SPOTC

SECURITY PROTECTION OFFICER TEAM COMPETITION

XXXVII

SPOTC

SECURITY PROTECTION OFFICER TEAM COMPETITION

RULE BOOK 2009

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY · UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER · EST 2002 · U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

SPOTC
SECURITY PROTECTION OFFICER
TEAM COMPETITION
XXXVII

RULE BOOK

Table of Contents

Section 1 – Safety 5

1.1 Four General Firearms Safety Rules....5
1.2 Range-Specific Rules....5

Section 2 – Course Design 6

2.1 General Guidelines....6
2.2 Principal Course of Fire....6

Section 3 – Course Construction & Modification 7

3.1 General Regulations....7
3.2 Course Construction Criteria....8
3.3 Climbing Barriers....9
3.4 Obstacles....9
3.5 Barriers....9
3.6 Solid Tunnels....9
3.7 "Cooper" Tunnels....9
3.8 Stage Props....9

Section 4 – Course Information 10

4.1 General Regulations....10
4.2 Written Stage Briefings....10

Section 5 – Range Equipment 10

5.1 Targets....10
5.2 Rearrangement of Range Equipment or Surface....11
5.3 Range Equipment Failure and Other Issues....11

Section 6 – Competitor Responsibilities/Equipment 11

6.1 Competitors' Duties and Responsibilities....11
6.2 Team Officers and Duties....12
6.3 Eligibility of Competitors....12
6.3.2a New Competitor Rule....13
6.4 Firearms and Equipment....14
6.5 Competitor Weapon Substitution....15
6.6 Holsters and Other Equipment....15
6.7 Malfunctions....16

Section 7 – Competition Structure 16

7.1 General Principles....16
7.2 Teams....16

Section 8 – Range Management 17

8.1 Competition Officials 17
8.2 Competition Director 17
8.3 Protest Officer 17
8.4 Chief Range Officer (CRO) 17
8.5 Range Officer (RO) 18
8.6 Statistical Officer 18

Section 9 – Range Control and Commands 19

9.1 Delaying a Match 19
9.2 Policing Range 19
9.3 Firing Lines 20
9.4 Noise 20
9.5 Commands 20
9.6 Penalties 20

Section 10 - Courses of Fire 20

10.1 General 20
10.2 Ready Position 20
10.3 Handgun Ready Conditions 20
10.4 Rifle Ready Conditions 20
10.5 Weapons Loading 20
10.6 Team Loading 21
10.7 Range Commands 21
10.8 Reloading 21
10.9 Movement 22
10.10 Assistance or Interference 22

Section 11 – Scoring 22

11.1 Approaching Targets 22
11.2 Touching Targets 22
11.3 Prematurely Reset Targets 22
11.4 Un-restored Targets 23
11.5 Scoring Methods 23
11.6 Score Verification, Challenges, and Protests 24
11.7 Score Sheets 24
11.8 Scoring Responsibility 25
11.9 Official Time 25

Section 12 – Penalties 25

12.1 Procedural Penalties 25
12.2 Firing Line Violation 25
12.3 Match Disqualifications 26
12.4 Safety Infractions 27
12.5 Medical Emergencies 28
12.6 Dropped Weapons 28
12.7 Unsportsmanlike Conduct 28
12.8 Protest Process 29

Section 1 – Safety

SPOTC events must be designed, constructed, and conducted with due consideration to safety. *Safety rules will be strictly enforced.* Violation of safety rules may subject the competitor to removal from competition.

The following safety rules are posted on every range. (They can be found in DOE M 470.4-3A, Contractor Protective Force, Chapter IX, Firearms Training.)

Be aware that certain types of firearms and shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

1.1 Four General Firearms Safety Rules

1.1.1 ALL FIREARMS ARE ALWAYS LOADED.
No exceptions. Don't pretend that this is true. Be serious about it.

1.1.2 NEVER POINT A FIREARM AT ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO DESTROY.
This one is conspicuously and continuously violated, especially with pistols, because "It's not loaded."

1.1.3 KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET.
You cannot align your sights any faster than you can position your trigger finger, and there is no need to fire an unaligned weapon.

1.1.4 BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET.
Know what your target is, what is in line with it, and what is behind it. NEVER shoot at anything you have not positively identified.

1.2 Range-Specific Rules

1.2.1 It is mandatory to use approved eye and hearing protection and other personal protective equipment as required by the range safety officer.

1.2.2 Unsafe conditions must be reported immediately to a range safety officer or the range officer.

1.2.3 A firearm may be exchanged with another shooter ONLY at the direction of the range officer. (Prior to any such exchange, the range officer shall verify that the cylinder or action of the weapon is open and that the chamber is empty. If a weapon is exchanged, both parties shall check it for safety.)

1.2.4 Firearms must not be left unattended or unsecured.

1.2.5 Firearm loading and firing may commence ONLY on command.

1.2.6 Shooters are not permitted to talk while on the firing line during a firing exercise except in reply to a range safety officer or range officer as a part of the exercise, or to shout "cease fire" in an unsafe situation.

1.2.7 Until the firing line has been declared safe by the range officer, shooters must ***neither move past nor bend over the line***.

1.2.8 Fingers shall not be placed on a weapon's trigger or in the trigger guard until the firearm is pointed at the target.

1.2.9 All shooters must be trained to recognize an unsafe condition and to shout "cease fire" when such a condition is observed.

1.2.10. Persons on the firing line are prohibited from smoking, eating, and drinking while on the line.

1.2.11 Alcoholic beverages and drugs are prohibited on DOE firing ranges. If the firearms staff detects the presence of alcohol or drugs on a shooter, or if a shooter is believed to be under the influence of either, the firearms staff must remove the shooter from the range and appropriate follow-up action must be taken in accordance with pre-established directives. Shooters taking medication must report this fact to the staff before reporting to the firing line. The staff is responsible for determining whether a shooter is safe to use the range. The staff must consult a medical doctor if necessary.

1.2.12 Shooters must take precautions to prevent hot spent cartridges and gunshot residues from getting inside their clothing.

1.2.13 When a competition event is completed, each firearm must be physically examined by the shooter and by a designated range safety officer to ensure that it is unloaded and in safe (clear) condition before leaving the range. If the shooter is using a duty weapon on the range, he or she may reload that weapon at the range if returning directly to a duty station.

1.2.14 While a firearm is being cleaned, live ammunition must not be allowed in the cleaning area.

1.2.15 Shooters will receive direction on the collection and disposition of unexpended ammunition.

Section 2 – Course Design

2.1 General Guidelines

2.1.1 Quality

The value of the SPOTC shooting competition is determined by the quality of the challenge presented in the course design. Courses of fire shall be designed primarily to test a competitor's marksmanship, tactics, decision making, and teamwork.

2.1.2 Diversity

SPOTC shooting challenges shall be diverse. While it is unnecessary to construct new courses for each competition, no single course shall be repeated in a manner that would allow it to be considered a definitive measure of shooting skills.

