



SAPRF  
RANGE OFFICER (RO) QUICK REFERANCE GUIDE  
AUGUST 2023

## **1. RANGE OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Range Officers are responsible for all aspects of the Course of Fire (CoF) they are running, and must have a complete understanding of the stage procedure on their assigned stage. Any questions regarding the rules or procedure of the stage must be addressed with the Match Director (MD) prior to the start of the match.

Range Officers must have a full understanding of the official SAPRF Rules and ensure the rules are applied consistently for every shooter.

Range Officers will provide a Stage Briefing prior to the start of each squad and all questions must be asked and answered prior to the start of the first competitor from each squad. Range Officers will point out each target to the shooters except on “blind” stages in which case target locations shall not be provided.

A Range Officers primary responsibility is first and foremost safety.

## **2. THE COURSE OF FIRE**

### **2.1 RIFLE READY CONDITIONS**

The ready condition for Rifles will normally be as stated below. However, in the event that a competitor fails to load the chamber when permitted by the written stage briefing, whether inadvertently or intentionally, the Range Officer must not take any action, as the competitor is always responsible for the handling of the rifle.

Rifles Loaded: magazine filled and fitted (if applicable), chamber empty and the action/bolt open.

Courses of fire may require ready conditions which are different to those stated above. In such cases, the required ready condition must be clearly stated in the written stage briefing.

When a written stage briefing requires that a competitor’s firearm and/or allied equipment be placed on a table or another surface prior to the Start Signal, they must be placed as stipulated in the written stage briefing.

This designates when, under the direct command of a Range Officer the rifle is prepared, made safe and held or placed as specified in the written stage briefing.

### **2.2 COMPETITOR READY CONDITIONS**

Unless specified in the written stage briefing, the competitor’s stance prior to the commencement of the Course Of Fire must be Port Arms; standing erect, with the rifle in the ready condition, held in both hands, stock touching the competitor at hip level, trigger guard downwards, muzzle pointing downrange and with the finger out of the trigger guard.

Unless otherwise stated in the written stage briefing holding the gun upside down is not acceptable.

A competitor who attempts or completes a Course Of Fire where an incorrect start position was used may be required by a Range Officer to reshoot the Course Of Fire.

Different stages may require the "ready position" to be prone, kneeling, sitting or as otherwise stated in the written stage briefing. However, the "ready condition" of the rifle stipulated here and the general outline of the "ready position" will prevail.

A Course Of Fire must never permit a competitor to start a stage with the rifle mounted into the shoulder and pointing towards targets.

The competitor must start the Course Of Fire with all required equipment on their person, off the ground. Any equipment 'left behind' after the start signal shall remain 'out of play' for the duration of the stage.

Should a 'Reshoot' (2.7) be required, the competitor will restart the stage with the same equipment that was used on the stage in the first attempt.

## 2.3 RANGE COMMUNICATION

The approved range commands and their sequence are as follows:

- **"Shooter do you understand the Course Of Fire?"** – The lack of any negative response from the competitor indicates that he fully understands the requirements of the Course Of Fire and is ready to proceed. If the competitor indicates that he requires clarity regarding the Course Of Fire, then the Range Officer may answer any questions prior to continuing.
- **"Make Ready"** (or **"Load and Make Ready"**) – This command signifies the start of "the Course Of Fire". Under the direct supervision of the Range Officer the competitor must face downrange, or in a safe direction as specified by the Range Officer, fit eye and ear protection, and prepare the firearm in accordance with the written stage briefing. The competitor must then assume the required start position. At this point, the Range Officer will proceed.
- Once the appropriate command has been given, the competitor must not move away from the start location prior to issuance of the Start Signal without the prior approval, and under the direct supervision, of the Range Officer. Violation will result in a warning for the first offense and may result in a Stage Disqualification or Match Disqualification for further offenses in the same match.
- **"Are You Ready?"** – The lack of any negative response from the competitor indicates that he is ready to proceed. If the competitor is not ready at this command, he must state "Not Ready". When the competitor is ready he should assume the required start position to indicate his readiness to the Range Officer.
- **"Standby"** – This command should be followed by the Start Signal within 1 to 4 seconds.
- **"Start Signal"** – The signal for the competitor to begin their attempt at the Course Of Fire. If a competitor fails to react to a Start Signal, for any reason, the Range Officer will confirm that the competitor is ready to attempt the Course Of Fire, and will resume the range
- In the event that a competitor inadvertently begins shooting prematurely (**"false start"**), the Range Officer will, as soon as possible, stop and restart the competitor once the Course Of Fire has been restored.
- A competitor who reacts to a Start Signal but, for any reason, does not continue their attempt at the Course Of Fire and 'Times Out' on the timing device operated by the Range Officer, will be given a zero score and zero time (if applicable) for that stage.

