

Belgian Parcours Shooting Association

***SAFETY RULES AND BASIC SKILLS
COURSE FOR IPSC BEGINNERS***





Belgian Parcours Shooting Association

Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course for IPSC Beginners

Voorwoord van de Regional Director – Préface du Regional Director

*Welkom bij de schietsportfederatie van de **Belgian Parcours Shooting Association (BPSA)** die optreedt als de officiële vertegenwoordiger van de **International Practical Shooting Association (IPSC)**. In uw hoedanigheid als beginnende binnen de schietsportdiscipline IPSC bent U nu in het bezit van de « **BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course** » die bedoeld is als referentiewerk voor de initiatie van beginnende IPSC schutters.*

Dit document is met opzet in het Engels opgesteld om de stagiair(e) de gelegenheid te bieden om zich vertrouwd te maken met de gebruikelijke woordenschat en uitdrukkingen eigen aan de discipline.

*De « **BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course** » is de beschrijvende monografie van de initiële én voortdurende opleiding tot IPSC schutter waarbij U deze in uw moedertaal zal worden onderwezen door officiële BPSA Monitoren. De opleiding, die gegeven en omkaderd wordt door uw BPSA Monitor, is erop gericht om U de vaardigheden bij te brengen die nodig zijn om IPSC te beoefenen zijnde : veiligheid, techniek, precisie en snelheid van uitvoering.*

*Na het succesvol afronden van deze verplichte leerperiode over de grondbeginselen van de discipline zal uw BPSA Monitor U graag uw jaarlijkse licentie van de federatie overhandigen. Dit is uw « paspoort » en vormt een essentieel en reglementair onderdeel om U toe te laten te evolueren binnen andere IPSC clubs en later, in het bezit van uw « **Competitor Card** », om deel te nemen aan nationale en internationale wedstrijden.*

Bienvenue au sein de Fédération de Tir de la **Belgian Parcours Shooting Association (BPSA)**, le représentant officiel belge de l'**International Practical Shooting Association (IPSC)**. En votre qualité de débutant à la discipline de Tir Sportif IPSC, vous êtes à présent en possession du « **BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course** » qui est l'ouvrage de référence destiné à l'initiation du tireur IPSC néophyte.

Ce document a intentionnellement été rédigé en Anglais pour offrir au stagiaire l'opportunité de se familiariser aux mots-clefs et expressions usuelles fréquemment utilisées dans la langue officielle et véhiculaire de la discipline.

Le « **BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course** » est la monographie descriptive du stage de formation initial et progressif à l'IPSC qui vous sera enseigné dans votre langue maternelle par les Moniteurs officiels de la BPSA. Le stage, dirigé et encadré par votre Moniteur BPSA, vise à vous enseigner les compétences requises pour la pratique de l'IPSC en termes de sécurité, de technicité, de précision et de vitesse d'exécution.

A l'issue de la réussite de cette période obligatoire d'apprentissage des fondamentaux de la discipline, votre Moniteur BPSA aura le plaisir de vous remettre votre licence annuelle de la Fédération qui est le « passeport » indispensable et réglementaire pour vous permettre d'évoluer dans d'autres clubs IPSC et plus tard, en possession de votre « **Competitor Card** », de participer à des compétitions nationales et internationales.

Charles De Rongé
Regional Director Belgium



Belgian Parcours Shooting Association

Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course for IPSC Beginners

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Introduction

Parcours Shooting is an international widespread shooting sport with the aim to elevate the modern sporting techniques of handling firearms in strict compliance with firearms' laws and international safety rules. This sport is worldwide represented by the **International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC)** which currently gathers more than 100 nations around the world. The three basic principles of Parcours Shooting are **Accuracy, Power** and **Speed** translated into Latin by "**Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas**" in short **DVC**, which is the motto of the IPSC World Body. IPSC is defined as a pure sports discipline with its own techniques, proper safety rules, specific regulations and national and international competitions

In Belgium, the official representative of the IPSC is the **Belgian Parcours Shooting Association (BPSA)**. Within the BPSA, certified IPSC Instructors from the **National Firearms Instructors Institute (NFII)** are responsible for the training of novice and advanced IPSC shooters. As a novice IPSC shooter to our sport, you will be trained for IPSC through the "**BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course**" which is intended to be taught under the supervision of a qualified and certified IPSC Pistol Instructor or Trainer.

Your introductory and fundamental training period in our sport may, at a first glance, be perceived as quite deterring. The NFII encourages you to listen carefully to our IPSC Instructors and Trainers, be diligent in the application of the drills and assimilate all of the knowledge and skills that are taught to you. Once you acquired enough practice and experience you will probably look back on this period of training and acknowledge how elaborated and precious it all was. However, do not become complacent and always set high standards for yourself. In every shooting circumstance, you remain responsible for your own safety and for the safety of those around you.

BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Courses are regularly organized in almost all BPSA Clubs in order to make the sport accessible to the bigger part of new "will-be" members. For details and organization on the next training period, the NFII advises you to contact the person responsible for IPSC of the BPSA club closest to your home, see our link to [BPSA clubs](#).

Purposes of this Manual

This guide to the discipline pursues two objectives.

-) The major objective of this manual is to teach the novice shooter the safety rules specific to the practice of our discipline. Mastering these rules is essential to be a permanent member of our sport community. Throughout this manual, the novice shooter will develop the necessary skills to fully ensure his own physical safety as well as the safety of other participants and spectators.
-) Our second and key goal is to introduce the novice shooter to the modern techniques of handgun manipulation, basic movements and shooting positions as well as some elementary rulings that are enforced during national competitions.

The BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course is a specific IPSC training program that is given in addition to the basic trainings certified by the recognized Belgian Sports Shooting Federations (1).

As all BPSA members have to be in possession of a Sportshooting License (2) issued by a recognized sport shooting federation, The BPSA course for beginners does not include elementary notions of safety and basic technical manipulations that have been previously explained, trained and validated by the licenced Shooting Instructors of these Federations. The elementary safety notions are, of course, embedded into the learning program provided by our IPSC Instructors and Trainers.

How to become a member of a BPSA club

Please find hereunder the current and principal conditions required for a membership with a BPSA Club. As gun laws are continuously being adapted, we invite you to rely on your IPSC Club Delegate in order to have the most recent version of the conditions for a membership.

-) You must be a member of a shooting sport federation recognized by the Competent Regional Authorities.
-) You have to be a BPSA member in order to be properly insured against the specific risks of our sport
-) You must have the legal documents authorizing you to possess and carry a weapon of a caliber greater than or equal to 9mm (.354 "Dia) within a shooting range.
-) Your weapons, equipment and ammunition must be compliant with the IPSC guidelines and regulations, see link to [Current IPSC Rules](#).