2.1.3 Freestyle

SPOTC competition is freestyle. Conditions may be created and constructed to compel a competitor into positions or stances required by the stage design. These conditions may include barriers and other physical limitations. Competitors must be allowed to solve the presented challenges while engaging targets appropriately. A course of fire may specify "support hand" or "strong hand." The specified hand must be used exclusively from the point stipulated and for the balance of the string or stage.

2.1.4 Difficulty

SPOTC shooting competitions present varied degrees of difficulty. No shooting challenge or time limit may be protested as being prohibitive. (This does not apply to non-shooting challenges.)

2.2 Principal Course of Fire

2.2.1 Match: The entire series of scored events.

2.2.2 Stage – Event: A single course of fire that can be defined as a team event.

2.2.3 String: One of the segments that make up a stage or event.

2.2.4 Open Match: A match open to all eligible DOE and DOE-contractor personnel, military units, and law enforcement agencies.

2.2.5 Restricted Match: A match that limits competition to specified groups, e.g., first-line SPOs or DOE federal agents.

2.2.6 Squadded Team Match: Teams are assigned a definite time to fire. Teams may be assigned one or more adjacent targets or shooting positions. All entries must be made before firing commences in that match. The entire team must report and fire as a unit.

2.2.7 Aggregate Match: This is an aggregate of the scores from two or more events.

Section 3 – Course Construction & Modification

The following general regulations for course construction list the criteria, responsibilities, and restrictions that apply to SPOTC courses of fire. Course designers, host organizations, and officials are governed by these regulations.

3.1 General Regulations

3.1.1 Physical Construction: Safety considerations in the design, physical construction, and stated requirements for any course of fire are the responsibility of the host organization, subject to the approval of the range master. Reasonable effort must be made to prevent any injury to competitors, officials, or spectators during the competition. Course design should prevent inadvertent unsafe actions wherever possible. Consideration must be given to the operation of any course of fire to provide suitable access for officials supervising the competitors.

3.1.2 Safe Angles of Fire: Course-of-fire construction shall always take into account safe angles of fire. Consideration must be given to safe target and frame construction and to the angle of any possible ricochets. The physical dimensions and suitability of backstops and side berms shall be determined as part of the construction process.

3.1.3 Minimum Distances: Whenever steel targets are employed in a course of fire, precautions shall be taken to ensure that competitors and match officials maintain established minimum distances from the metal targets while the targets are being shot. These minimum distances are 7 yards for handgun-caliber ammunition and 100 yards for rifles. Exception: With frangible ammunition, rifles may be used to engage steel targets as close as 25 yards.

3.1.4 Impractical Behavior: When a course is constructed to include target positions other than immediately downrange, organizers and officials must protect or restrict the surrounding areas to which officials, spectators, or competitors have access. Individual competitors must be allowed to solve the competitive problem in their own way and must not be hindered by being forced to act in any manner that might cause unsafe action. Targets shall be arranged so that they're engaged on an "as or when visible" basis that will avoid causing competitors to breach safe angles of fire. Competitors may be required to re-holster a handgun during the course of fire.

3.1.5 Range Surface: Where reasonably possible, range surfaces shall be prepared or altered prior to the competition to provide adequate safety for competitors and officials. Consideration should be given to the results of inclement weather and competitor actions. To enhance safety, range officials may add gravel, sand, or other materials to a deteriorated range surface. Competitors may not protest these range-maintenance actions.

3.1.6 Obstacles: Natural or created obstacles in a course of fire should reasonably allow for variations in competitors' heights and physical builds, and the obstacles should be constructed and employed to provide reasonable safety for all competitors, match officials, and spectators.

3.1.7 Target Placement: To prevent "ricochet hits," care must be taken with the physical placement of steel targets.

3.1.7.1 Target positions should be clearly marked on the target stands to ensure consistent location throughout the competition as targets are replaced. Target stands should be securely fixed in position, or their positions should be clearly marked on the range surface, to ensure consistent location throughout the entire competition. Prior to the start of the competition, target types should be specified and identified on the target frames or stands to prevent scoring targets from being interchanged with non-scoring or penalty targets after the competition has begun.

3.1.7.2 Course design must prevent competitors from engaging steel targets at distances closer than 7 yards with handguns and 100 yards with rifles (or 25 yards with frangible ammunition). Where possible, this should be done with physical barriers. If charge lines are used to limit the approach to steel targets, they must be placed at the minimum safe distance from the targets so that a competitor could inadvertently fault the line and still be outside the safety limit.

3.1.7.3 When steel falling targets are used in a course of fire, care should be taken to ensure that the location or foundation area is prepared to provide consistent operation throughout the competition.

3.2 Course Construction Criteria

During the construction of a course of fire, various physical barriers may be used to restrict competitor movement and to provide additional competitive challenges. These barriers are as follows:

3.2.1 Charge Lines and Fault Lines. Physical barriers are the preferred method for restricting competitor movement. Nevertheless, the use of charge lines and fault lines is permitted as follows:

3.2.1.1 Charge lines are used to restrict unreasonable movement by competitors toward or away from targets.

3.2.1.2 Fault lines are used to force the competitor to shoot at targets from behind physical barriers. The fault lines may be positioned at any angle extending to the rear of these barriers. Fault lines should be at least 1 yard long. Unless otherwise stated in the stage briefing, they are deemed to extend to infinity.

3.2.1.3 Charge lines and fault lines should be constructed of wooden boards or other suitable material and should extend no more than 1.5 inches above ground level. This will provide competitors with both physical and visible references to prevent inadvertent faulting of the line. Fault lines and charge lines shall be fixed firmly in place to ensure that they remain the same for all competitors throughout the competition.

3.2.1.4 The introduction of new fault lines and charge lines, or the modification of existing lines, after any competitors have completed the course of fire shall be permitted only for safety reasons and only with the prior consent of the CRO.

3.3 Climbing Barriers

Courses of fire may include the use of barriers or major obstacles to be surmounted by competitors. Obstacles used in this way shall not exceed a height of 2 yards. Obstacles taller than 1 yard shall be supplied with scaling aids to assist competitors and shall be constructed to provide for the competitor's safety in the following ways:

3.4 Obstacles

Obstacles shall be firmly anchored and braced to provide adequate support when in use. Whenever possible, unduly sharp or rough surfaces shall be removed to reduce the possibility of injury to competitors or match officials. The descending side of any obstacle shall be clear of obstructions and natural hazards.

3.5 Barriers

Barriers for use by competitors shall be constructed in the following manner:

3.5.1 They shall be high enough to serve the intended purpose and strong enough to allow their use in a braced shooting position.

3.5.2 They shall include fault lines projecting rearward at ground level from the side edges, when called for.

3.6 Solid Tunnels

Solid tunnels that a competitor is required to enter or pass through shall be constructed of suitable material and to any length. Sufficient ports shall be provided, however, to allow match officials to safely monitor competitor action. Tunnel-mouth edges shall be prepared to minimize the possibility of injury to competitors and match officials. Course designers must clearly designate the entrance and exit portions of the tunnel as well as the parameters for shooting at any targets from within the tunnel (i.e., fault lines and charge lines).