- During the Course Of Fire, the Range Officer, or Spotters will call 'Impact' to let a competitor know that the target that they engaged has been hit and awarded the point. Any other call indicating a hit should be avoided, as it may lead to confusion.
  - No other information may be provided to the competitor, by Range Officials, Spectators or other competitors alike, while a competitor is shooting the Course Of Fire, unless such information is provided for safety reasons.
  - At the Match Director's discretion, and after receiving National or Provincial Council permission; verbal assistance during the Course Of Fire may be allowed between team mates during specialty matches such as 3 Person Team, Pro-Am or Shooter Spotter matches.
  - **"Stop", or "Cease Fire"** – Any Range Officer assigned to a stage may issue this command at any time during the Course Of Fire. The competitor must immediately cease firing, stop moving and wait for further instructions from the Range Officer.
  - **"If You Are Finished, Unload And Show Clear"** – If the competitor has finished shooting, he must lower his rifle and present it for inspection by the Range Officer with the muzzle pointed downrange, fixed magazine empty or detachable magazine removed and chamber empty, action held or latched open.
  - **"Insert Chamber flag"** – If the gun proves to be clear, the competitor or Range Officer must then fully fit a chamber safety flag to ensure that the chamber is clear. The action can remain open or be partly closed.
  - If the gun does not prove to be clear, the Range Officer will resume the commands from **"Unload And Show Clear"**
  - Full compliance with the above signifies the end of the Course Of Fire. The competitor must then safely leave the Course Of Fire.
  - **"Range Is Clear", or "Range is Safe"** – Competitors or Match Personnel must not move forward of the firing line or final shooting location, or collect spent cases, or approach the competitor until this declaration is given by the Range Officer. Once the declaration is made, officials and competitors may move forward to score, reset props, barricades, targets, collect spent cases, etc.
- A competitor with a severe hearing disability may, subject to prior approval of the Range Master, be entitled to have the foregoing verbal Range Communications supplemented by visual and/or physical signals.
  - The recommended physical signals are taps on the competitor's weak side shoulder using a countdown protocol, namely 3 taps for "Are You Ready", 2 taps for "Standby" and 1 tap to coincide with the Start Signal.
  - There are no fixed range communications designated for use at the chronograph station or at an equipment compliance check (which may be conducted at a venue away from the shooting range). Competitors must not handle their firearms, or remove chamber safety flags, as the case may be, until the examiner asks for them to be passed to him, in accordance with his instructions.

## 2.4 LOADING, RELOADING OR UNLOADING DURING A COURSE OF FIRE

When loading, reloading or unloading during a Course Of Fire, the competitor's fingers must be visibly outside the trigger guard, and the firearm must be pointed safely downrange or in another safe direction authorized by a Range Officer.

## 2.5 MOVEMENT

Except when the competitor is actually aiming or shooting at targets, all movement must be accomplished with the fingers visibly outside the trigger guard and the Bolt open, or in the case of a Semi-Automatic Rifle, the external safety should be applied. The firearm must be pointed in a safe direction. "Movement" is defined as, but not limited to, any of the actions below:

- Transitioning to a target.
- Taking more than one step in any direction.
- Changing shooting position (e.g. from standing to kneeling, from seated to standing etc.).
- Changing the location of the rifle on a Barricade, Prop, or Natural obstacle.

## 2.6 ASSISTANCE OR INTERFERENCE

- No assistance of any kind can be given to a competitor during a Course Of Fire, except that any Range Officer assigned to a stage may issue safety warnings to a competitor at any time. Such warnings will not be grounds for the competitor to be awarded a reshoot.
- Competitors confined to wheelchairs or similar devices may be given special dispensation by the Match Director in respect of mobility assistance.
- **Any person providing assistance to a competitor during a Course Of Fire without the prior approval of a Range Officer (and the competitor receiving such assistance) may, at the discretion of a Range Officer, be subject to a verbal warning. In the case of repeated offenses, the Match Director may, at his discretion, issue a Stage or Match Disqualification.**
- Any person verbally or otherwise interfering with a competitor during his attempt at a Course Of Fire may be subject to Disqualification for un-sportsmanship like behaviour. If the Range Officer believes that the interference significantly affected the competitor, he must report the incident to the Match Director, who may, at his discretion, offer the affected competitor a reshoot.
- In the event that inadvertent contact with the Range Officer or another external influence has interfered with the competitor during a Course Of Fire, the Range Officer may offer the competitor a reshoot of the Course Of Fire. The competitor must accept or decline the offer prior to seeing either the score or the time (if applicable) from the initial attempt. However, any safety infraction committed, by the competitor, during any such interference will still be penalised.