(1) Fédération reconnue : URSTBF (FR) – Erkende Federaties VSK en FROS (NL).

(2) Licence de Tireur Sportif (FR) or Sportschutterslicentie (NL)

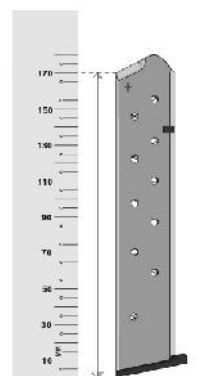
Introduction

The IPSC recognizes numerous distinct "Divisions" in which the handguns are allowed to compete: the CLASSIC, OPEN, PRODUCTION, PRODUCTION OPTICS, REVOLVER and STANDARD Divisions. As this introductory guide is particularly intended for beginners, our recommendations will be limited to advice on acquiring a handgun and equipment in the most common ones.

The classification of a handgun within a division is primarily depending on its technical modifications and customization that the competitor is allowed to make to the basic weapon. Below and per division, a brief and non-exhaustive presentation of the handguns and a description of the allowed changes and restrictions to them. Full requirements can be consulted on the IPSC.ORG website : <https://www.ipsc.org/pdf/RulesHandgun.pdf>

Open Division (OD)

Pistol equipped with recoil compensator, muzzle brake, counterweight, optical and/or optronic sight, slide and lightened frame, usually supplied in 38 Super Auto caliber. Almost no technical restrictions are imposed, except for the magazines' length which is limited to 170mm.



Standard Division (SD)

The handguns belonging to this division are mostly large capacity "1911" style clone pistols that undergo very elaborate custom jobs in order to improve their functioning and accuracy like fitting of a match barrel, trigger job, fiber optic sights and high capacity magazines. The IPSC regulation requires those handguns, while unloaded, with hammer cocked and an empty magazine inserted, to fit wholly within the confines of a box which has internal dimensions of 225 mm x 150mm x 45 mm (tolerance of +1 mm, -0 mm). Note that all magazines must comply. Compensators, optic and optronic sights are not allowed. The SVI / STI, Tanfoglio, Para-Ordnance and Glock guns in 40S&W are the most commonly encountered weapons on the range in this Division.



Production Division (PD)

Most handguns from this Division are “Out of the Box” pistols. Only handguns listed as [Approved](#) on the IPSC website may be used in Production Division. Note that handguns deemed by IPSC to be single-action-only are expressly prohibited. Requirements are the following : First shot attempted must be double action, minimum trigger pull must be at least 2,272Kg for the first shot shot, minimum power factor is set to "125" and magazine capacity is limited to 15 rounds. Very few modifications and enhancements are allowed. Guns such as CZ 75 Shadow, GLOCK 17, Tanfoglio Stock II and III, S & W MP9, SIG P226, PO-LDA, HK USP... all chambered in 9mm are unrivaled in this Division

**Production Optics Division (POD)**

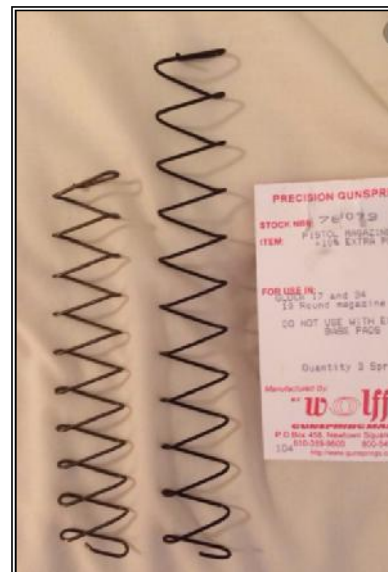
Basically, those handguns are exactly similar to PD guns and utilizing the Production Division rule set, but allowing slide mounted red dot optic sights. The optical sight can only be mounted to the un-modified slide. Racking handles or other protuberances from the optical sight or its mounting are not permitted.



BPSA Instructors do not indicate any preference for a brand and/or manufacturer of equipment. Our comments and recommendations are based on the application of the IPSC rules, our competition experience and the personal views of the confirmed shooters of the National Team. Reference made to a trademark, manufacturer of handguns or equipment and accessories is purely informative and is not to be considered as advertising. The choice of gear and equipment will mostly depend on your handgun and the "Division" to which it belongs.

Magazines

-) For the Divisions mentioned above, FOUR magazines for a minimum total capacity of 60 rounds worn “on the belt” are needed to complete the SRBSC.
-) It is worth remembering that the cheapest magazines very often become the most expensive ones. Buying quality magazines from the start will avoid you the extra cost of buying new ones. Magazines are one of the most likely sources of mechanical failure in a semi-auto pistol, so you need to take care of them to ensure your pistol continues to run reliably.
-) During the course of fire, magazines are subjected to a severe test. A rubber, plastic or aluminum base pad placed at the base of the latter will effectively prolong its longevity and facilitate locking it in the magazine well.
-) Be sure to regularly check the tension of the springs of your magazines and do not hesitate to replace them at any sign of weakness.
-) Do NOT oil the inside of the tube, dust and combustion waste will accumulate more easily there. Your magazines should be perfectly dry, a light blow of silicone “spray” will suffice to ensure flawless operation.
-) Carry out frequent visual and tactile checks of the lips of your magazines. Falls on hard floors have the effect of deteriorating this part of the equipment and causing burrs or backflow of metal which frequently prove to be the cause of jamming and malfunctions.
-) We recommend to mark the inefficient magazines with the use of any signal that warns not to use the old magazine.

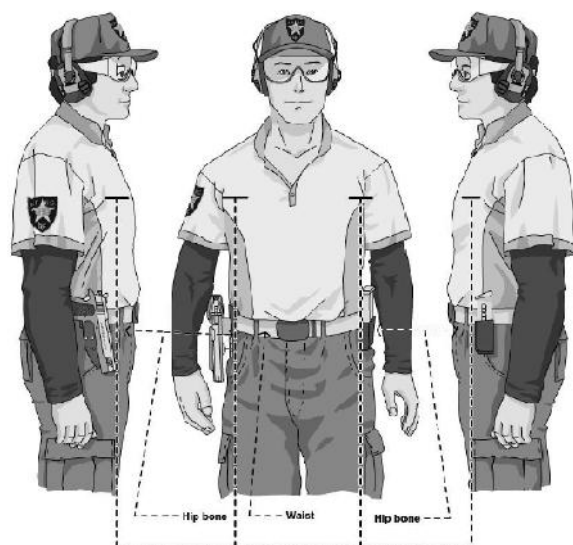


The Holster

Standard and Production Divisions require the holster and related equipment to be worn behind the hip bone of the competitor. In Open Division you may place your gun and magazine pouches anywhere on your belt or forward of the hip bone. Female shooters are subject to exceptions as they may have their equipment to rest on their hips.