3.7 "Cooper" Tunnels

Cooper tunnels may be constructed to any height, with braced uprights supporting loose wooden slats or PVC pipe. Because overhead material will be dislodged if the competitor bumps or strikes it, the material must not be heavy enough to present a safety hazard.

3.8 Stage Props

Where these items are intended to support a competitor in motion or while engaging targets, they must be constructed with the safety of the competitor and match officials as a priority. Provisions shall be made to allow match officials to safely monitor and control competitor actions at all times. Props shall be strong enough to withstand use by all competitors.

3.8.1 If props are taller than 1 yard, scaling aids should be provided to assist competitors.

3.8.2 The surface to be traversed by competitors shall be kept reasonably clear of debris that may cause loss of footing. For safety reasons, range officials may add gravel, sand, or other materials to a deteriorated range surface. Competitors may not protest these range-maintenance actions.

Section 4 – Course Information

4.1 General Regulations

Many courses of fire and stages are extremely complex. They may involve sophisticated range equipment and complicated movements. Although competitors are always responsible for meeting the course-of-fire and stage requirements, they can reasonably be expected to do so ONLY after receiving a stage briefing that adequately explains the requirements.

4.2 Written Stage Briefings

4.2.1 A written stage briefing should be posted at each course of fire prior to commencement of the competition.

4.2.2 The range officer (RO) shall read aloud and explain the published courses of fire at the team leaders meeting. Written stage briefings shall provide competitors with ***at least*** the following information: Stage number, scoring method, target types, start position, time starts—audible or visual signal, time stops on the last shot, penalties per the current edition of the SPOTC rule book, and procedure.

4.2.3 The CRO shall be allowed to modify a written stage briefing at any time for reasons of clarity, consistency, or safety. If any competitors have attempted the course, prior to any change, in a manner that the CRO determines to be inconsistent with the modification, those competitors shall be required to reshoot the ***modified*** course. If this is not possible, the CRO may allow the course to continue with only that competitor whose actions brought about the change being required to reshoot. If the CRO believes that the competitive balance or equality has been lost, the course of fire shall be deleted from the competition, and all scores for that course of fire shall be removed from the match scores.

4.2.4 Props, walls, barriers, screens, and vision barriers shall be deemed to be impenetrable ("hard" cover) unless the written stage briefing states otherwise. If any hit on a scoring target or penalty target is determined to have passed through "hard" cover, that hit shall ***not*** count for score or penalty. Any hit on paper, steel, or reactive targets through "hard" cover shall be treated as range equipment failure.

Section 5 – Range Equipment

5.1 Targets

General Principle: Targets shall be scored in accordance with Appendices.

5.1.1 Targets used as penalty targets must be clearly marked in a color different from that of scoring targets.

5.1.2 Concealed targets used in a course of fire may be partially or wholly concealed through the use of "soft" or "hard" cover, as follows:

5.1.3 Cover provided merely to obscure the view of targets shall be considered "soft" cover. Shots that have passed through soft cover and strike a scoring target shall score. Shots that have passed through soft cover and strike a penalty target shall be penalized. All scoring zones on targets concealed by soft cover shall be left wholly intact.

5.1.4 Cover provided to conceal completely all or a portion of targets shall be considered "hard" cover.

5.1.5 Partially concealed steel targets are permitted. Course designers may simulate hard-cover barriers in the following ways:

5.1.6 By constructing simulations that actually conceal a portion of the target.

5.1.7 By cutting targets to remove the portion deemed to be concealed by hard cover.

5.1.8 By painting a portion of the target one solid color to simulate hard cover.

5.1.9 Metal plates are designed to fall or overturn when hit and are designed and installed to prevent them from turning on edge or sideways. In the event that a target fails to fall when engaged properly, the range officer will call the target as "hit." If a target turns sideways and the hit cannot be seen, the shooter will make a decision either to attempt to knock down the target or to bypass the target. If the shooter bypasses the target and a full hit is on the target, the RO will score the target as down. If no mark or a partial mark is on the target, it shall be scored as a target remaining and be assessed a penalty.

5.1.9a Paper targets, if used, will be the DOE TQ-15 and the Belgian target. (See sec. 11.5 for scoring.)

5.1.10 Reactive targets may be made of steel or other materials designed to react to the strike of a projectile. They are scored as required by the individual course description.

5.1.11 Steel penalty targets may be constructed either to remain upright or to fall or overturn when hit.

5.2 Rearrangement of Range Equipment or Surface

5.2.1 Competitors are prohibited from rearranging the ground or range equipment prior to the start of a course of fire.

5.3 Range Equipment Failure and Other Issues

5.3.1 Range equipment shall present the challenge as fairly as possible to all competitors. Examples of range equipment failure include, but are not limited to, displacement of targets, premature activation of steel or moving targets, malfunction of mechanically or electrically operated equipment, and failure of props such as openings, ports, and barriers. A competitor who is unable to complete the course of fire because of range equipment failure shall be required to reshoot the stage after the necessary repairs have been made to the malfunctioning equipment.

The exception is as follows:

5.3.2 Altered target position. If the RO observes that the position of a target has changed and therefore presents a different challenge than that presented to previous competitors, the competitor shall be required to reshoot the course of fire. Chronic malfunction of equipment in a course of fire may result in the removal of that stage from the match results. The match director is responsible for any such decision.

Section 6 – Competitor Responsibilities/Equipment

6.1 Competitors' Duties and Responsibilities

6.1.1 Discipline
Competitors are expected to cooperate with competition officials in the effort to conduct a safe, efficient competition. Competitors are expected to promptly notify the appropriate officials of any rule infractions, safety issues, or bad sportsmanship.

6.1.2 Knowledge of Rules and Program
It is the competitor's responsibility to be familiar with this rulebook and with the competition program. Officials are not responsible for a competitor's failure to obtain or be familiar with the rules or the competition program.

6.2 Team Officers and Duties

6.2.1 Team Leader (Captain)
One member of each team must be designated as "team leader." The team leader is responsible for all activities of the team, and will

- Be an assigned protective force supervisor.

  NOTE: Only one supervisor is allowed on a team; all other team members must be SPOs who are not classified as supervisors.
- Be familiar with the rulebook and competition program and ensure that the team is familiar with both.
- Make proper entries at registration.

  NOTE: Only the team leader will be briefed for team events.
- Make substitutions during the team events (see 6.2.3).
- Have team members report punctually to proper firing points, with approved equipment and attire, ready to fire.
- Verify scores.

Once a competitor has participated at the supervisor level, that person may not compete at the SPO level, even if he or she has a change in status (i.e., a demotion, voluntary or involuntary).

It is the team captain/team leader's responsibility to gain clarification of any and all rules and courses of fire for the team.

6.2.2 Coaching
Coaching is allowed until the team has been called to the firing line. Coaches are not allowed past the spectator area at any time.

6.2.3 Alternates
Alternates are allowed *if they have been named on the entry form.* During the team events, the team leader may substitute any member of the team for specific team skills to allow the team to achieve the objective. The team leader must identify the team members who will be competing in the event to the RO at the conclusion of the 5-minute briefing time. The team leader can select from all registered team members for each team event.

