

SOUTH AFRICAN BISLEY UNION

RANGE OFFICERS' MANUAL



FOREWORD

The changing conditions in our country and in particular the sporting world are precedent to this document, and in particular the effect of the changes on our sport, Bisley. The sport was primarily governed by military rules and regulations as a result of the fact that the majority of shottists were previously from the ranks of the Defence Force. The ranges in use are largely Defence Force ranges. The extent of the involvement of the Defence Force has decreased. We are transforming into a privately controlled, representative sporting body which has to conform to set standards. The safety aspect of our sport should be our primary concern/objective and one of the ways to achieve this end, is to have qualified Range Officers who are specifically qualified for the sport of Bisley.

Chairman

SABU

BACKGROUND

USE OF RANGES

- 1 Civilian clubs and provinces affiliated to SABU may make use of SANDF controlled ranges. The only condition is that the program of such range can accommodate said use.

RESTRICTIONS

- 2 Use of the range is conditional as long as the requirements in terms of Standing Range Orders are met. Particular attention must be paid to the following:
 - a Only weapons approved for use on a particular range may be used;
 - b The safety precautions on the range are to the same standard as required by the SANDF;
 - c Any shooting exercise or competition arranged by SABU or its affiliated provinces and clubs is controlled by a trained and registered Range Officer.

RANGE OFFICERS COURSE

PURPOSE

- 3 The purpose of the SABU Range Officer's Course is to enable suitable persons to qualify as civilian (SABU) Range Officers with specific attention to the following:
 - a Compliance with and implementation of adequate safety measures;
 - b Use of correct procedures on SANDF property and thereby promoting good relations with the SANDF;
 - c Maintenance of discipline on the range;
 - d Acceptance of responsibility during shooting exercises;
 - e Development of general standards for use of ranges by SABU.

REQUIREMENTS

- 4 The Range Officer is in control of and assumes responsibility for everything that takes place on the range, and must therefore be a competent, well-informed individual. The course is structured to test the knowledge and competency of applicants as well as providing the necessary information and rules.
- 5 Upon successful completion of the required examination, the candidate will be certified as an Assistant Range Officer. He will be qualify as a Range Officer once his physical competencies are tested. Such certificate will be valid for a period of 6 years.
- 6 Minimum requirements for applicants are:
 - a General shooting experience;
 - b Preferably had experience as an Assistant Range Officer at the applicants own club;
 - c Applicants should be nominated by the secretary of their own club or province as being suitable for such qualification.

EXTENT

- 7 This manual provides rules for the safe handling of shooting exercises by SABU and its affiliated provinces and clubs on SANDF ranges. It is also the factual basis of the Range Officers Course and guidelines for procedures which must be followed.
- 8 Although this manual is compiled specifically in respect of SANDF ranges, it can be adapted for use on any range where required.

LAYOUT OF THE MANUAL

- 9 This manual consists of the following chapters:
 - a **Chapter 1 : Range Management.** General information regarding the management of shooting exercises and competitions.
 - b **Chapter 2 : Range Activities.** Rules for the conducting of safe shooting exercises on the range.
 - c **Chapter 3 : Firearm Safety Procedures.** Implementation of safety procedures necessary for the safe use and handling of firearms.

CHAPTER 1 : RANGE MANAGEMENT

GENERAL

- 1 No shooting activities can be completely guaranteed as safe. The planning, execution and supervision of shooting activities must therefore be carried out by qualified individuals to ensure the safety of participants.
- 2 Adequate safety can be achieved by the following :
 - a A clearly defined danger zone;
 - b Sufficient control by the person in charge of the shooting event (Range Officer), and where applicable, his safety officers;
 - c Integrity of individual shottists for the safe handling of their firearms.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

- 3 The Range Officer is at all times in control of persons on the firing point and must ensure that shooting activities are conducted safely. He is in control of the firing point and may not participate in any other activities – i.e. **the Range Officer may not participate in the shoot whilst he is on duty.**

Note: it is recommended that the Range Officer is easily identified by wearing a T-shirt or special Bib.