For safety reasons, some requirements are to be strictly respected (See IPSC Rule 5.2). Your BPSA Pistol Instructor will explain them more in detail during your equipment check prior to starting your BPSA Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course. Hereunder are the most important ones. An IPSC novice shooter will NOT be permitted to start the BPSA course with :

-) A holster which does not completely prevent access to, or activation of, the trigger of the handgun while holstered.
-) A holster which permits the muzzle of the handgun to point further than 1 meter from the feet while standing relaxed.
-) A holster with the heel of the butt of the handgun below the top of the belt.
-) A holster which does not comply with the maximum distance (50 mm) allowed between the competitor's torso and the center of the longest dimension of the handgun grip and/or any reloading devices.
-) A shoulder holster or "tie-down" rig.
-) More than 1 holster at the belt.

**Standard Division****50mm Distance****Production Division****Open Division**

Foremost limit for gun, holster and allied equipment behind the hip bone at the start signal. The diagram also displays arms "hanging naturally" (see Rule 8.7.2)

Besides your handgun, the holster is the centerpiece of your IPSC equipment. Purchase it with care and always see to it that it is of excellent quality, the security of your handgun depends on it! A modern IPSC holster is currently made of lightweight metal or high-strength plastic and composite materials.

Your holster should have adjustable tensioning means (Pistol securement) and angle adjustment. The result must be a holster that does not deform under range conditions, where tension on the handgun does not change, which firmly secures the handgun during movements, but which makes it easy to grip and draw the handgun.

Some "versatile" holsters allow a multitude of handguns by a quick change of a part, accessory or other. If you plan on shooting with two different handguns or plan to change handgun in the short term these holsters will certainly be a less expensive option.



The Belt

A quality IPSC belt must be thick, rigid, wide, and adapted to the holster to reduce the lateral and vertical movements that accompany the unholstering of the gun, it also has to pass through three belt loops. The IPSC belt is composed of two separate pieces. An inner belt with a male velcro that slips into the pants loops and an outer belt equipped with a female velcro. The holster and magazines pouches are adjusted and secured to the outer belt which can then be placed exactly where desired on the inner belt and participate to muscle memory. These belts are either ultra-resistant textiles or composite materials. NFII Instructors do not advise to go for a "classic" leather single belt as holster and pouches will probably be in different position every time using it.



The Magazine Pouches

The magazine pouches must hold firmly to the belt, cover at least more than one third of the magazine, be equipped with a tensioning system and must offer a wide range of angle adjustments. Note that open pouches equipped with magnets, which firmly hold the magazines in place, are allowed.

The purchase of a magazine pouch equipped with a magnet perpendicular to the belt is an interesting acquisition for the fast placement of magazines during specific course of fire and training session.



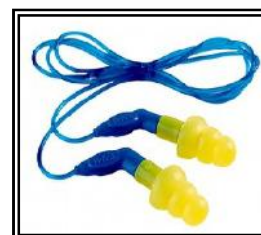
Eye protection

Wearing Goggles or safety glass is vital and mandatory throughout shooting sessions (even for spectators). Metal targets can ricochet splinters of lead and copper, and no one is immune to it. Protective eyewear must be unbreakable and, if possible, provided with side shields. If you wear glasses all the time for sight improvement reasons, make sure that your glasses have safety glass or safety plastic lenses. Tinted glasses may be worn to accommodate different light conditions. The wearing of mineral glasses is also prohibited.



Ear Protection

The wearing of hearing protection is a must and mandatory on pistol ranges. Acquiring a quality model will allow you to hear the monitor's commands clearly, but will also provide effective protection against surrounding noise and gunshots, while allowing you to stay focused on your activities. The electronic head sets also offer the double advantage of attenuating the blast from the detonations, but at the same time increase vocal sounds. If your hearing is especially sensitive, you may wish to use earplugs as well as earmuffs.



Knee protection and baseball cap

Consider having knee protection in your range bag as well as a baseball cap or hat to protect your lenses against the sun or the rain.



No other objects / accessories that are considered as a weapon may be brought to the firing line (e.g folding knives...) !! This could result in severe disciplinary actions.

The Paper Targets

The official IPSC target commonly used is the "Classic" Target, this target is in the form of a diamond (or a turtle) and is made of tan-brown cardboard. The target has three distinct scoring zones (labelled A-C-D) which reward a distribution of different points according to the power factor of the shooter's ammunition. There are two sizes of paper targets approved for use in IPSC contests : the "Classic" Target and the IPSC Mini Target. These targets can be either partially cut or painted providing that a minimum of each scoring zone is kept.

IPSC Metal Targets

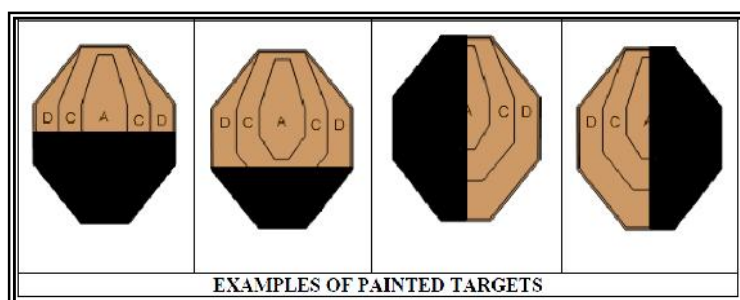
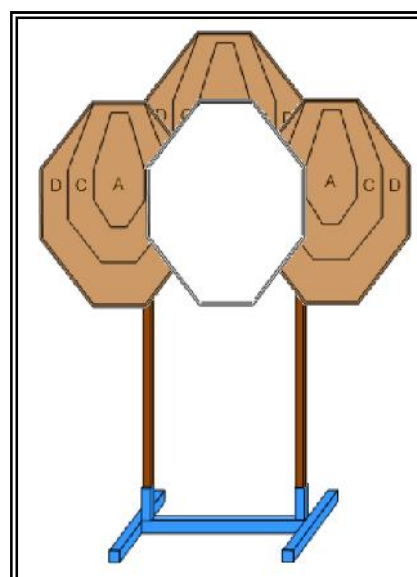
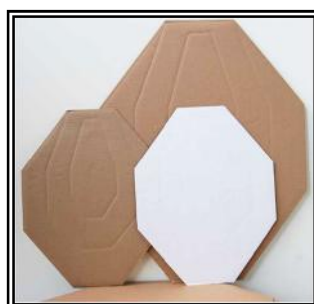
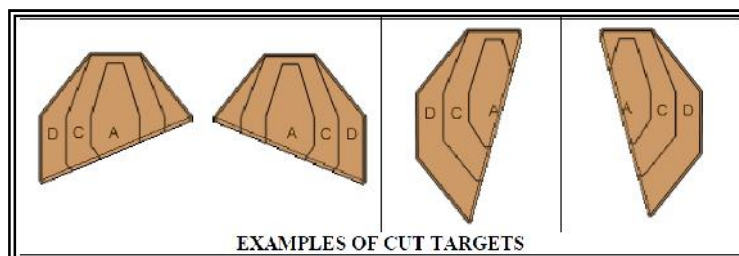
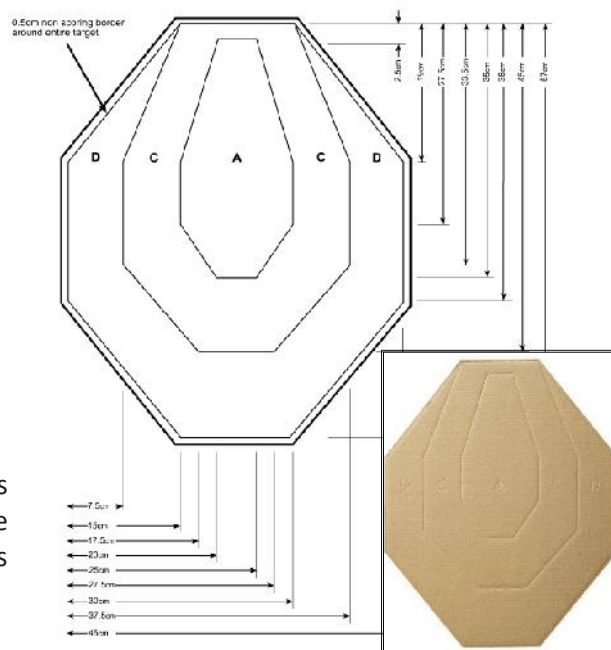
Aside from the paper targets, IPSC recognizes metal targets as Poppers, Mini-Poppers and Plates. These targets represent a value of five points. Their sizes and dimensions are strictly regulated as well as their calibration.

