



**Thurmont Conservation & Sportsman Club
Thurmont, Maryland**

**An Orientation for New Shooters at Thurmont IDPA
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by Cody Claxton (IDPA Certified Safety Officer),

Portions by Chip Hammond (N.R.A. Certified Pistol Instructor and I.D.P.A. Certified Safety Officer)

(Disclaimer: This course is not an NRA sanctioned course, nor an official IDPA publication. Many of the peripheral rules are proprietary to TCSC IDPA)

1. Welcome

The purpose of this document is to provide an orientation to experienced pistol shooters so that they have the working knowledge to shoot IDPA matches at Thurmont Conservation & Sportsmen's Club. This is NOT a comprehensive IDPA training. Persons taking this orientation should have taken a formal competition shooting class, be an experienced USPSA shooter of D class or better, be an experienced IDPA shooter of Marksman or better, or have an extensive resume of shooting that would be equivalent.

TCSC has 9 pistol bays available for IDPA matches. It is important to understand the range-specific rules for your protection, other participants protection and range protection. Some shooting bays have one berm downrange and concrete walls on both sides. Some have two berms, and some have three berms. The muzzle safe points will then be different for each range depending on the location of the berms. As a new shooter your first duty today is "muzzle and finger awareness." As you shoot the match today, go slow enough so that you are thinking about where your muzzle is pointing and where your shooting finger is positioned on your gun. We will go over this in more detail later. First, let's talk the four basic rules of gun safety.

2. Cooper's Rules of Firearms Safety

2.1 Consider every gun to be always loaded – ***ALWAYS!***

2.2 Never cover anything with the muzzle you are not willing to destroy

2.3 Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target.

- Register your shooting finger on the gun at ALL TIMES except AT THE VERY MOMENT you must shoot.

- While drawing, while moving, while reloading, while changing hands, while pushing out, and just before you shoot.

- Retention shooting is aimed shooting, but not sighted shooting, but finger rule still applies.

2.4 Be sure of your target, and what is beyond and around it

3. Thurmont Safety and Range Rules

3.1 Muzzles may not be pointed over the berm: When engaging targets, reloading, moving or handling the gun the muzzle may not go over the berm. This can be difficult for those of you who are used to loading with the muzzle angled up. However, due to the close proximity of homes this is not allowed. You will hear a “Muzzle” call if you point it over the berm. If your finger is on the trigger and the muzzle is above the berm, that is a match DQ. If a round actually goes over the berm, that is a match DQ.

3.2 Muzzles may not be pointed more than 90 degrees left or 90 degrees right: We call this the “180 RULE.” As you are moving imagine a line running 90 degrees left and 90 degrees right. Your muzzle may not go past that line. This would be a match DQ.

3.3 Muzzles may not go past “muzzle safe points” on the ranges: We will notify you where the muzzle safe points are for each range and if we see you get near that point, we will call “Muzzle.” That does not mean you have broken the muzzle safe point but it does mean you got close to it and this is a warning. You may receive many muzzle calls without a penalty or a DQ as long as you don’t *actually* break it.

3.4 The Cowboy Steel may not be shot: Cowboy loads are very light and the steel is not hard enough for regular pistol loads. Do not shoot any of the cowboy steel.

3.5 Steel must be engaged at least 12 yards: The range policy prohibits shots on steel less than 12 yards for regular pistol rounds.

3.6 Use the earthen berms to do gun handling, holstering, unholstering, etc: Walk to within 3 feet of the berm. NO ammunition is allowed on you while at the safe berm. The Match Director may make Safe Tables as needed. You may reload ammo anywhere else, including your trunk or the tables in the bays.

3.7 Ammunition with any iron in the bullets is prohibited or ammo greater than 1300FPS: The range policy prohibits any ammunition with iron/steel or high power to protect the steel and props.

3.8 Negligent discharge: A round that strikes within 6 feet of the shooter is a match DQ, unless it is in the COF.

3.9 IDPA Safety Rule: Guns may ONLY be handled under the direct supervision of a Safety Officer, the Match Director or in the Safe Area with no ammo present. NO EXCEPTIONS.

3.10 Crowding Cover: If you hold too close to cover it tends to put you in danger of violating the muzzle rules. It is important to stand back from cover, pull the gun IN, then push it OUT to avoid muzzle up or down. (Demonstrate)

4. Range Commands

4.1. Before shooting the stage

- **“Range is going hot. Eyes and Ears”**

- Everyone should scan the area to ensure all participants have eye and ear protection on, and any spectators

4.2. When coming to the shooting line

- **“Load and make ready”** (to be done only at the line, and only at the command of an SO) **HOLSTER SLOWLY!**

- **“Are you ready?”** You may say, “Not Ready” and take a half step back. You will have 15 seconds to step back into position and say, “Shooter Ready” or give another indication to the SO you are ready.

- **“Stand by”** (buzzer is the start signal)

4.2. After shooting the stage

- **“If shooter is finished, unload and show clear.”** Remove your magazine, stow it in your pocket. Pull the slide or open the cylinder and eject any unshot rounds and let them fall to the ground.