- 4 The Range Officer's primary responsibility is to ensure that the range is safely utilized. He must be familiar with the shooting program and firearms used. He should be well acquainted with the SABU rules and regulations as well as the Range Orders.

RANGE ORDERS

GENERAL

- 5 There are two kinds of orders, namely:
 - a **Range Standing Orders** : Covers the general rules and regulations of the range;
 - b **Range Orders** : These are with regard to the rules and regulations of a specific competition within the guidelines of the Range Standing Orders.

PURPOSE

- 6 Range orders are specifically written for a range to ensure that:
 - a All precautionary measures are specified to prevent accidents or injury to shottists, range personnel and the public outside of the range;
 - b Guidelines are provided for individuals not familiar with the range facilities;
 - c The danger zone is specified.

RESPONSIBILITY OF RANGE OFFICER

- 7 The Range Officer must be familiar with the Range Orders of the specific range before accepting responsibility for shooting activities.
- 8 The Range Officer must inform all participants of the relevant rules and regulations contained in the Range Orders.

GENERAL SAFETY

FLAGS

- 9 **General:** Red flags are used to indicate danger.
- 10 **Range Boundary Flags:** Warning flags are positioned on the boundaries of the range to inform participants, visitors and the public outside the range that the range is in use.
- 11 A **red flag** in the butt will indicate that the range is unsafe.

EAR PROTECTION

- 12 All individuals in close proximity to the firing point must have suitable ear protection.
- 13 Range Officers must consider the safety of spectators, and where necessary reprimand them.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

- 14 The SANDF (SANMB) no longer provides general medical services in respect of shooting activities.
- 15 If the Range Standing Orders stipulate that medical support is available on the range, arrangements can be made with the local medical command regarding compensation for such services and support if necessary.
- 16 If no arrangements with the SANDF exist, or the SANDF is unable to provide medical support services, the responsible province/club must provide:
 - a A First Aid kit;
 - b A suitably qualified individual to administer first aid;
 - c An ambulance/vehicle on standby.

CHAPTER 2 : RANGE ACTIVITIES

GENERAL

- 1 To conduct a shooting exercise safely, certain basic requirements must be met. This chapter covers the basic requirements.

DANGER ZONE

- 2 The danger zone of the entire shooting range is contained in the Range Standing Order. It stipulates the height of the backstop, the position of the safety boundaries, etc. The danger zone referred to above is applicable to the actual range being used for the shooting exercise being carried out at the present time.
- 3 Participants and visitors must be told which areas are off limits before commencement of the shooting exercise.
- 4 Any object, human, animal or otherwise appearing in the off limits area will cause all activities to be terminated immediately.

PREPARATION

- 5 During preparations for a shooting exercise the range should be physically inspected and the following established:
 - a Facilities available on the range;
 - b The targets required, and the individual responsible for the placing on the range and removal thereof;
 - c Access route to butt and target store;
 - d Determine the danger zone;
 - e Determine range times for shooting activities;
 - f Any other relevant factors.

STARTING PROCEDURE

- 6 The Range Officer should report to the range caretaker or controller on the day of the shoot.
- 7 The Range Officer must be satisfied that the following are in place:
 - a Condition of the butt;
 - b Unhindered movement of the target frames;
 - c The firing point is clear and free of obstruction.
- 8 If there are any objects or problems that could affect the safety of participants or spectators, the range may not be used.
- 9 The range may be declared open (safe) if there are no problems related to safety.

INFORMATION

- 10 Before the shoot can commence, the Range Officer must inform the participants and visitors of the following:
 - a The danger zone;
 - b Safety regulations (as contained in Chapter 3);
 - c Sequence of events. (Shooting program)

RED FLAG IN THE BUTT

- 11 A red flag in the butt will be used to indicate to the firing point that the range is unsafe.
- 12 Only the Range Officer may issue the command to raise or lower the butt flag.
- 13 Detail of the procedure regarding the use of the red flag is contained in Chapter 3.
- 14 The only time the red flag in the butt may be raised without the Range Officer's command, is when the butt officer loses communication with the Range Officer on the firing point (see Communication).