IPSC No-Shoot Targets

Paper Targets and Metal Targets can also be used as No-Shoot. No-shoots targets must be clearly marked with a conspicuous "X" or be of a single, unique color different from scoring targets, preferably white.

Frangible and Synthetic Targets

Any frangible targets, such as clay pigeons or tiles, are not authorized targets for IPSC Handgun matches. Synthetic targets, sometimes used by indoor ranges, may be used for training purposes, but not for competition.



The Power Factor (PF)

As Power is recognized as an inherent part of IPSC shooting, the power of cartridges is measured and subsequently rewarded through the power factors of 'Major' (M) and 'Minor' (m).

The minimum power factor rating to enable a competitor's scores on an IPSC Target is called Minor and is set at a rate of 125PF. Some Divisions offer a higher power factor rating called "Major", which enables competitors to earn more points for peripheral shots on scoring paper targets

Historically, the minimum power factor rule was designed to moderate the speed and accuracy advantages of light recoiling calibres. In comparison with a .45ACP calibre, 9mm rounds have less recoil, and therefore can be fired faster while maintaining the same accuracy. Fixing the minimum power factor value at 125PF requires equal recoil management skills by all competitors.

Divisions	Minor Scoring	Major Scoring	Values of Scoring Zones		
			A	C	D
Open	125	160	5	4	2
Standard		170	5	4	2
Production & Production Optic		N/A	5	3	1

The Chronograph

The conformity of your ammunition will be regularly tested in most competitions by means of a chronograph. The power factor of a round is calculated by multiplying the bullet weight in grains by the velocity (Feet per second). The resultant figure is then divided by 1000.

$$\text{Power Factor} = \frac{\text{bullet weight (grains)} \times \text{average velocity (feet per second)}}{1000}$$

Note

If a competitor's ammunition, within the relevant division, does not attain the required minimum power factor (PF) as a result of the chronograph test then the following rules will apply:

-) Ammunition fails to meet the Major PF → the competitor's scores will be recalculated as Minor, if achieved.
-) Ammunition fails to meet the Minimum PF → the competitor may continue shooting the match, but his scores will not be entered into match results nor count for match recognition and awards.



Ammunition

The majority of IPSC competitors load their own ammunition. The primary reason for this is that the cost savings are significant and the ammunition can be tuned to the firearm. This will allow the firearm to perform at its maximum potential. Extreme care must always be taken in the reloading of ammunition. It is not necessary to load ammunition beyond safe levels. All that is required is to achieve the necessary power factor

If you decide to load your own ammunition, it is strongly recommended that you purchase or have access to a chronograph, this will allow you to calculate your power factor. Most of BPSA Clubs are in possession of a chronograph and regularly organize "Chrono" session for the benefit of their affiliates.

The Four Golden Rules of Gun Safety

Hereunder are the “Four Golden Rules” of gun safety that **MUST** be followed at all time to keep yourself and others around you safe. The four golden rules are the foundation of everything you will do using your firearm. Though you feel comfortable while practicing your favorite shooting sport, bear always in mind the power and the risks of it. You should not take the gun safety rules lightly or use your gun carelessly at **ANY** circumstances.

Rule #1 : All firearms are always loaded

The only "safe and secure" way to handle a firearm is to consider, without exception, that the weapon is **ALWAYS** loaded. When you want to examine or show a weapon, always check that it is not loaded and then treat it always with the same caution that you would adopt with a loaded weapon. It is only on the firing line and under the supervision of the Range Officer (RO), that the firearm will be loaded and holstered. In a competition, you will be mercilessly disqualified if you are found to have a loaded weapon elsewhere than on the firing line.

Rule #2 : Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction

The barrel of your firearm must always be pointed in a direction in which, if the case maybe, ammunition accidentally fired will have no effect on people or property. Pointing a firearm at another participant, even if unloaded, is stupid, and criminal. During training sessions or in a match, your weapon must always be aimed at targets, the bullet trap or the shooting berm. The rule of 90 ° must always be strictly observed. Your weapon may never exceed the fictitious 90 ° line that is located to the left and right, top and bottom of the shooter while standing upright facing the targets from the line of fire. If you do not respect this rule, you will be disqualified.

Rules #3 : Always keep your finger straight and outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot

BPSA Instructors will teach how to keep your index out from the trigger guard until the moment your firearm is directed towards the targets and ready to fire. During the Course Of Fire (COF) all actions and activities, jamming resolutions, (re)loading or whatever manipulations are always operated with the finger outside the trigger guard.

Rule #4 : Always be sure of your targets and your environment

Always check that all participants in the training session or competition have left the shooting zone before starting your exercises and engaging your targets. Know what's behind your targets and look for unintended or hazardous objects/obstacles between you and the backstop.

