

Basic Firearm Safety

> The primary safety is between your ears!! <

* Treat all guns as though they are always Loaded.

* Always Keep the Gun Pointed in a Safe Direction.

This is a primary rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun does not point at anything you are unwilling to destroy. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending upon the circumstances. If only this one safety rule were always followed, there would be no injuries or fatalities from unintentional shootings.

* Always Keep Your Finger Off the Trigger Until Ready to Shoot.

Your trigger finger should always be kept straight, alongside the frame and out of the trigger guard, until you have made the decision to shoot. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are sure of your target, your backstop (what is behind your target) and your sights are on target.

> Do not point the gun at anything you are unwilling to destroy!! <

Democracy is two wolves and a lamb.

Liberty is a well-armed lamb.

B. Franklin

Autoloading Firearm Function

- **Secure the Firearm / Checking Safe:**

The first step in making an autoloading firearm ready for use is to secure the firearm ... make sure it is not loaded and safe. 1) Remove the magazine* (ammunition supply), TAKE THE SUPPLY AWAY. 2) Open the action and check that the breech is empty and the barrel is clear. 3) Check the mechanism to see that it functions smoothly with no binding. 4) Check the safety or safeties to be sure they are functional. 5) Check the firing group (trigger, hammer, striker, sear release) function.

- Loading:

After you have secured the firearm. 1) Load the magazine (place ammunition into the supply). 2) Make the supply of ammunition available to the action or mechanism (insert the magazine into the gun). 3) Cycle the action to load the chamber.

Note: the gun is now loaded. Cycling the action also sets up the firing mechanism so that the gun may be fired (sets the sear, the hammer is cocked, partially loads the striker, puts the firing mechanism under spring tension, etc. as design dictates).

- Unloading:

1) Take away the supply of ammunition (remove the magazine or empty the magazine if it is a fixed magazine). **Note: the gun is still loaded!** 2) Unload, remove the cartridge from the chamber. Open the action to extract and eject the cartridge from the chamber. You may have to take it off safe in order to open the action. Check the chamber! Look into it, stick a finger in there, look through the barrel. The gun is now unloaded note: **Treat all guns as though they are always Loaded !**

Note: **the order is important!!** 1) FIRST take the supply away and then 2) SECOND after the supply is removed the chamber can be emptied to unload. If this sequence is reversed the gun is LOADED. Note: **Treat all guns as though they are always Loaded !**

Discussion:

Any Range Master (unless very new to the detail) is personally aware of unintentional discharge. This occurs whether military,

law enforcement or private range. There are many “I thought it was unloaded” statements for an unintentional discharge even though the party has had training in the use of their firearm. They think they unloaded the gun by taking the magazine out (**does not unload** the gun it only removes the supply of ammunition). They worked the action ejecting the cartridge in the chamber without taking the magazine out first (this **just re-loaded** the gun with a cartridge from the magazine).

Finger on the trigger without acquiring the target is the primary other than the “I thought it was unloaded” discharge. Any UNINTENTIONAL DISCHARGE need not result in injury if the basic safety rules are followed.

There is much ignorance of firearm function even among the presumably trained personnel. For example; calling a magazine (the supply of ammunition) a clip (used in some military application to rapidly load the magazine. Law Enforcement or Military calling a cartridge or piece of ammunition a bullet. And the most egregious; Law Enforcement, Military, Reporters and Public calling anything that even remotely resembles any firearm that modern military forces carry as their primary firearm an “Assault Rifle”. It is only an Assault Rifle if it is Automatic (machine gun / select fire).

Educated, trained, ignorant or uneducated, if Basic Firearm Safety is adhered to there is no injury.

** Definitions:*

***Magazine:** The ammunition supply. A container for cartridges which has a spring and follower to feed those cartridges into the chamber of a firearm. The magazine may be detachable or an integral part of the firearm.

***Clip:** A separate cartridge container used to reload rapidly the

magazine of a firearm. Also called striper clip, en bloc clip, or charger. Term sometimes incorrectly or improperly used to describe a removable magazine.

***Cartridge:** A single unit of ammunition consisting of the case, primer, propellant and one or more projectile(s).

***Bullet:** The projectile fired through the barrel at the target.

***Autoloading or Semiautomatic:** A firearm requiring a separate pull of the trigger for each shot fired, and which uses the energy of discharge to perform a portion of the operating or firing cycle (usually the loading portion).

***Automatic:** A firearm design that feeds cartridges, fires, extracts and ejects cartridge cases as long as the trigger is fully depressed and there are cartridges in the supply. Also Full Auto, Machine Gun, or a Service rifle/carbine identified as an Assault Rifle.

***Assault Rifle:** A rapid-fire, magazine-fed automatic rifle designed for infantry use. An assault rifle is a selective fire (selective between automatic, semi-automatic, and burst fire (a small group of cartridges with a single pull of the trigger)). Uses an intermediate cartridge and a detachable magazine. Assault rifles are the standard service rifles in most modern armies.

Gaylan Warren

Columbia International Forensics Laboratory

<http://4n6lab.org/>

Also:

***Good Gun Control:** Precisely hitting where you aim, bullet consistently centered in the X of the X-ring.

***You cannot miss fast enough to win a gun fight.** Good Gun Control ... Practice.. Practice and more Practice.