COMMUNICATION

- 15 There are two kinds of communication on the shooting range; namely, firing point to butt, and Range Officer to firing point.
 - a The Range Officer must be satisfied that communication between the firing point and the butt is adequate, and that a contingency plan exists should communications fail.
 - b The communication between the Range Officer and firing point must be clear and any command by the Range Officer must be audible to all participants.

Note: It is proposed that megaphones are used.

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

- 16 The procedures during a breakdown in communication are as follows:
 - a Firing point to butt: The Range Officer should restore communications by sending a delegate to the butt on his behalf. During this procedure shooting shall cease and firearms made safe.
 - b Butt to firing point: Should the Butt Officer lose communication with the firing point, the targets must be pulled halfway down, and the red flag raised. The Range Officer will, as described in "a" commence restoring communication.

MESSAGE PROCEDURE

- 17 Communication between firing point and the butt must be clear and concise and it is proposed that messages as contained in the SABU Rule Book are used during shooting activities.

CEASE FIRE

- 18 The Range Officer shall give the command "Cease Fire" under the following circumstances:

- a Infringement of the danger zone;
- b Communication breakdown;
- c Any other reason that could influence the safety of participants, markers, range personnel, namely:
 - (1) Broken targets;
 - (2) Broken target frames;
 - (3) Ammunition problems;
 - (4) Markers on strike.
 - (5) Anything else which in the opinion of the range officer constitutes a threat to safety

ACCESS TO FIRING POINT

- 19 Only the following persons have access to the firing point during a specific shooting match, namely:
 - a Shottists;
 - b Coaches (team shooting);
 - c Scorer Keepers (team and string shooting);
 - d Team officials;
 - e Range Officer and Assistant Range Officers/Safety Officers.
- 20 All shottists awaiting their turn to participate as well as spectators shall wait ten (10) meters behind the firing point.
- 21 Vehicles of Range Personnel shall be parked twenty five (25) metres behind the firing point.
- 22 The vehicles of participants and spectators shall be parked fifty (50) metres behind the firing point in line with the wind flags.
- 23 Only shottists with medical disabilities, with the permission of the Range Officer, may park at a distance less than fifty (50) metres.

BUTT PROCEDURE

- 24 Control: The Range Officer has control over the butt via a competent Butt Officer.
- 25 The Butt Officer is responsible to the Range Officer for safety in the butt. Safety precautions as contained in the Range Standing Orders apply.
- 26 The Butt Officer may not act as a marker, but must be free to perform his duties.
- 27 The Butt Officer must be familiar with the “Red Flag” procedures.

CLOSURE OF RANGE

- 28 At the end of the day’s shooting activities, the Range Officer must ensure that the range is neat and tidy.
- 29 Range Officer should report back to range caretaker/responsible official.

CHAPTER 3 : FIREARM SAFETY PROCEDURES

GENERAL SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Shooting, firearm and ammunition related accidents caused by negligence, irresponsibility or non-compliance with safety measures, lead to loss of personnel and life. This is totally unacceptable and counter-productive.
- 2 The image of Bisley shooting in South Africa has a good track record and shooting accidents can cause unnecessary harm to the sport. Shooting accidents are not only unacceptable, but all efforts and methods at our disposal should be actively engaged to ensure safe shooting competitions and environment.
- 3 The safety instructions, procedures, precautions and drills are laid down in SALO GS 3/77: Vol VII. This document is prescriptive during training, exercises and shooting competitions.

ON FIRING POINT

- 4 **No shooting equipment** is allowed on the firing point before the order “Prepare” is given.
- 5 No shottist may take up the firing position or dry fire a firearm before the order “Range Safe” is given.
- 6 Firearms may only be loaded when the “Range Safe” order is given by the Chief Range Officer.
- 7 Range Officers must concentrate on the activities on the firing point.
- 8 During any shooting exercise ear protection must be worn on the firing point.

BEHIND FIRING POINT

- 9 The bolt is always removed from the rifle when not on the firing point (Rule 21.1). It is the responsibility of the shottist’s score keeper to ensure that the shottist removes the bolt from the rifle before leaving the firing point.
- 10 Shottists, excluding shottists busy on the firing point, or persons acting as score keepers in the case of string shooting, must remain ten (10) metres behind the firing point until it is their turn to shoot.
- 11 All vehicles must be parked behind the line indicated by the Chief Range Officer (usually fifty metres) except:
 - a Control vehicles;
 - b Signal vehicles;
 - c Where medical certificates have been presented.