Rule #5 : Range Safety is Paramount

1. Follow the Four Golden Rules.
2. Acknowledge and respect all the rules of the shooting range.
3. Listen carefully to the Range Officer and do not hesitate to ask him questions.
4. Dry fire/train and (un)case your weapon in the safety zone **ONLY**.
5. If you notice something that is unsafe bring it to the attention of the Range Officer.
6. **EVERYONE** is responsible for the safety on the shooting range.



Range Commands and Communications

Commands	Actions to be taken
Load and make ready !	Face downrange or in a safe direction, prepare your firearm in accordance with the stage briefing (Gun is loaded and bullet chambered or simply a loaded magazine inserted, safety on or hammer down and holstered) and assume the required starting position
Make ready !	Assume the required start position, gun unloaded (empty) i.e. NO loaded magazine inserted
Are you ready ?	The lack of any negative response from you indicates that you fully understand the requirements of the course of fire and that you are ready to proceed
Standby !	This command means that the start signal will follow within 1 to 4 seconds
If you are finished, unload and show clear !	Present your firearm for inspection to the Range Officer with the muzzle pointed downrange, magazine removed, slide locked or held open, and chamber empty.
If clear, hammer down, holster !	While continuing to point the handgun safely downrange, you must perform a final safety check of your handgun, release the slide and pull the trigger without touching the hammer or decocking lever, if any. Holster the gun
Range is clear, score and patch !	Once this declaration is made, officials and competitors may move forward to score, patch, reset targets, etc..
Stop !!!	Once this command is issued during the course of fire, you must immediately cease firing, stop moving and wait for further instructions from the Range Officer.
Muzzle !	Safety warning issued by the Range Officer in order to warn you that your barrel should be clearly directed in a safe direction.
Finger !	Safety warning issued by the Range Officer in order to warn you that your finger should be visibly outside from the trigger guard.
Clear the range !	Once this declaration is made all participants, officials and shooters must move rearward from the firing line.
Check your load ! Reload if necessary !	Check if your gun is loaded in order to be ready for the next string, stage or exercise.

Dry firing

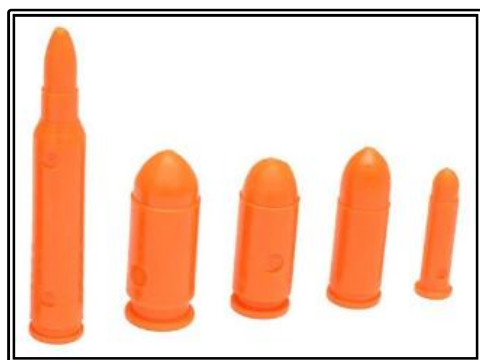
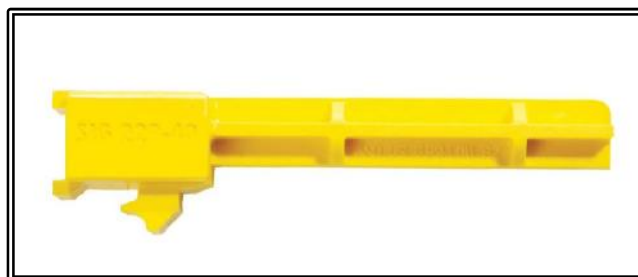
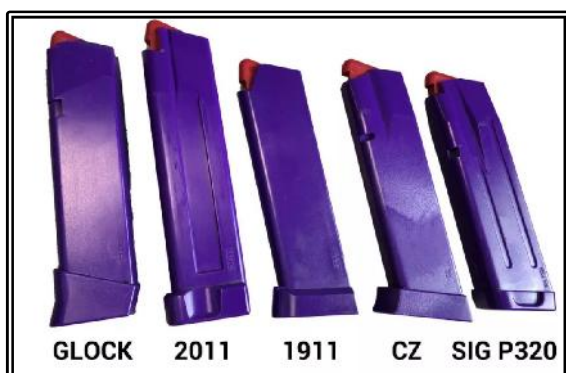
Dry fire training is, without any doubt, the key to success in ensuring the IPSC shooter rapid, constant and sustainable progression. Dry-fire training not only develops basic or advanced skills and techniques, but also builds an excellent mindset about safety among competitors who practice this type of training.

During your dry shooting training, **NEVER** lose sight of the fact that you are handling a firearm capable of propelling a projectile which can cause irreparable and irreversible damages both to third parties and to property. Always treat your firearm as if it were loaded and take **ALL** the necessary precautions, these precautionary measures are **YOUR** sole responsibility.

Dry firing is done, by definition, with an **EMPTY** gun, in the absence of any live ammunition. So always double and triple check that you are not in possession of any live ammunition on your person as in your environment **BEFORE** starting your dry firing training session. If you dry-practice at home, **ALWAYS** place your targets on a concrete wall and outside any crossing point, door or entrance. No member of your family would be happy to be confronted with the muzzle of a gun.

The practice of "dry" shooting has two major advantages. Firstly, this training mode is completely priceless and secondly, it requires no vehicle travel to a specific place for this purpose. Some accessories are however nice to purchase to practice it safely and profitably :

-) A pro-timer allowing to set part-times to 1/10th of a second,
-) Plastic colored dummy rounds,
-) Dry fire practice magazines,
-) Training barrel,...



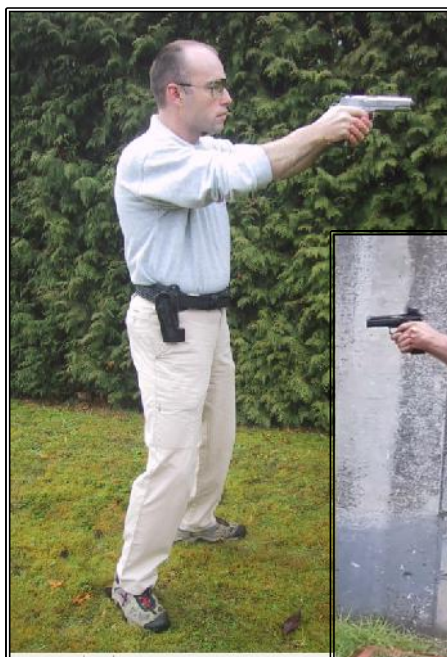
The Stance

The most frequently encountered stance is the "isosceles" position. The body faces the targets, the shoulders and hips are aligned in parallel. The distance between the feet is somewhat greater than shoulder width. The weak foot is slightly forward in relation to the strong foot.

The arms are extended towards the targets, but not locked in order to avoid the mechanical effects of the recoil to be immediately transmitted to the rest of the body. Both arms are slightly bent and are at the same height.

The head is slightly tucked between the shoulders and the trunk leans a few degrees forward.

This is the most commonly used stance by IPSC shooters as it offers stability and a wide arc of engagement.



The Grip

IPSC shooters commonly use both hands to hold the pistol in a firm and controlled manner, called the "Freestyle" grip. The dominant hand is called the "strong hand", while the supporting hand is called the "weak hand".

