



Safety Rules

Safety is everyone's top priority in our shooting sport. You are encouraged to understand how you personally can continue the excellent safety track record of our sport. The following is provided for your understanding and implementation.

General Gun Handling Rules for Cowboy Action Shooting with the Rio Grande Renegades:

- Follow the general rules of gun safety summarized below:

Assume every firearm is loaded.

Control the muzzle direction at all times.

See that the firearm is unloaded. PROVE it safe.

- All SASS safety rules apply-see general SASS rules below
- No alcohol is allowed on the Rio range and shooters can not shoot if they have had alcohol on the day of the shoot
- Both prescription and nonprescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment are not allowed for shooters or range officers.
- Rio Grande Renegades Range is a cold range and loaded guns are not allowed except at the loading table through the firing line
- A rifle or handgun round fired over the back berm at Hay's City is a no call. Rounds fired over the side berms will result in a stage DQ. Be aware that at other ranges different rules apply.
- Eye protection is mandatory for both shooters and spectators, ear protection is strongly recommended. Ear protection is mandatory for juniors. Side shields are encouraged on safety glasses.
- All guns are to be checked by another posse member at the unloading table to make sure they are unloaded. The unloading table officer and the shooter must inspect every cylinder chamber to make sure it is empty in revolvers. The unloading table officer and the shooter must inspect every magazine and chamber of a long gun having same. Look for the magazine follower in rifles if possible or cycle the lever several times to show clear.
- All long guns are to be carried muzzles **UP** while carrying them to and from the firing line. When long guns are carried during shooting and moving from one point to another, the long guns must not break the 170 rule and be pointed downrange at all times. This is particularly hard when moving parallel to the firing line, so be careful.
- Long guns, rifles and shotguns are to be stored in your gun cart with their actions open unless completely covered with a gun case in the gun cart.

- SASS uses a **170** degree rule on the firing line, which means no matter the direction the shooter is facing, the shooter's muzzle must be within a **170** degree cone downrange perpendicular to the firing line. Cross draw holster shooters must be extremely careful not to break the **170** rule when drawing and holstering.
- Rifles magazines can only be loaded with the hammer down on an **EMPTY** chamber. Coming to the firing line with your hammer cocked on an empty chamber from the loading table is a stage disqualification.
- Shotguns are not to be loaded at the loading table and must be staged empty with the action open.
- Revolvers can not be loaded with more than five rounds with the hammer completely down (not on safety cock) on an empty chamber in the cylinder
- Shooters must not break the **170** rule when they are at the loading table or unloading table. In this case, the equivalent of the firing line is parallel to the loading/unloading table front edge.
- Shooters must be careful and not sweep another shooter while at the loading and unloading table. Sometimes shooters are incorrectly standing too far off to the side of the stages to count hits and misses so be careful.
- Shooters can not cock their revolvers or rifles until they are at a 45 degree angle up from straight down
- If there is a rear berm in close proximity to the targets, the shooter must not cock his revolver or his rifle with the muzzle pointing above the rear berm.
- Shooters may lever their first round into their rifle as the butt of the rifle is on the way to the shooters shoulder, but be aware that some ranges require the rifle to be at the shooters shoulder before levering a round into the chamber.
- Percussion revolver shooters may charge five cylinders with ball and powder in the safety area, however, they may not "cap" them until they are at the loading table or on the firing line if a reload is needed. If a particular stage requires a reload, the sixth chamber of the percussion revolvers may be charged at the bench and then capped on the clock, either before the first round is fired or after the last round is fired. A complete reload for the percussion revolver shooters is handled by staging a loaded, uncapped revolver down range or switching uncapped cylinders and capping on the clock. There will be no handling of ammunition or caps in the safety areas.
- Percussion revolver shooters should cap and discharge an uncharged revolver to clear nipples at an adjacent, unoccupied berm so as not to be a distraction for shooters at the firing line.
- Dropped ammunition can not be picked up by the shooter between the loading table and the unloading table. Another shooter will pick it up and bring it to the shooter at the unloading table.
- Dropped firearms, during a stage, are to be left on the ground and retrieved and cleared by a range official. Empty dropped firearms, during a stage, result in a minimum stage disqualification, loaded dropped firearms are a mandatory disqualification from the match. Dropped unloaded firearms away from the firing line are a no call.
- Shotguns must be put onto the props provided with action open and empty. Sometimes the shooter will start with the shotgun at port arms open and empty.
- If a shooter is stopped by the Range Officer (RO) or Timer Operator (TO) with a Stop command or a Cease Fire command, the shooter must immediately put his firearm down on a prop or hand it off to RO/TO and **NOT** fire another shot.

- If you are at the loading table or unloading table that face side berms and a Stop command or a Cease Fire command is issued to the shooter on the firing line, you will stop what you are doing until you can determine the issue that caused the cease fire and whether it is safe for you to continue loading or unloading.
- If you are at a loading table or unloading table on the firing line and a Cease Fire or stop command is issued to the shooter, stop what you are doing and put your guns in a safe position and step back from your guns. An example of why it is a good idea to stop loading or unloading is if unauthorized personnel have somehow wandered on the range downrange of your position.
- If a Down Range command is given, the shooter should step back a step and not touch his guns again until he hears the all clear command from the range officer.
- Shooters at a loading or unloading table that are in line with the firing line on shared stages within a single range when a Down Range command is given, shall also put their guns in a safe position on the loading table or holsters and step back from the table and not touch the guns again until the all clear command is given. In this case a flag system will normally be used to allow the shooters to also visually see when the all clear is given.
- If the stage is not shared and has its own side berms and if the loading table and unloading table face these berms and a down range command is given, the shooters at these tables can in some cases safely continue loading and unloading.(Check individual range rules)
- Shooters walking to and from their carts with empty guns when a Down Range command is given, should not place their guns on the loading tables if the tables are in line with the firing line, until the all clear command is given as the shooter could be sweeping posse members working down range with his guns while placing them on the tables.
- An accidental discharge within 5 feet of the shooter will result in disqualification of the shooter for the match
- Cowboy Action matches are not fast draw competitions. Any unsafe gun handling or fanning will result in disqualification
- Firearms are not to be handled except in designated safety areas or on the firing line under the supervision of a range official. This means you do not work gun problems unless you are at the unloading table or in a designated safety area.
- Revolvers must be holstered except when being used on the firing line, at the loading table, unloading table or taking them from your gun cart to holster or returning them to the gun cart from the holster (muzzles down)
- All shotguns and rifles must have their actions OPENED immediately after they have been shot BEFORE putting them back onto or into a prop or carrying them to the unloading table. Opening these long guns immediately will eject or allow the shooter to remove the fired hull(s) or brass and show that the gun is now empty.
- **The Rio Grande Renegades do not currently host Wild Bunch matches at Hayes City (The City of Albuquerque Shooting Range). If and when we do hold a Wild Bunch Match it will be governed by the SASS Rules set forth in the SASS Wild Bunch Action Shooting Handbook.**