INCIDENTS

- 12 An incident is an undesirable event which possibly or usually may result in a loss. The following may be considered undesirable events:
 - a Negligent discharge of firearms;

- b Unauthorized alterations to firearms;
- c Neglecting to make firearm safe at the end of a shoot;
- d The scorer neglecting to declare or ensure that the shottist for whom they have scored, has made safe;
- e The specifications for reloading ammunition have not been adhered to;
- f The firearm used has not been proofed;
- g The prescribed procedures for misfire of rifle/ammunition have not been followed.

EXECUTION

- 13 General outline. Safety measures should be planned and implemented for all shooting exercises, training and competitions.
- a Safety is the responsibility of the club management who will be held accountable.
 - b Safety is a compulsory consideration in all shooting exercises, training and competitions.
 - c Safety plans must be in writing to avoid any confusion or misunderstandings.
 - d Safety should be co-ordinated at the highest level.
- 14 Expertise and competency. The safety measures, instruction procedures and drills laid down in this document, are based on the assumption that the executors thereof:
- a Are trained to the specific level and system in which they function;
 - b Apply prescribed doctrines and drills;
 - c Are proficient at handling firearms and ammunition and their use.
- 15 Evaluation and control. Range committees should constantly evaluate safety and control the correct implementation thereof.
- a Instant corrective action is compulsory in any situation which does not comply with safety norms and standards;
 - b Control requires the personal participation of the range committee.
- 16 Safety measures : Instruction, Procedure and Drill. Safety instructions contained in SALO GS 3/77 : Vol VII Leaflet 2, must be taken into account during general safety planning, training and execution of shooting exercises and action during incidents on ranges. The compilation of this document is based on the above.
- 17 The stipulations of said SALO is legally enforceable upon all members of SABU for competitions and exercises carried out on SANDF controlled shooting ranges.
- 18 This document encompasses prescribed safety measures during Bisley activities. It is mainly aimed at the responsibilities of the Range Officer, range committee, training personnel and members involved with all facets of training and competitions.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF RANGE OFFICER

- 19 Safety is a command and Range Officers function (control function). Range Officers on all levels are responsible for the continued adherence to safety regulations during training and competitions as prescribed in this document.

- 20 Verbal Commands. The Range Officer must give clear verbal commands with regard to the particulars of the exercise/competition, the safety procedures, and declare the range safe before commencing fire. Action to be taken in the event of misfires must also be stated.
- 21 During shooting exercise/competition:
- a Firearms may only be discharged once the range has been declared safe by the Range Officer and the order to commence fire given;
 - b Firearms may only be fired at the targets and butt stop.
- 22 During an interruption of shooting: Should a shoot for any reason be interrupted by the Range Officer, the shottist must –
- a Remove rifle from shoulder;
 - b Open the rifle bolt;
 - c Remove all ammunition from the rifle;
 - d Declare the rifle safe to his score keeper;
 - e Keep the rifle pointing downrange toward the butt stop.
- 23 Action in the event of misfires. If a “hang-fire” should occur, the procedure as prescribed must be followed.
- 24 Handling of Ammunition.
- a Ammunition to be issued must be held at a central point behind the firing point.
 - b Only the responsible appointee or his deputy may issue ammunition.
 - c Ammunition must be thoroughly examined for any defects and controls in respect of lot numbers verified before issuing ammunition to members.
 - d No individual may smoke within ten (10) metres of the ammunition holding point.
- 25 Hand loaded ammunition. The era entered by South Africa of introducing use of hand loaded ammunition means that the responsibility and safety in respect of ammunition depends on:
- a The quality and condition of the brass cases;
 - b The limits of the propellant charge;
 - c The quality of the primers;
 - d The conscientiousness of the shottist and degree of accuracy/precision used during reloading ammunition.