The web of the strong hand and the index finger should grip the back strap of the pistol as high as possible. The middle finger is locked up against the bottom of the trigger guard, the remaining fingers of the strong hand firmly wrapped around the front of the pistol butt.

The weak hand overlaps the dominant hand. The index finger of the weak hand also locks up under the trigger guard. Both hands have to be in firm contact with each side of the pistol grip.

You should grip your gun firmly, but not to the point that your fingers start to tremble. The hands share a 60 – 40 percent grip ratio in favor of the supporting hand.

Take care that the thumbs are not touching the slide of the pistol in which case the safe operation of the firearm, through friction, could be jeopardized.



The Draw

IPSC shooting is the only pistol shooting discipline which requires competitors to start the Course Of Fire (COF) with their pistol in a holster. It is well known that only “perfect practice makes perfect” and this is particularly true in respect of the drawing technique.

Smooth, accurate, and numerous practice dry and live fire drills will develop muscle memory and will allow for a perfect and fast draw of the pistol for the beginner who wants to improve his skills.

The draw can be broken down into FOUR steps. If practiced in a correct order those four steps will assist the novice in establishing a strong drawing platform.

The most common starting position is standing relaxed, hands at the sides

**Step 1 - “Grip !”**

Eyes focused on target.

Simultaneously bring the strong hand to the grip of the pistol and the support hand to the area in front of the sternum.

Both hands are moved simultaneously.

**Step 2 - “Clear !”**

Pistol is lifted out of the holster, wrist is kept straight in line with the forearm, while arm is rotating downward from the shoulder.

Your trigger finger must remain outside of the trigger guard, preferably along the slide.

**Step 3 - “Join” !”**

The weak hand wraps around the front of the grip and the side, enclosing the entire grip, the pistol grip should nearly “disappear” in the hands of the shooter.

Pistol is brought up to eye level while manual safety is turned off (latter in case of standard/open guns)

Sight alignment is in process.

At the end of step 3, the trigger finger moves inside the trigger guard.

**Step 4 - “Stretch” !”**

Dominant eye (or both eyes) start to establish sight picture as the pistol moves forward.

Arms move to extension and finger is put correctly on the trigger.

Sight picture process is completed and trigger is pressed.

Gripping the gun – Detailed overview



Shooting hand moves up above pistol grip and back down on it to get a perfect firing grip on the gun. Perfect firing grips consist of the shooting hand being high on the grip. The web of the hand between the thumb and index finger should be as high as possible into the tang of the pistol.



Pistol is drawn straight up out of the holster with the muzzle high enough so that it is freed from the holster. The index finger should be straight and resting on the side of the holster or along the slide of the pistol.

Reholstering



Re-holstering the pistol is done in the reverse order of the draw.

Manual safety is turned on (standard and open guns) or the hammer is fully decocked (production and production optics guns).

Support hand is placed towards the chest. Shoulder is rotating while wrist is kept straight.

Elbow is raised and index finger is positioned straight along the barrel then pistol is pushed straight down into the holster and secured if the case maybe.

Note: Contrary to the draw where the shooter does not look at the gun when performing the actions, re-holstering might require a visual inspection by the shooter in order to ensure that the gun is secured in the holster.

Shooter should also be using the techniques as described in the Stage 7, *“Ready Conditions and Unloading Procedure”*, of this manual.

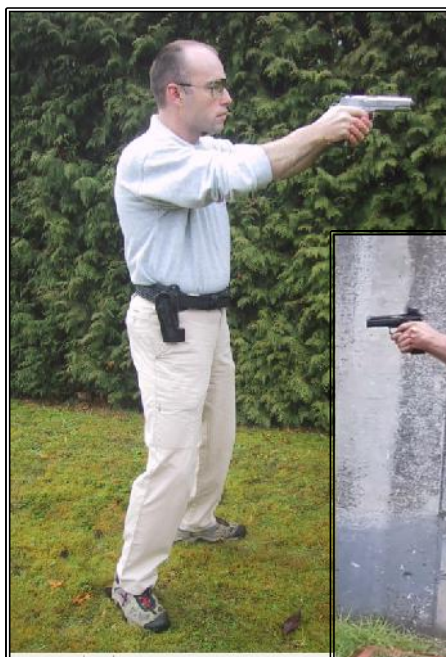
The Stance

The most frequently encountered stance is the "isosceles" position. The body faces the targets, the shoulders and hips are aligned in parallel. The distance between the feet is somewhat greater than shoulder width. The weak foot is slightly forward in relation to the strong foot.

The arms are extended towards the targets, but not locked in order to avoid the mechanical effects of the recoil to be immediately transmitted to the rest of the body. Both arms are slightly bent and are at the same height.

The head is slightly tucked between the shoulders and the trunk leans a few degrees forward.

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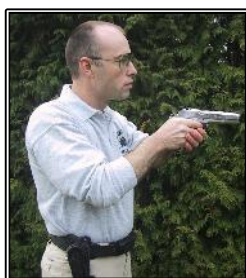
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Semi-Auto Pistols, Single Action ONLY**Load and Make Ready**

Step 1 : When the 'Load and Make Ready' command is issued by the Range Officer, unholster the pistol with the strong hand, point it down range with the triggerfinger well outside the trigger guard and insert a magazine with the weak hand.



Step 2 : With the muzzle pointed downrange, tilt the pistol slightly horizontal (toward the weak side), grip the slide using the rear or the front slide serrations and with a push/pull motion cycle back the slide to chamber a round.



Step 3 :with the hammer **fully** cocked, Immediately apply the external safety



Step 4 : Holster the pistol with the safety applied Your pistol is now in your holster with a loaded magazine inserted and a round in the chamber. When holstered the muzzle of the loaded firearm should never point rearwards on the position of the holster.

Semi-Auto Pistols, Single & Double Action

If you are competing in Production Division, the double action is a requirement for the first round fired and if the pistol is not fitted with a decocking lever, the hammer must be fully lowered.



Follow steps 1-2 from the “Load and Make Ready” procedure, then lower the hammer by firmly gripping it with the weak hand on both sides using the thumb and index finger pulling the hammer to the rear. Whilst holding the hammer, the trigger is actioned allowing the hammer to be **fully lowered** in a secure manner.

Single Action / Double Action pistols fitted with a decocking lever

Follow steps 1-2 from the “Load and Make Ready” procedure, then if the pistol has a decocking lever, **the latter** must be used to de-cock the pistol, without touching the trigger.

Striker fired pistols

This striker fired pistol has a safety device that requires neither a safety lever nor a decocking lever. To load and make ready, simply follow steps 1 and 2 from the “Load and Make Ready” procedure.

