost every stage will include some combination or combinations of USPSA, hard-cover, and/or no-shoot targets, and will more often than not include a steel target or two.

You'll also encounter partial/combination targets delineated by no-shoots, another shoot target(s), or perhaps a hard cover target, like these.....



All targets are impenetrable to a full bullet diameter, so, a hole through two targets only scores on the "top" target (the first one the bullet passes through). This includes no-shoot's and hard cover. For example, a full bullet diameter through the center of the no-shoots flanking the first target above would *not* score on the shoot target behind it! Likewise, a full bullet diameter through the right-hand "D" zone of the angled left-hand target in the second array above would *not* score a "C" on the center target!