Team Leader Replacement: Team leaders may be replaced ONLY if they are unable to participate because of injury or illness, and any such substitutions must be reported to the CRO before the next stage of fire. The replaced team leader may not re-enter the competition. This substitution is final.

6.3 Eligibility of Competitors

6.3.1 DOE Team Requirements

SPOTC is open to DOE-contractor SPOs and to DOE federal agents who have been members of a bona fide armed security force for at least 30 days prior to the start of the competition. Although other law enforcement agencies or armed forces units may be invited to participate in the competition, only DOE teams are eligible for the Team Leader of the Year award and the Secretary's Trophy.

6.3.2 Team Composition

Each DOE team competing in SPOTC must have the following composition of team members:

5-Man Team

1 team captain/leader ***(must be an SPO line supervisor)***

4 SPO team members

1 SPO alternate

3-Man Team

1 team captain/leader ***(may be an SPO line supervisor)***

2 team members

Three-man DOE teams will be composed of SPO I-certified members of a DOE protective force. One of the 3 team members must be the team leader/captain. The team leader/captain may be an SPO line supervisor or an SPO.

6.3.2a New Competitor Rule

Each year, some team members must be new competitors. "New competitor" is defined as someone who has not been part of a SPOTC team within the last three years. The new competitors may occupy any team position for which they are qualified.

The required number of new competitors is based on the number of uniformed protective force officers at the site.

Sites that have 400 or more uniformed protective force officers will be required to have at least 3 new competitors on their 5-man teams.

Sites that have fewer than 400 uniformed protective force officers will be required to have at least 2 two new competitors on their 5-man teams.

All 3-man teams must have at least 1 new competitor.

6.3.3 Law Enforcement Agencies; Armed Forces

Other law enforcement and armed forces (LEA) teams will compete for LEA Competitor of the Year and LEA Team Trophy awards. LEA competitors must be current sworn officers or active-duty personnel and ***cannot*** have served—for at least 30 days prior to the start of the competition—as LEA firearms or tactics instructors. Documentation of the current status of LEA competitors must be submitted to the competition director at least two weeks prior to the competition.

6.3.4 Medical Forms/Requirements

Every SPOTC competitor must submit to the NTC a hard-copy form, signed and dated by a licensed medical physician, allowing that competitor to participate in the competition. **For DOE competitors,** the medical/physical-fitness evaluation must have been performed ***no earlier than 30 days before*** the start of SPOTC. For military and other LEA competitors, no date restriction applies. The required form is the "NTC Medical Form," which is available from the SPOTC website.

DOE competitors: Every DOE competitor's medical/physical-fitness evaluation form must be signed and dated by the ***site medical director.***

LEA competitors must submit the signed medical form from the website, but it may be signed by any licensed medical physician.

All competitors must ensure that their medical evaluation paperwork reaches the registration coordinator no later than the day of registration.

NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO COMPETE WITHOUT TIMELY SUBMISSION OF THIS PAPERWORK.

6.4 Firearms and Equipment

Any competition official has the right to examine a shooter's equipment or apparel at any time. Competitors will use site-issued duty equipment during the competition.

6.4.1 Issued Firearms

Competitors may do either of the following:

(1) Use their site-issued firearms that have been inspected by their respective site armory staff prior to shipment.

OR

(2) Request the use of competition-sponsored firearms that have been zeroed by the sponsor's range staff.

NOTE: Firearms stored at the NTC will be maintained in locked cases and stored with a numbered security seal on the case or box.

Sites electing to use their own firearms will deliver these firearms to the competition sponsor prior to the start of the competition. See the current SPOTC website for due dates.

Sites electing to use available competition-sponsored firearms will submit a request to the competition director at least two weeks prior to the start of the competition, indicating the type and number of firearms requested.

Firearms shall meet or exceed manufacturer's minimum specifications for trigger pull, safety, and overall operation. Throughout the competition, random weapons inspections may be performed to ensure safe and reliable operations.

Any RO shall have the right to demand examination of a competitor's firearm, magazines, or related equipment at any time. Examinations may include the primary safety, which in all instances must be completely functional in accordance with the original manufacturer's design. The operational and inherent safeties may also be inspected to ensure that they are functioning as originally designed.

If a weapon is declared unserviceable or unsafe, it shall be withdrawn from the competition. The competition director shall have the final authority in decisions relating to this action.

ALL firearms used in competition will be inspected by the NTC armory staff to ensure that they are safe and fully operational prior to their use in competition.

Rifles must be equipped with an operational sling.

ALL semi-automatic pistols and rifles must be equipped with an operational mechanical safety and/or de-cocking device, as applicable.

6.4.2 LEA Competitors

Competitors using site- or LEA-issued duty firearms must submit to the competition director —at least two weeks prior to the competition— documentation of those issued or approved firearms (identifying by serial number each firearm to be used by each competitor, as well as any spare firearms). This documentation must be certified by a site/LEA firearms staff representative on site/LEA correspondence letterhead.

LEA teams that are authorized to use customized firearms (that is, firearms with custom modifications exceeding simple installation of after-market stocks/grips, sights, and triggers) must submit to the competition director —at least two weeks prior to the competition— documentation (e.g., the specific LEA policies or standard operating procedures) approving use of such customized firearms for duty use. Examples of customization include compensators and custom-ported barrels.

6.5 Competitor Weapon Substitution

Each competitor must use the same handgun and rifle for all courses of fire. If site armory staff deem that a competitor's original weapon system has become unserviceable or unsafe during a competition, the competitor may seek permission from the competition director to use a substitute weapon. The following rules apply:

6.5.1 The substitute weapon must be of comparable model and exactly the same caliber, and it will not cause the competitor to gain a competitive advantage.

6.5.2 A competitor shall ***never*** use or wear on his person more than one (1) handgun.

6.5.3 Detachable shoulder stocks are prohibited in SPOTC competition.

6.6 Holsters and Other Equipment

6.6.1 Belt: Must securely fasten and allow for safe attachment of the holster.

6.6.2 Holster: Must have one or more of the following and be capable of securing the handgun by a bail, strap, flap, thumb break, or similar retention system. Holsters must completely cover the trigger of the handgun. No "open-top"–style holsters will be allowed.

6.6.3 Ammunition Pouches: Must be capable of securing speed loaders and magazines.

6.6.4 Slings: Each rifle must be equipped with an operational sling.

6.6.5 Protective Mask: During specified courses of fire, each competitor shall carry a site- or department-issued protective mask. The mask shall have a functional filter attached. Each protective mask must be supplied with a carrier. The mask must remain in the carrier until the competitor is required to don the mask. The mask must remain in the competitor's possession until completion of the event in which it was used. Failing to carry a protective mask as designed is grounds for a procedural violation.

6.6.6 Caps: Competitors must wear site-issued billed caps or billed shooting caps that are appropriate.

6.6.7 Duty Uniform: Shall consist of —at minimum— "BDU"-style pants and long-sleeve shirts.

6.6.8 Pads: To prevent injuries, competitors must wear knee and elbow pads over or under their uniforms during all courses of fire. (Competitors must provide their own knee and elbow pads.) All pads must be worn in the proper position, as designed.