Unload and Show Clear

Step 1 : When the “Unload and Show Clear” command is issued by the range officer, point the muzzle of the pistol down range, remove the magazine, put it in a pocket or a magazine pouch and do not attempt to hold the magazine in the other hand. Keep the triggerfinger visibly outside the trigger guard



Step 2 : Pull the slide back, eject the chambered live round onto the ground. Rack the slide by the front or rear serrations, do NOT leave the palm of your hand over the ejection port ! If a cartridge were to go off (detonation), you could be injured.



Step 3 : Hold the slide open by locking it back or apply the slide stop until the Range Officer has inspected the firearm.

If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster



t

Step 1 : When the “If clear, Hammer Down”, holster’ command is issued by the Range Officer, point your handgun to a safe direction with your triggerfinger **OUTSIDE** the trigger guard.



Step 2 : Let the slide go forward in a guided and controlled manner until the action is closed. With the firearm pointing down range, action the trigger in order for the hammer to drop. If a live round were to be present in the chamber, it will discharge. It is your ultimate verification that there will be no live cartridge left in the chamber !

Note: The competitor is ultimately responsible for making sure that the firearm is unloaded.



Step 3 : Holster the empty pistol in such a way that the muzzle of the firearm never points rearwards on the position of the holster.

All manipulations are, at all times, performed with the muzzle of the firearm **POINTED DOWNRANGE** and the triggerfinger visibly **OUTSIDE** of the trigger guard.

Success in IPSC is obtained as a result of a good balance between speed and accuracy. In your early learning process do not worry too much about speed but focus on accuracy. Speed will gradually increase with further practice.

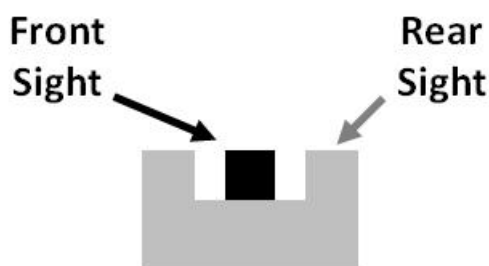
Fundamentals of Accuracy

Accuracy will be obtained when the following FOUR fundamental guidelines are followed.

-) **Sight Alignment**, the process whereby the top of the front sight post and the rear sight notch are aligned.
-) **Sight Picture**, is the image you see with your master eye (or both eyes) when the sights are aligned correctly with the target.
-) **Trigger Control**, is the ability to smoothly press the trigger straight back while keeping the sights and target aligned.
-) **Follow Through**, is looking through the sights during the recoil of the gun and immediately re-aligning the sight picture with the target.

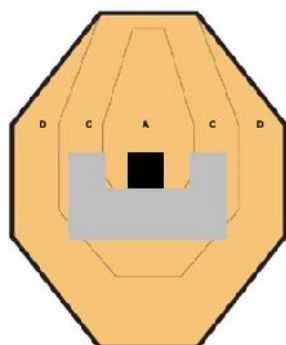
Sight Alignment

When the gun is drawn from the holster, the front and rear sights should be correctly aligned and the muzzle of the firearm horizontally directed towards the target.



Sight Picture

The gun is directed towards the target, and the shooter focuses from the target onto the front sight for the sight picture. Because of the element of speed, IPSC shooters must learn and understand the concept of an acceptable sight picture for a particular shot. A three-meter sight picture is totally different from a fifty-meter sight picture. It is only through practice that the shooter will know what an acceptable sight picture is in relation to a required shot.



5 Meter Shot



25 Meter Shot

Trigger Control

Only the first pad of the index finger is used to pull the trigger straight back with a smooth and uniform pressure until the shot breaks. Good trigger control is obtained by keeping the triggerfinger independently from the grip. The grip strength should come from your weak hand (60%) thus allowing the strong hand (40%) to action the trigger in an easier way.



Pushing the trigger, too little finger on the trigger. Shots land left.



First pad of index finger is on the centre of the trigger.



Pulling the trigger, too much finger on the trigger. Shots land right.

Follow through

The shooter must be able to maintain a uniform grip and exercise controlled muscle tension on his firearm whilst tracking his sights even if they are skewed during the recoil process. The objective is to concentrate on maintaining a perfect sight picture throughout the process of slide recoil in order to immediately re-align the sight picture on the target.

In IPSC, unlike any other shooting sports those fundamental guidelines must be applied at very high speed. From the four successive actions, trigger control and follow through are without any doubt the most difficult ones to master.

Controlled Pair

IPSC paper targets require a minimum of two hits in order to be scored to the maximum of their value. This is called a "Controlled Pair" which is defined as a shooting technique whereby two aimed shots are fired in rapid succession at the same target.

In the controlled pair technique, the split time between the two shots depends primarily on the distance and type of targets the shooter is firing at. With an increased distance or reduced scoring zone (e.g: through the use of penalty targets), the split time is most likely to increase as a result of acquiring an "acceptable sight picture". When looking for gaining time with controlled pair, the key advantage is for the shooter to leave his finger in permanent contact with the trigger during the whole process of recoil and cycling of the gun. Also to avoid or minimize the risks of flinching and/or jerking.



As IPSC shooting is a dynamic sport, you will have to perform magazine changes (Reloads) in order to complete the course of fire. "Reloading" is defined as being the action of ejecting an empty magazine and replacing it with a fresh one. As changing magazines is a time consuming activity, you have to carefully plan your reload(s). Preferably you should execute your reload(s) during position transitions or when moving since those are, from a tactical and shooting point of view, "off-time" periods.



Step 1 : With the finger out of the trigger guard, bring the gun close to your body, your strong arm is bend at about a 90 degree angle. Your gun is slightly tilted towards your weak side to allow the strong thumb to push on the magazine release button to drop the empty magazine.



Step 2 : Used magazine comes out of the magwell. Simultaneously your weak hand grabs a new magazine with your index finger extended down to the front of the mag. Your eyes are looking for the opening of the magwell, whilst keeping your gun in front of your face.



Step 3 : Your fresh magazine is pointing towards the magwell and is securely seated with an upward movement of the weak hand together with a firm push from the heel of your hand on the magazine base pad.



Step 4 : When the magazine is firmly seated into the gun, recover your two-handed grip (Freestyle Grip), proceed to your sight alignment and focus on the next target.

During the reloading process, keep your finger outside of the trigger guard at all times and keep the muzzle of your firearm pointed downrange within the 90 degree safety angle boundary.

When transferring from strong to weak hand, your index must ALWAYS remain visibly outside the trigger guard !

Strong hand stance

From your "Isosceles" stance, facing the target, draw the gun from the holster ! As you grab your gun with your strong hand, bring your weak hand close to your chest to increase your body stability, then with your arm fully extended and gently locked, bring your pistol towards the target, get it up to eye level and keep it vertical in your wrist.