PROCEDURE

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

- 26 The procedure to be followed during individual competitions as contained in Rule 23 of SABU is briefly summarized:
- a No equipment may be placed on the firing point before the Range Officer gives the order “Prepare/Maak Gereed”;

- b After the order shottists may move forward and prepare for shooting. Targets will be in the half-raised position, and the red flag raised;
- c When shottists on the firing point have exchanged score cards and unpacked their equipment the Range Officer shall order the red flag to be lowered, and issue the order “Range is safe, when targets appear you may continue/Baan is veilig, as die skywe verskyn mag u aangaan”;
- d Before the order is given no shottist may take up the prone/shooting position to select rings for his sights or to dry fire at the targets;
- e At the end of the shoot, the onus is on the score keeper of each shottist to confirm to the Range Officer, that the shottist’s rifle is safe;
- f The score keeper must physically confirm the safety of the shottist’s rifle and not accept the shottist’s word only.

Note: It is the considered opinion of the Rules Committee that range safety is enhanced when the bolt of the rifle is closed when the rifle is in the horizontal position pointing downrange.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

- 27 In principle, the procedure is the same for the first shottist of each team as it is in individual competitions.
- 28 The next shottist, and those following, may unpack their equipment, prepare, take up the prone shooting position and dry fire their rifles.
- 29 It is the responsibility of the coach and the scorer to ensure that safety precautions are adhered to.
- 30 The succession of shottists must be in a safe orderly fashion in order that fellow competitors are not disadvantaged.

STRING SHOOTING

- 31 The same principles apply to the first shottist of the string as in commencement of competition.
- 32 The allocated score keeper is responsible for the safety of the shottist’s firearm.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED FOR MISFIRES/HANG-FIRES

- 33 The reason for following this procedure is because a “misfire” can become a “hang-fire”. A “hang-fire” is a “misfire” where ignition of the powder charge occurs after a short delay. This delay can be a moment or a couple of seconds after the firing pin strikes the primer. If the shottist fails to follow adequate safety measures, the consequences may be tragic.
- 34 Although the safety precautions for such an event can be cumbersome and disruptive for fellow shottists during a shooting exercise, it is in the interests of the shottist, fellow shottists and other persons present that they are carried out properly.

DESCRIPTION OF “MISFIRES” AND “HANG-FIRES”

- 35 For purposes of this procedure a “misfire” is **any event in which a shottist has chambered a round (or thinks he has done so), pulled the trigger, and the round has not fired.**

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN BOTH INSTANCES

- 36 The shottist must inform his scorer immediately, who in turn shall inform the Range Officer. **No-one may touch the bolt of the rifle.**
- 37 The Range Officer removes from the firing point all shottists and range personnel behind the shottists, and warns shottists to the left and right of the target.
- 38 The shottist must keep the muzzle of his rifle pointed downrange to the target for 60 seconds, with his body positioned out of line with his bolt, should the round discharge forcing the bolt backwards.
- 39 After 60 seconds the rifle should be carefully placed, muzzle downrange pointing at the targets, with the loading port facing a shooting bag or box.
- 40 The bolt may now be carefully opened, keeping hands, fingers and other body parts clear of the backward trajectory of the bolt:
 - a Firstly, the bolt must be firmly tapped down;
 - b If the shot does not go off, open the bolt with fingers placed in front of the bolt.
- 41 If the cartridge is removed safely, it should be wrapped in a towel and removed from the firing point by the Range Officer, whereafter it will be inspected and disposed of by a qualified person.
- 42 *From the time that the shottist informs the scorekeeper of the “misfire”, the shot is declared void.*
- 43 The shottist may resume his position and continue shooting the exercise/competition. If the shottist was using issued ammunition, the Range Officer should replace such round. **The shottist may not change his position in the two/three shottist sequence.**
- 44 Should the problem reoccur in the same exercise/competition, the shottist should stand back and resume shooting when all the other shottists on his target have finished shooting.
- 45 The shottist is not entitled to additional proof shots when he re-commences shooting, see rules 22.1.2; 22.1.3; 23.15; 23.16 and 23.17. After the competition the Technical Committee – (in the case of hand loaded ammunition) – may inspect the rifle to establish any malfunction.
- 46 Shooters are also referred to rule 21.3.