6.6.9 Footwear: Competition footwear must be the site-issued combat-type or three-quarter leather shoe.

6.6.10 Magazines and Speed Loaders: If a competitor inadvertently drops or discards a spare magazine or reloading device after the start signal, he may retrieve it if he can do so safely. **Important:** Such retrievals are always subject to the safety rules applicable to that particular course of fire.

6.6.11 Ammunition: All ammunition used in the competition will be provided by the National Training Center. Any competitor found using ammunition ***not*** provided by the NTC will automatically be disqualified from that match. It is the competitor's responsibility to ensure that no other ammunition is introduced into the match.

6.6.12 Hydration Systems: Personal hydration systems are permitted and may be worn by competitors during SPOTC.

6.6.13 Body Armor: All competitors will have serviceable Level IIIa body armor when applicable, and will receive NOTIFICATION of the intended use or need well in advance.

6.7 Malfunctions

6.7.1 In the event that a competitor's firearm malfunctions, the competitor may safely attempt to correct the problem and continue the course of fire.

- During such corrective action, the competitor shall keep the muzzle of the firearm pointing safely downrange at all times.

6.7.2 In the event that a competitor's rifle malfunctions, the competitor must attempt to safe the rifle before transitioning to the handgun. Transition will occur ***only*** when appropriate.

6.7.3 While the competitor is rectifying a malfunction that requires lowering the firearm, the competitor's fingers shall be clearly placed ***outside*** the trigger guard.

6.7.4 In the event that the competitor cannot correct a firearm malfunction, the competitor shall point the firearm safely downrange and advise the RO. At ***no*** time during a course of fire will the competitor attempt to disassemble a weapon.

- The RO shall terminate the course of fire in the normal manner.
- The course of fire shall be scored normally, including all misses and failure-to-engage penalties.
- Under no circumstances shall a competitor be permitted to leave a course of fire while still in possession of a loaded firearm.

6.7.5 Where the firearm has failed as described above, the competitor shall not be permitted to reshoot the course of fire. This includes situations in which the armory staff declares a weapon to be unserviceable or unsafe during a course of fire.

6.7.6 In the event that an RO must terminate a course of fire because of a weapon perceived to be unsafe because of a "squib round," the RO shall take whatever steps necessary to return both the weapon and the range to a safe condition. Once the weapon has been deemed safe, the competitor will reshoot the stage of fire.

Section 7 – Competition Structure

7.1 General Principles

Competitions may involve multiple shooting challenges and multiple firearm types used in various combinations. The following definitions are used for clarity:

7.1.1 Match: The entire series of scored events.

7.1.2 Stage – Event: A single course of fire that can be defined as a team event.

7.1.3 String: Segments that make up a stage or event.

7.1.4 Shoot Off: An event established by the competition director for the purpose of breaking a tie.

7.2 Teams

7.2.1 DOE "teams" shall consist of either three (3) or five (5) firing members. One of the firing members will be the team leader/captain.

7.2.2 Alternates are allowed ***if they have been named on the entry form.*** During the team events, the team leader may substitute any member of the team for specific team skills to allow the team to achieve the objective. At the conclusion of the 5-minute briefing time, the team leader must identify the team members who will be competing in the event to the RO. The team leader can select from all registered team members for each team event.

7.2.3 If a member of a team is disqualified from the competition, the team will NOT be allowed to replace that member.

Section 8 – Range Management

8.1 Competition Officials

Competition officials are appointed by the NTC and are prohibited from competing in any event in which they officiate. Officials shall be thoroughly familiar with conditions of this rulebook and the competition program.

All officials and personnel are duty-bound to conduct themselves properly by being fair and impartial to all.

Should a competitor's equipment or demeanor warrant disqualification, the official should conduct the disqualification in a manner that minimizes inconvenience to all concerned. In so doing, the official should state to the competitor the rule or section of rules under which the disqualification is being made and what type of disqualification should occur (stage/event or match).

If any competition official has an indication that a competitor is in medical distress, a "cease fire" will be called. This action is not a protestable action.

8.2 Competition Director

The competition director is the senior official responsible for conducting the competition.

- In applying these rules, the competition director may confer with competition officials on any point in question.
- The competition director is responsible for the overall competition, including efficient administration, squadding, scheduling, range construction, coordination of all staff, and provision of services.
- The competition director's authority and decisions shall prevail in all these matters.

8.3 Protest Officer

The protest officer shall be responsible for resolving competition protests.

8.4 Chief Range Officer (CRO)

The chief range officer is responsible for operation of the range and for conducting the competition in accordance with this rulebook and the competition program.

- The CRO has overall responsibility for one or more courses of fire.
- The CRO has authority in all matters of safety, including the safety of competitors, spectators, and other persons in the vicinity of the range.

- The CRO is responsible for the fair and equitable application of all procedural and scoring rules.
- The CRO is in charge of all the range officials.
- The CRO is responsible for range safety and safe course design.
- The CRO ensures that all guidelines and rules are followed and is responsible for the training, instruction, and conduct of the range staff.

All matters requiring disqualifications will be brought to the CRO's attention. The CRO's authority and decisions shall prevail in all matters related to range safety, range officials, actual operation of the courses of fire, and application of the rules (except arbitration rulings).

The CRO is appointed by and works for the competition director.

8.5 Range Officer (RO)

Each range officer is an assistant to the CRO, with responsibility for the safety and discipline of range personnel, competitors, and spectators in the range sector assigned. The range officers' responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Check number and names of competitors to ensure that they conform to the scoring schedule and register.
- Accurately record shots, where applicable.
- Give necessary commands.
- Ensure the correct working of the targets.
- Check the competitors' shooting positions.
- Ensure that competitors' firearms and equipment are examined.
- Maintain order on the range, with particular attention to safety.
- Ensure that competitors comply with the stage instructions.
- Station themselves near the competitor to observe correct procedure, issue the range commands, and oversee competitor behavior to ensure its safety.
- Assign assistant range officer (ARO).

The RO works under the authority of the CRO.

8.6 Statistical Officer

The statistical officer has overall responsibility for collecting, sorting, tabulating, and retaining all score sheets, and for calculating, verifying, and publishing all provisional results, final results, and statistics.

The statistical officer ensures that incomplete or inaccurate score sheets are promptly referred to the CRO. The statistical officer is in charge of all statistics in connection with the match, except the actual recording of scores on the range.

The statistical officer is directly responsible to the CRO and is assisted as required. It is the duty of the statistical officer to do the following:

- Register competitors and check their eligibility and classification.
- Accept match entries.
- Prepare, post, and maintain a current list of competitors.

- Squad competitors and prepare range assignment cards where such cards are used.
- Prepare official scorecards.
- Correct errors in scorecards and notify the competitor.
- Tabulate scores.
- Prepare preliminary and official bulletins.
- Post official scores where they are accessible to competitors.
- Determine award winners.
- Report any irregularities in firing or scoring to the competition director.