## 2.7 RESHOOTS

- A competitor may request a reshoot if they believe that one is warranted. The competitor will have a period of two (2) minutes to explain his grievance to the Range Officer, who may make the decision to allow the reshoot. If the competitor receives an unfavourable decision, or the Range Officer is unable to make a decision, then the competitor may appeal to the Match Director.
- A reshoot may be requested under the following circumstances:
  - Range Failure ( Prop or Target)
  - Safety Equipment failure ( i.e. Hearing protection falling off)
- A reshoot will not be warranted for equipment failure, or failure to adhere to the course of fire.

- The competitor will have fifteen (15) minutes to explain his grievance to the Match Director, who shall then make a decision.
- There are two types of reshoots:
  - A Full Reshoot means the competitor will run the entire Course Of Fire over from start to finish.
  - A Partial Reshoot means the competitor is placed in the exact same position they were in at the time of the stoppage and will have the exact amount of time remaining at the time of the stoppage. If either the position or the time remaining cannot be determined, the competitor must take a full reshoot.
- Once a competitor reshoots a stage, they must take the reshoot score.

## 2.8 SIGHT PICTURES, DRY FIRING AND COURSE INSPECTION

Competitors are prohibited from taking a sight picture with a loaded firearm prior to the Start Signal. Violation will result in a warning for the first occurrence, and a Stage Disqualification for each occurrence thereafter.

If Match Organizers also prohibit taking a sight picture with an unloaded firearm prior to the Start Signal, competitors must be advised in the written stage briefing.

When permitted, competitors taking a sight picture with an unloaded firearm prior to the Start Signal must only do so on a single target, to verify that their sights are prepared as required. Competitors may not test a target sequence or a shooting position while taking a sight picture.

- Competitors may only use a Binocular, Monocular, Rangefinder, or Spotting Scope to find and range targets on a Course Of Fire. Such optics may be mounted on a tripod or other suitable stability device. Rifle scopes may not be used.
- Competitors are prohibited from using any equipment or any part of a real firearm including any accessories thereof etc., except for their own hands, while conducting their inspection ("walkthrough") of a Course Of Fire.
- No person is permitted to enter or move through a Course Of Fire without the prior approval of a Range Officer assigned to that Course Of Fire, or the Match Director.
- **Any violations of the above will result in a warning for the first occurrence, and a Stage Disqualification for each occurrence thereafter.**

## 3. WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

### 3.1 WARNINGS & DISQUALIFICATIONS – GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. A competitor who commits a safety infraction or any other prohibited activity during a match and is disqualified from the match; will be prohibited from attempting any remaining courses of fire regardless of the schedule or physical layout of the match, pending the verdict of any appeal submitted.
2. When any Warning or Stage / Match disqualification is issued, the Range Officer must record the reasons for the sanction, and the time and date of the incident, on the competitor's score sheet. In the case of Stage or Match Disqualification, the Match Director must be notified as soon as possible.

3. Where a competitor is Disqualified from a match, the Match Director must notify the competitor's Provincial Management Committee of such Disqualification, including the circumstances surrounding such Disqualification. In the case of National matches, the Match Director must similarly notify the National Executive Committee.

Such Disqualification may carry additional sanctions should the competitor's Provincial, National or IPRF Council warrant that they are necessary.

Scores for a competitor who has received a Disqualification must not be deleted from match results, and match results must not be declared final by the Match Director; until such time as the match is concluded, or if, once the match has been concluded and an appeal has been lodged, then until such time as the appeal has reached a conclusion.

Scores for a competitor who has completed a pre-match or main match without a disqualification will not be affected by a disqualification received while that competitor is participating in a Shoot-Off or other side match.

## 3.2 NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE

Negligent Discharges (ND's) are taken very seriously.

Any Negligent Discharge will result in an immediate Match Disqualification, and no further part may be taken by the competitor in the match.

