

2A. FIRING POINT PROCEDURE

The RCO

The Range Conducting Officer is at least an NRA qualified person and is in charge of and responsible for, the safety of everyone on and around the range, including the butts. His/her instructions are to be obeyed. The RCO runs the firing point as well as being alert to safety around the range. Safety staff may help the RCO. The RCO has authority to discipline anyone present for infringement of the rules, up to and including dismissal from the range.

The Butt Officer

The Butt Officer is in charge of the butts. Targets will be hoisted to start the detail or lowered to finish it, ONLY on the butt officer's instruction (even if you can hear what is happening by overhearing radio or phone messages). Markers do not leave the butts until permitted to by the butt officer, who in turn will have been instructed by the RCO.

Words of Command

Typical words of command you may hear at the beginning of a detail are:

'The red flag is down, you may put rifles on the firing point'

'Message 1 has been passed to the butts. You may load and go on when your targets appear.'

At the end of a detail you might typically hear:

'All rifles off the firing point'

(To the butts: 'red flag up')

'The red flag is up – change over'

However, if visiting an unfamiliar range, if necessary, familiarise yourself with their procedure and LISTEN. NEVER ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT THE RCO / BUTT OFFICER IS GOING TO SAY NEXT.

Emergency 'STOP'

If there is an emergency, you will hear 'STOP, STOP, STOP'. On hearing this, open the bolt, leave the rifle down and await further instructions from the RCO.

(Anyone who sees a potential emergency (something which could cause injury, death or serious damage) may give the emergency 'STOP' and immediately report to the RCO what it is they have seen).

Target Rifle / F Class Rifle

Load/Unload

Firearms are only to be loaded on the instructions of the RCO. If the RCO instructs 'Unload', firearms are to be unloaded immediately. Ensure your ammunition is clean, dry and undamaged. When permitted to load, a round is placed in the chamber and, with the rifle pointed horizontally at the butts, the bolt is closed.

To unload, keep the rifle horizontal and open the bolt. Remove the empty case if necessary.

The range is designed to take care of slight inadvertent deviations from the horizontal, up to 70 mils (4°) but the rule is – on the load and unload, keep the rifle horizontal.

Inspection or 'Proving'

Before leaving the firing point, your rifle must be inspected by someone else to ensure it is safe. This is usually your firing partner. You are to remove the bolt, allow them to look down the barrel and when declared clear, insert the breech flag. In this country, you may then reinsert the bolt, but if you go to another province /country, check the local procedure. If you are firing alone, you must get someone else (e.g. RCO or safety staff) to carry out the above procedure. (The few recent reported incidents on ranges have mostly been due to this not having been done properly).

Firing Order and Squadding Cards

On a target rifle firing point, you will normally be squadded with one or two other firers. The normal practice is that the right hand firer fires first, then centre, then left (in a competition, you may incur a penalty if you fire out of turn). If you are in a competition, you will mark each others squadding cards. The normal practice is to swap to the right i.e. left gives to the middle, middle to right and right to left. On a firing point with three firers, this means that your order of actions is: fire - mark a card - prepare to fire. At the end of the detail, you will clear (see above) the rifle of the firer for whom you marked, then sign their card. The firer then signs to agree with you scoring.

Messages

Most normal instructions questions and information can be passed between butts and firing point by a series of messages. Shooters need to memorise the most used messages. The message list has thirteen messages but messages 6, 8 and 13 do not apply to Target Rifle. Those most often used are, in rough order 1, 10, 4, 5 and 7. The list of messages will be found at the end of the 'Butt Marking' document.