8.6.1 Retention of Records

The statistical office will retain all official scorecards for 30 days.

8.6.2 Preliminary Scores

For each match, preliminary scores will be posted promptly at official locations. Challenges, if any, must be filed within one hour of this posting. This interval is called the "challenge period."

The challenge closing time will be stated with each posting.

8.6.3 Official Scores

Preliminary scores will become final and official after the one-hour challenge period.

8.6.4 Correction of Scoring Errors

The statistical officer will correct errors that come to the attention of the office prior to publication of official scores.

8.6.5 Changing Official Scores

No official score shall be changed except by authority of the competition director or the CRO. Subsequent changes from the competition director are limited to correction of typographical errors, changes to bulletins in which total scores fail to agree, scores for disqualification of competitors, or scores affected by protest actions.

Section 9 – Range Control and Commands

9.1 Delaying a Match

NO stage will be delayed because of a competitor's tardiness in reporting to the line ready to fire. As soon as the RO calls a relay, competitors must report immediately to their assigned firing points.

9.2 Policing Range

It is the competitors' duty to police the firing points when so directed by the RO. Brass call will be at the discretion of the ROs at their respective stages.

9.3 Firing Lines

During firing activities, the firing line and firing points must be kept clear except for competitors and competition officials.

9.4 Noise

Loud or distracting noise or conversation is prohibited near the firing points. Competition officials, team officials, and competitors shall limit conversation to official business. The range officer shall ensure that spectator noise is kept to a minimum. Upon receiving a second warning about excessive noise, any spectator will be removed from the area by competition officials.

9.5 Commands

Range and firing line commands shall be given during the course description.
(See Rule 10.7.)

9.6 Penalties

Failure to follow specified procedures will result in assessment of a penalty. The penalty will be identified in the individual course description.

Section 10 - Courses of Fire

10.1 General

Except at the direction of the RO for the stage, all firearms and magazines will remain unloaded, holstered, or slung and empty.

10.2 Ready Position

The written stage briefing will clearly state the starting ready position.

10.3 Handgun Ready Conditions

The ready condition of handguns shall be the standard DOE full load, unless the course of fire dictates otherwise.

10.4 Rifle Ready Conditions

The ready condition of rifles shall be the standard DOE half load, unless the course of fire dictates otherwise.

10.5 Weapons Loading

A course of fire may stipulate the number of rounds loaded in the firearm and when to load. Competitors shall **NOT** be required to draw a handgun from the holster with their weak hand.

10.6 Team Loading

The RO may have the entire team load and make ready and stand by, or may have each team member load and make ready individually at the starting position.

10.7 Range Commands

As soon as the RO has the competitors loaded, the competitors will be called to the starting position. The approved range commands and their sequence are as follows:

10.7.1 "Shooter, you are on duty. Stand by."

This command will be followed by the start signal within one (1) to four (4) seconds.

10.7.2 "Start" Signal

The signal to begin the course of fire will be provided at the stage briefing.

10.7.3 "Stop."

This command may be used at any time during the course of fire. Upon hearing it, the competitor shall immediately do the following:

- Cease firing.
- Stand still.
- Wait for further instructions from the RO.

10.7.4 "If you are finished, unload and show clear."

If it appears that the competitor is finished, the RO will issue the above command. When the RO issues this command and the competitor has finished, the competitor shall do the following:

- Lower the firearm.
- Unload the firearm in the approved DOE sequence, as follows.
    1. Rifle: Safety on, magazine out, bolt locked to the rear
    2. Pistol: Magazine out, slide locked to the rear.
- Present the firearm to the RO for inspection with the muzzle pointed downrange at all times.

10.7.5 "Gun clear. Holster or sling."

This command is given after the RO is satisfied that the firearm is unloaded and safe. The competitor shall holster the handgun and sling the rifle in the approved DOE configuration.

10.7.6 "Range is clear."

Until the RO gives this command, ***no one*** moves forward or away from the firing line. As soon as the command is given, officials and competitors may move forward to score, reset targets, etc.

10.8 Reloading

During reloading, the firearm shall be pointed safely downrange, and the competitor's fingers shall be outside the trigger guard.

10.9 Movement

All movement must be accomplished with the finger outside the trigger guard, unless targets are visible to the shooter and the shooter maintains a sight picture on the targets. If the shooter moves a significant distance, the shooters must safe or de-cock the handgun and safe the rifle. "Significant distance" can be defined as two steps, unless shooters are briefed otherwise.

10.9.1 "Movement" is defined as leaving a shooting position.

10.9.2 If a competitor holsters a firearm during the course of fire, the following rules apply:

- For single-action semi-automatic, the safety must be applied.
- For double-action semi-automatic and revolvers, the hammer must be down.

10.10 Assistance or Interference

NO physical, verbal, visual, or other assistance or interference shall be given to a competitor during a course of fire. An RO may provide safety warnings to a competitor at any time. Such warnings shall ***not*** be grounds for the competitor to be awarded a reshoot.

At the discretion of the officiating RO, any person providing assistance or interference to a competitor during a course of fire may incur a procedural penalty or disqualification for that stage. Also at the discretion of the RO, the competitor receiving such assistance may incur a procedural penalty or be disqualified from that stage.

10.10.1 In the event of inadvertent physical contact between the RO and the competitor, the RO may offer the competitor a reshoot of the course of fire. The competitor must make this decision prior to seeing either the time or the score from the initial attempt.

Section 11 – Scoring

11.1 Approaching Targets

Unless specifically authorized by the RO, competitors shall stay ***at least*** one (1) yard away from scoring or penalty targets. Violation of this rule may result in either warning or procedural penalty.

11.2 Touching Targets

Competitors shall neither touch nor otherwise interfere with a scoring or penalty target without the authorization of the RO. Should the RO deem that a competitor or competitor's delegate has influenced or affected the scoring process as a result of such interference, the RO may do the following:

11.2.1 Score the affected target as a missed target with penalties applied for misses, if applicable.

11.2.2 Impose penalties for any affected penalty targets.

11.3 Prematurely Reset Targets

If a target is prematurely reset, preventing the determination of the actual score, the RO shall order the competitor to reshoot the course of fire.

11.4 Un-restored Targets

If a target has ***not*** been properly reset in preparation for the next competitor, the following shall apply:

11.4.1 The RO shall order the competitor to reshoot the course of fire.

11.5 Scoring Methods

Courses of fire shall be scored using the time penalty method. This method adds time to a competitor's score as follows:

11.5.1 Steel SHOOT targets left up: plus 30 seconds.

11.5.2 Steel NO-SHOOT targets hit or knocked down: plus 30 seconds.

- Any hit on a NO-SHOOT target—whether or not it falls—will result in a 30-second penalty. This applies to both reactive and non-reactive no-shoot targets.
- Any time the shooter's action causes the NO-SHOOT target to fall, the shooter will be assessed a 30-second penalty.

Note: Paper targets may be used on some stages of fire. These targets will be limited to the standard DOE TQ-15 or Belgian target.