A competitor who causes a negligent discharge must be stopped by a Range Officer as soon as possible. A negligent discharge is defined as follows:

- A shot, which travels over a backstop, a berm or in any other direction, specified in the written stage briefing by the Match Director as being unsafe.
- A shot which occurs while actually loading, reloading or unloading a firearm. A shot which occurs during remedial action in the case of a malfunction.
- A shot which occurs while transferring a rifle between hands.
- A shot which occurs during movement or transitioning between targets.
- A shot which occurs when the shooter is not 'on glass' with an established sight picture.
- A shot which impacts anything other than a specified target under 75m from the shooting position.
- A shot which occurs during a cease fire period.

If it can be established that the cause of the discharge is due to a broken or defective part of the firearm, the competitor has not committed any safety infraction in this Section, and a disqualification will not be invoked, but the competitor's scores for that stage will be zero.

The firearm must be immediately presented for inspection to the Match Director or his delegate, who will inspect the firearm and carry out any tests necessary to establish that a broken or defective part caused the discharge. A competitor may not later appeal a disqualification for an accidental discharge due to a broken or defective part if they fail to present the firearm for inspection prior to leaving the Course Of Fire.

Unless specified below, and at the discretion of the Match Director who, when the situation warrants, may warrant a more severe penalty, the following offenses shall carry the following sanctions which shall all be recorded on the score sheet:

- First offense: Recorded Verbal warning.
- Second offense: Stage Disqualification.
- Third offense: Match Disqualification.

### 3.3 UNSAFE GUN HANDLING

Examples of unsafe gun handling include, but are not limited to:

- Handling a rifle, without an Empty Chamber Indicator, at any time except when in a designated Safety Area, or elsewhere deemed safe by a Range Officer, or when under the supervision of, and in response to a direct command issued by, a Range Officer.
- Prematurely Discharging a shot during a Course Of Fire, while 'on glass' within the Safe Angle of Fire.
- Allowing the muzzle of a rifle to point at any part of the competitor's, or any other person's body during a Course Of Fire (i.e. sweeping or flagging).
- If the bolt is closed, this is considered a serious safety violation, and will result in an immediate Match Disqualification.
- Failure to use an Empty Chamber Indicator / Flag when not competing.
- Failure to keep the finger outside the trigger guard during movement or transitioning to targets.
- Failure to keep the finger outside the trigger guard while clearing a malfunction where the competitor clearly moves the firearm away from aiming at targets.
- Failure to keep the finger outside the trigger guard during loading, reloading, or unloading.
- Allowing the muzzle of a firearm to point outside of the specific safe angles of fire; during a Course Of Fire, or while the firearm is loaded, or while loading or unloading, or while under direct Range Officers supervision.

Unsafe gun handling :

- First offense: Stage Disqualification.
- Second offense: Match Disqualification.

**If at any time during the Course Of Fire, a competitor drops his firearm or causes it to fall, loaded or not, or fails to maintain Positive Control of a loaded or unloaded firearm during a Course Of Fire, they will receive a Stage Disqualification. A second offense will result in a Match Disqualification. Should the firearm also point outside of the specific safe angles of fire, then the competitor will receive a Match Disqualification.**

Note that a competitor who, for any reason during a Course Of Fire, safely and intentionally places the firearm on the ground or other stable object will not be disqualified provided:

- The competitor maintains constant physical contact with the firearm, until it is placed firmly and securely on the ground or another stable object; and
- The firearm is in the ready condition as specified; or
- The firearm is unloaded and the action is open.



- Dropped firearms must always be retrieved by a Range Officer who will, after checking and/or clearing the firearm, return it to the competitor in a safe condition. **Dropping an unloaded firearm or causing it to fall outside of a Course Of Fire is not an infraction.**
- A competitor who retrieves a dropped firearm will receive a Match Disqualification. Having a loaded firearm other than when specifically authorized by a Range Officer.
- A competitor will be exempt from this rule when operating the trigger to dry fire or to release the action and/or drop the hammer while making ready prior to the Start Signal, or when 'Making Safe' at the end of a Course Of Fire. **In the event that the gun discharges during this operation Disqualification will still apply.**
- Using prohibited and/or unsafe ammunition.
- Engaging a target with significantly incorrect dope, or 'dialling' a revolution more than intended for any target resulting in an impact that is unsafe.
- If the round can potentially be determined to have travelled over a berm or backstop, this is considered a serious safety violation, and will result in an immediate Match Disqualification.