- Hold the slide or cylinder open until you hear **“If clear, slide forward or chamber closed”** Check the chamber, release the slide or close the cylinder.

- Listen for the command **“Pull The Trigger”** and pull the trigger. If you have a magazine interlock, have an empty magazine available.

- Listen for the command **“Holster.”** You may carefully holster the gun. You are not on the clock, take it slowly.

- Listen for the command, **“The range is clear.”** You may now pick up your magazines and unspent rounds

4.3.. Commands during shooting

- If you hear **“Finger”** it means the SO saw your finger get inside the trigger guard and not registered on the frame/slide or at some other time when the finger should be registered and not shooting. Two FINGER calls result in a match DQ.

- **“Stop”** can be called by the SO or any other member of the squad for a variety of reasons. Props may need to be reset, the shooter may be moving in an unsafe direction, or someone may still be downrange.

- **“Cover”** can be called when you violate the cover rule. Both feet (the entire foot) must not be visible to the threat target and less than 50% of your torso. If you exceed that the SO will attempt to call “cover.” If you moved too fast or engaged out of cover you will earn a cover penalty.

5. IDPA Rule Highlights

5.1. When reloading behind cover one foot must always be planted and may not move.

5.2. Dropping and leaving a loaded magazine is a procedural, unless a malfunction occurred.

5.3. Shooting on the move means actually moving, not stopping to take a shot and then moving.

5.4 Shooting in priority means near to far or from cover shooting them as you see them, slicing the pie.

5.5 You may not “air gun” within the boundaries of the shooting area, but you may do so back behind the shooting area.

6. Malfunctions

6.1 If the shooter is not very experienced with malfunction resolution, trying to clear a weapon quickly can result in an Negligent Dishcharge due to his/her inability to keep his finger off the trigger. If you are not familiar with the procedure, slow down and take the added time penalty. If you need to, **stop** and ask for help.

6.2 If the malfunction has been induced by a squib that is lodged in the barrel, firing again can be catastrophic. If you get a light report, or light recoil, err on the side of safety. **Stop** and ask for help. If the SO or anyone else hears a squib, they will yell “STOP” (no one else wants to potentially be injured either) – desist immediately, take your finger off the trigger and point the gun downrange.

SO’s will do what they can to maintain safety during a malfunction clearance, but in the final analysis, the responsibility to maintain safety is *yours and yours alone*.

7 Thurmont IDPA Hot Range Policy

At the discretion of the Match Director, the Thurmont IDPA club may run a “hot range,” which means that once a competitor’s gun is loaded at the first stage of the match it will stay loaded until the end of the last stage of the match. The procedure and rules are as follows:

7.1. You must come to the line of the first stage with an unloaded gun. If you legally carry concealed, and come to the match with a loaded gun, find an SO who will direct you to the place and in the procedure to safely unload your gun. If you come to the line of the first stage with a loaded gun, you will be DQ’d from the match.

7.2. After you finish shooting the stage, you should do a threat-assessment scan, and should perform a tactical reload (or reload with retention). You should reholster a fully loaded gun.

7.3. Once the gun is holstered, you may only touch it to perform a *range reload*. The gun must remain holstered, and the magazine removed from the holstered gun. A new magazine may be inserted in the holstered gun. Removing a loaded gun from the holster apart from the direction of an SO, or removing an unloaded gun in other than a designated Safe Area will result in a DQ.

7.4. At the end of the last stage, you will be taken through the process to “unload and show clear” by the SO.

Note: “The question of hot and cold ranges at the local club level is subject to individual club policy; it is the sole responsibility of local clubs and is beyond IDPA control. State, national, and international championships sanctioned by IDPA will be required to have cold ranges” (pp.4-5)

8. Purpose of IDPA

8.1 What IDPA is not: IDPA is not self-defense or tactical training. At its best it will drill you in a skill-set that is applicable to self-defense and sound tactics, but it is not self-defense or tactical training (if that's what you want, we can recommend a number of good schools).

8.2 What IDPA is: A sport which makes use of practical equipment to solve simulated "real world" self-defense scenarios. Competitors are required to use practical handguns and holsters No "competition-only" equipment is permitted in IDPA

8.3 Code of Conduct:

3.22.2. I will follow all of the safety rules of IDPA and the host range. The safety of the shooters, match officials, and bystanders shall always be my primary objective.

3.22.3. Prior to and during a match, I will refrain from the use of alcohol, substances, or medications that may negatively impact my ability to shoot safely.

Just because you have a prescription to take a medication does not necessarily mean you are able to operate a handgun safely. If you should not be operating a vehicle on the medication, you should not be shooting either.

8.4 Be Ready to shoot, and Be Ready to Paste: Please help us run the match efficiently. BE READY, and PASTE!

8.5 Everyone here is expected to stay for teardown: Please help us run the match efficiently and don't leave just a few of us here to do the teardown. **BE READY, BE HELPFUL and BE PASTING!**

9. Thurmont Events and Announcements

- Schedule for IDPA and USPSA events
- Sanctioned Matches
- Membership Opportunities.

9. Equipment Inspection

We will now conduct an equipment inspection.