Scoring of these paper targets will be as follows:

- TQ-15—Any hit printing inside the four (4) or five (5) ring of the body will count as a hit. Any bullet or hit printing in the silhouette outside the 4 or 5 ring, head, neck, or elsewhere on the silhouette or paper will be considered a miss. If the bullet cuts the line of the 4 ring but the main bullet print is outside the 4 ring, it will be counted as a hit.
- Belgian targets will use the printed scoring ring of the target. If a bullet prints inside the scoring ring, it will be counted as a hit. Any bullet printing on the target or paper outside of this ring will be considered a miss. If a failure drill is called for, a printed line will be added to the target from a standard template. All hits within this area will count as hits; all others (those outside this marked area) will be considered misses.
- Only the required number of rounds will be counted on paper targets. Any paper target without the required number of hits in the appropriate scoring area will be counted as a SHOOT target left up, per round, and will be assessed a 30-second penalty.
- After each team, all paper targets will be taped with clear tape. Before the next team, the RO for that stage will be responsible for ensuring that all holes have been taped. Paper targets will be replaced as needed.

11.5.3 Breaking the seal on the gas mask: plus 30 seconds for every time it is broken.

11.5.4 The filter falling off the gas mask: plus 30 seconds per shot.

11.5.5 If the "stop" plate is inadvertently shot during an event, a whistle blow will terminate the event and all targets left standing will be assessed 30-second penalties. If the competitor or team leader fails to shoot the stop plate, the competitor or team will be disqualified.

11.6 Score Verification, Challenges, and Protests

11.6.1 "Challenges" are differences of opinion—between the RO and the competitor—about the value of a shot or shots.

If the competitor disagrees with the RO's call, the competitor may challenge the score. The competitor will then provide a $5 challenge fee.

The RO will guard the target and summon the CRO, who will examine the target in question and make the final decision.

Challenges are not protestable.

11.6.2 "Protests" are claims that a procedure was applied inconsistently or incorrectly. The competitor has one (1) hour to deliver a written protest—with a protest fee of $100—to the protest officer. After reviewing the protest and this rulebook, the protest officer will take any action necessary and make the final decision.

11.6.3 After the RO has declared the "range clear," the competitor may accompany the RO to verify the scoring.

11.6.4 The RO may stipulate that the scoring process will begin while a competitor is actually completing a course of fire. In such cases, the competitor's delegate shall be entitled to accompany the scorekeeper to verify the scoring. Competitors shall be advised of this procedure during the stage briefing.

11.6.5 A competitor or delegate who fails to accompany the RO and verify every target during the scoring process will forfeit the right to challenge or protest the score.

11.6.6 Any objection to a score or scoring penalty shall be immediately challenged by the competitor or delegate with the RO.

During a scoring challenge, ***no one*** will interfere with the subject targets until the dispute has been settled. Exception: The RO may remove a disputed target from the course of fire to prevent any delay in the competition.

The CRO will be summoned and will make the final score determination.

11.7 Score Sheets

The elapsed time the competitor takes to complete the course of fire shall be recorded to not less than two (2) decimal places in the appropriate place on the sheet.

11.7.1 Before the RO and the competitor sign the competitor's score sheet, the RO shall ensure that all information is entered on it.

11.7.2 If score-sheet corrections are necessary, they shall be clearly entered on the original and other copies of the competitor's score sheets.

The competitor and the RO should initial any corrections.

11.7.3 Should a competitor refuse to sign or initial a score sheet, the matter shall be referred to the CRO. If the CRO is satisfied that the course of fire has been conducted and scored correctly, the CRO will sign and submit the score sheet.

11.7.4 A score sheet that has been signed by both a competitor and the RO shall be conclusive evidence that the course of fire has been completed and that the time, scores, and penalties attained by the competitor are accurate and uncontested.

The signed score sheet shall be deemed to be a definitive document and shall be changed ONLY to correct arithmetical errors or to add procedural penalties as described in Section 12.

11.7.5 If a score sheet is found to have insufficient or excess entries, or if the time has not been recorded, the competitor will be required to reshoot the course of fire.

11.7.6 In the event that a reshoot is impossible or not permissible for any reason, the following rule shall prevail:

11.7.6.1 If the time is missing, the competitor shall receive a zero score for that course of fire.

11.8 Scoring Responsibility

Individual competitors are responsible for the following:

- Maintaining an accurate record of their scores
- Verifying the lists posted by the stats officer

11.8.1 If a competitor detects an error in the results, he must notify the stats officer no later than one (1) hour after the results are posted.

If the notification is not filed within the time limit, the posted scores will stand.

11.9 Official Time

Only the timing device operated by the RO shall be used to record the time of a competitor. If a timing device proves to be faulty, a competitor whose attempt cannot be credited with an accurate time will be required to reshoot the stage. In the event of a failure of the primary timing device, an ARO will use a stop watch as a secondary method of time keeping.

Section 12 – Penalties

12.1 Procedural Penalties

Procedural penalties are applied where the competitor has failed to comply with the procedures specified in the stage briefing.

The RO imposing such procedural penalties shall determine the number of penalties and the reasons they were imposed. This information should be clearly recorded on the score sheet. A competitor who disputes the application or number of procedural penalties may appeal the decision to the CRO. If the dispute is not settled, the competitor may file a protest.

12.2 Firing Line Violation

If a competitor allows any part of his body to touch the ground beyond a fault line or charge line and fires shots while faulting, that competitor shall receive one procedural penalty for every shot fired while faulting.

When a competitor is engaging targets from the prone position, only the lower arms (below the elbow) may extend over the line. A penalty for each shot fired will be issued where a competitor faults a line in this manner.

There shall be no penalty when a competitor faults a line but does not fire any shots.

12.2.1 Where multiple penalties are assessed in the above cases, they shall ***not*** exceed the maximum number of scoring hits that the competitor can attain. For example, if a competitor gains an advantage while faulting a fault line or charge line where four (4) steel targets are visible, he shall receive a procedural penalty for each target knocked down.

12.2.2 If a competitor fails to comply with a procedure specified in the stage briefing, the competitor shall incur a single procedural penalty for each occurrence.

12.2.3 A competitor who fails to perform a mandatory reload shall incur one (1) procedural penalty for each shot fired after the required reload point and until a reload is performed.

12.2.4 In a Cooper tunnel, if a competitor disturbs one (1) or more pieces of the overhead material and the material falls, that competitor shall receive a procedural penalty for each piece of overhead material that falls.

12.2.5 Even if a course of fire stipulates strong or support hand only, a competitor will be required to use ***both*** hands to safely correct malfunctions, including any reloads necessary to help clear the malfunctions. A competitor will be issued one procedural for each of the following:

- Faults by touching the firearm with the other hand (except when necessary for safe correction of malfunctions as described above)
- Shots fired while using both hands or while using the "other" hand to support the shooting arm or wrist: one procedural per shot fired
- Shots fired while using the "other" hand to increase stability or stance, by placing it on a barricade, prop, or any other item: one procedural per shot fired
- Faults by using the other arm or hand to disengage the safety

12.2.6 When competitors are restricted by use of shooting boxes, any part of the body resting on top of the shooting box when a shot is fired will incur a procedural penalty for every shot fired. In general, once a competitor has left a shooting box, he may return to it and shoot at the targets as long as he can do so safely and as long as he has ***not*** commenced firing from any subsequent position. Nevertheless, specific course procedures may prohibit re-engagement, and a procedural penalty per shot fired will apply if re-engagement procedures are not followed.

12.2.7 Double-action handguns shall ***not*** be cocked to single-action mode before engaging targets.

12.3 Match Disqualifications

A match disqualification will be imposed on a competitor who commits a safety infraction or other prohibited activity.

When a match disqualification is issued, the RO shall ensure that the reasons for the disqualification, as well as the time and date, are clearly recorded on the competitor's score sheet. The match director and CRO must be notified immediately.

If an individual is disqualified for a safety violation, the "match" will be defined as the remainder of the competition.

12.4 Safety Infractions

A competitor who commits a safety infraction before posting of the final match results shall be disqualified. That competitor's scores shall be removed from the match scores.

Match and event disqualifications shall be issued for the following infractions (not an inclusive list):

12.4.1 Unauthorized Discharge

An "unauthorized discharge" is defined as a bullet passing through the barrel of a competitor's firearm when the competitor does ***not*** intend to fire the weapon.

12.4.2 Any shot that is fired outside the confines of either the backstop or side berms, or that strikes the ground within six (6) feet of the competitor, or that goes in any other direction deemed unsafe as specified in the stage briefing, shall be classified as an unauthorized discharge.

In the event of an unauthorized discharge, the RO shall stop the competitor as soon as possible.

12.4.3 Unsafe Firearm Handling

A "discharge" is defined as a bullet that has passed through the barrel of a competitor's firearm. The following discharges may be defined as unsafe firearm handling:

12.4.3.1 Any discharge of a firearm occurring prior to commencement; during loading, reloading, or unloading; or during remedial action in the case of a malfunction.

12.4.3.2 Any discharge of a firearm during movement, except while engaging targets.

12.4.3.3 Any of the discharges described above will cause the RO to prevent further action on the part of the competitor as soon as possible.

12.4.3.4 When it can be established that the cause of the discharge is due to the actual breakage of a part of the firearm and that the competitor has fulfilled all normal safety requirements, match disqualification will ***not*** be invoked. The competitor's scores for that stage shall be zero. The firearm must be immediately presented for inspection by the match armorer, who will inspect the firearm and carry out any tests necessary to establish that an actual breakage of a part caused the discharge. This immediate presentation for inspection is crucial. Competitors may ***not*** later protest a match disqualification for an accidental discharge due to the actual breakage of a part, if they failed to present the firearm for immediate inspection before leaving the course of fire.

12.4.3.5 In the event of a discharge after the RO's declaration "Gun Clear," the RO shall require the competitor to "unload and show clear" and ensure that the firearm is safe. No further action is required. In the event that the discharge was in an unsafe direction or as defined above, the regulations for this section shall apply.

12.4.3.6 Handling a firearm at any time except when in a designated safety area or on the firing line under the supervision of a range officer.

12.4.3.7 At any time during the course of fire, a competitor allows the muzzle of a firearm to break the 180-degree rule—whether or not the firearm is loaded.

12.4.3.8 Holstering or unholstering from any position other than standing.

12.4.3.9 Allowing the muzzle of a loaded firearm to point at any part of the competitor's body during a course of fire (i.e., "sweeping").

12.4.3.10 Allowing the muzzle of a loaded handgun to point rearward from a competitor's feet during drawing or re-holstering.

12.4.3.11 Failing to keep the finger outside the trigger guard while clearing a malfunction, or clearly lowering the firearm from aiming at targets. —Event disqualification.

12.4.3.12 Failing to keep the finger outside the trigger guard during loading or unloading. —Event disqualification.

12.4.3.13 Failing to keep the finger outside the trigger guard during movement, in accordance with section 10.9. —Event disqualification.

12.4.3.14 Holstering a loaded handgun in any of the following conditions —Event disqualification:

12.4.3.14.1 A single-action self-loading pistol with the safety not applied

12.4.3.14.2 A double-action or selective-action pistol with the hammer cocked and the safety not applied

12.4.3.14.3 A revolver with the hammer cocked

12.4.3.15 Retrieving a dropped handgun outside a course of fire.

12.5 Medical Emergencies

If any competition official has an indication that a competitor is in medical distress, that official will initiate the following process:

Team Event: The individual competitor showing medical distress will be removed as soon as possible. First aid will be administered, and medical assistance will be called. The RO will ensure that all weapons have been secured. If necessary, emergency range procedures will be instituted. The CRO and competition director will be notified as soon as practical. If the team is in a position to continue safely, the team leader will have the option of allowing the team to continue without the impaired competitor or being disqualified from the stage.

If a competition official believes that the team cannot continue safely, that official will call "cease fire."

If a "cease fire" occurs or the team leader chooses not to continue, the stage of fire will be scored as a disqualification for only that stage. This disqualification CANNOT be protested.

12.6 Dropped Weapons

12.6.1 If a competitor drops or loses a weapon at any time during the individual course of fire or while loading or unloading for that specific course of fire, the competitor will be disqualified for that event—whether or not the weapon is loaded.

12.7 Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Range officials shall have complete authority over all persons on the range. Disqualification from the competition will be invoked in the event of gross or repeated unsportsmanlike behavior. The CRO must be notified immediately.

Repeated violation of the rules of the range or stage briefing will be considered to be unsportsmanlike conduct.

12.8 Protest Process

12.8.1 Administration

Occasional disputes are inevitable in any competitive activity governed by rules. It is recognized that —at the more significant levels of competition— emotions run high, and the outcome is much more important to competitors. Nevertheless, effective match administration and planning will prevent most if not all disputes.

12.8.2 Access

Protests may be submitted for arbitration in accordance with the following sections for any matter except the actual scoring of targets. Bear in mind, however, that protests arising from a disqualification for a **safety** infraction will be accepted ONLY to determine whether or not the infraction (as described by the range official) was in fact unsafe. The commission of the infraction may ***not*** be protested.

12.8.3 Appeals

Initial decisions are made by the RO. If the complainant disagrees with a decision, the CRO for the stage or area in question should be summoned and asked to rule.

12.8.4 Retain Evidence

Complainants may inform the RO of their wish to present the case to the protest officer and may request that — pending the hearing — the officials retain all relevant documents.

12.8.5 Preparing the Protest

The complainant is responsible for the preparation and delivery of the written submission along with the appropriate fee. Both submission and fee must be submitted to the RO within the specified period of time.

12.8.6 Match Official's Duty

Any match official in receipt of a request for arbitration shall inform the RO without delay, noting the identities of all witnesses and officials involved and passing this information on to the CRO.

12.8.7 Competition Director's Duty

Upon receiving the RO's report of a protest, the competition director will turn over the information to the protest officer.

12.8.8 Protest Officer's Duty

The protest officer shall review all related documents and may also contact other competition officials before rendering the final decision.