Disengage the safety and move your finger inside the trigger guard. Do not change anything, you are in the right position !

To increase the balance of the body and decrease the effect of recoil, put a little more muscle tension on the strong shoulder. As an interesting option, you may find it more comfortable to tilt the gun a little bit about +/- 10 degrees towards the center of your body with your elbow slightly bent. This grip could help you to reach a stronger shooting stance as your arm muscles are in a more natural position.



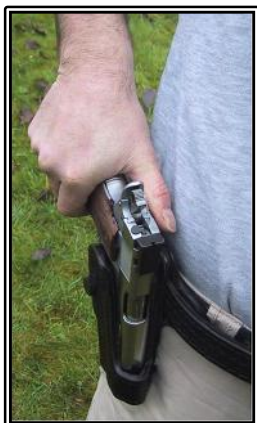
Weak hand transfer

As you would normally do for a draw, grab the firearm from the holster (or from your freestyle platform) with your strong hand. The transfer of the firearm to the weak hand occurs at the point where your hands would normally join together to wrap around the firearm. The thumb of the strong hand moves away from the firearm and discloses a space under the beavertail to allow the weak hand thumb to move to the opposite panel of the gun. Progressively the palm of the weak hand passes smoothly onto the back of the weapon. The weak hand is positioned as high as possible on the firearm to improve recoil control.

Disengage your safety as you would normally do, but be careful when transferring to the weak hand to place your triggerfinger alongside the slide above the trigger guard. If your firearm is equipped with an ambidextrous safety, leave it on while you are transferring the firearm to your weak hand. The weak thumb will disengage the safety when the weak hand grip is completed. Certain firearms do not have an external safety lever so when operating such a firearm, be very aware of this and take appropriate precautions to keep a safe grip with the finger outside the trigger guard.



Another method which can be used when starting from the holster is to grip the gun lower on the butt. This will create a space under the beavertail for your weak hand to slide onto the grip. Approximately at chest level, begin to transfer the firearm to the open weak hand.



Weak hand Stance

Start from your "Isosceles" stance with your feet spread apart (shoulder-width) and the 'gun-side-foot' slightly moved back about +/- 20cm. Face the target and grip the gun at chest level. Get the gun up to eye level with the weak arm fully extended. If not previously done, disengage the safety (if appropriate) and move your finger inside the trigger guard. Keep a rather strong grip and hold the pistol as vertical as possible.

As for the strong hand stance, you may feel it easier to tilt the gun slightly towards your strong side. With this technique, your weak arm is slightly bent to a more natural position and may give the impression to have more control over the gun. This method is also aiding you to align the sights in front of your dominant eye

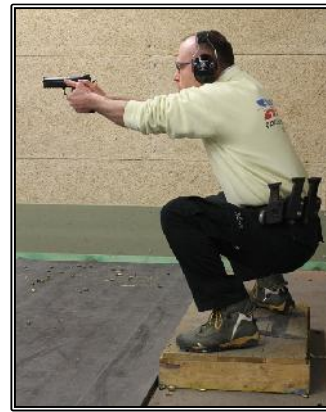


Squatting and kneeling positions are commonly used to shoot through low apertures or windows. Both methods have distinctive advantages that the novice shooter has to master while maintaining his upper body in the same stance as if he was standing upright (Isosceles Stance). During the Course Of Fire (COF), it will be up to the competitor to decide on the best method to adopt in accordance to the required shot(s) : number of targets, type of shot(s), next firing position,...

Squatting

Squatting offers greater mobility and requires a short reaction time to stand up, it will also allow the shooter to quickly leave his initial firing position and move to another one. This stance is undoubtedly the most effective for shooting through low openings or apertures, especially when engaging nearby targets.

-) Whilst maintaining your isosceles stance, squat down
-) Spread your feet a bit further apart than usual in order to increase your body stability and to bring your center of gravity lower to the ground.
-) Extend your arms towards the target and slightly lean forward in order to manage the felt recoil.



Kneeling Position

The kneeling position offers more stability to the body thus allowing a quicker sight picture. The latter characteristic makes this method really effective for distant targets (accuracy oriented) or when the competitor has to shoot around a barricade or from behind props.

-) Kick your strong foot backwards or alternatively step forward with your weak foot,
-) Assume the kneeling position and place the 'holster side knee' on the ground
-) Extend your arms towards the target and slightly lean forward from the waist in order to manage the felt recoil.



Dynamic Shooting

IPSC shooting is without any doubt a very dynamic sport. Shortly after the draw most courses of fire include movements. Shooting positions transitions may involve activities like going left to right, turning to face down range, opening a door, going prone, running up range, kneeling, crossing a bridge,... It is essential that whilst adopting these positions or when running (forwards or backwards) the shooter is constantly aware of the muzzle direction of his handgun as to avoid sweeping any part of his body.

Finger Out of the Trigger and the 90 Degree Rule

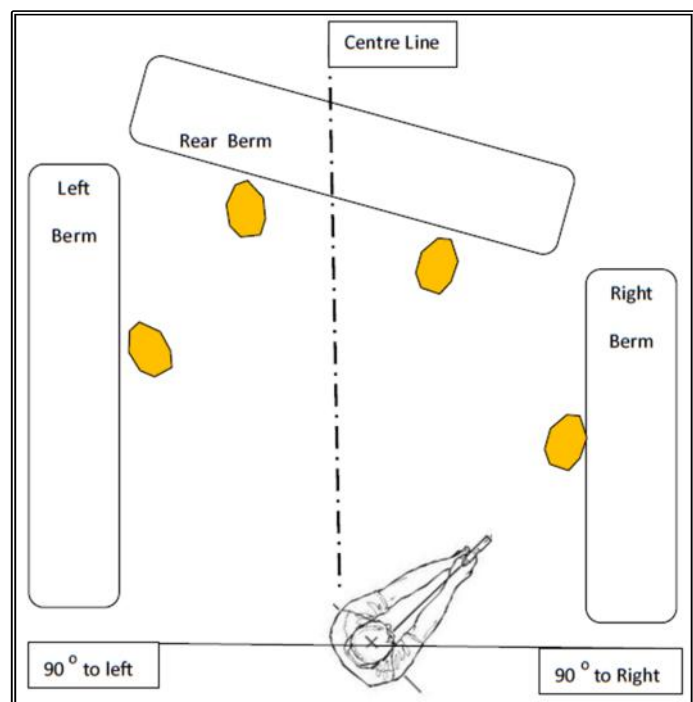
When transitioning between shooting positions or during on-course movements between targets, the trigger finger **MUST** be visibly outside of the trigger guard, unless you are engaging a target. The muzzle must not be allowed to point rearwards further than 90 degrees left and right from the median intercept of the backstop (See Diagram). Failure to comply with this rule invokes disqualification from the match.

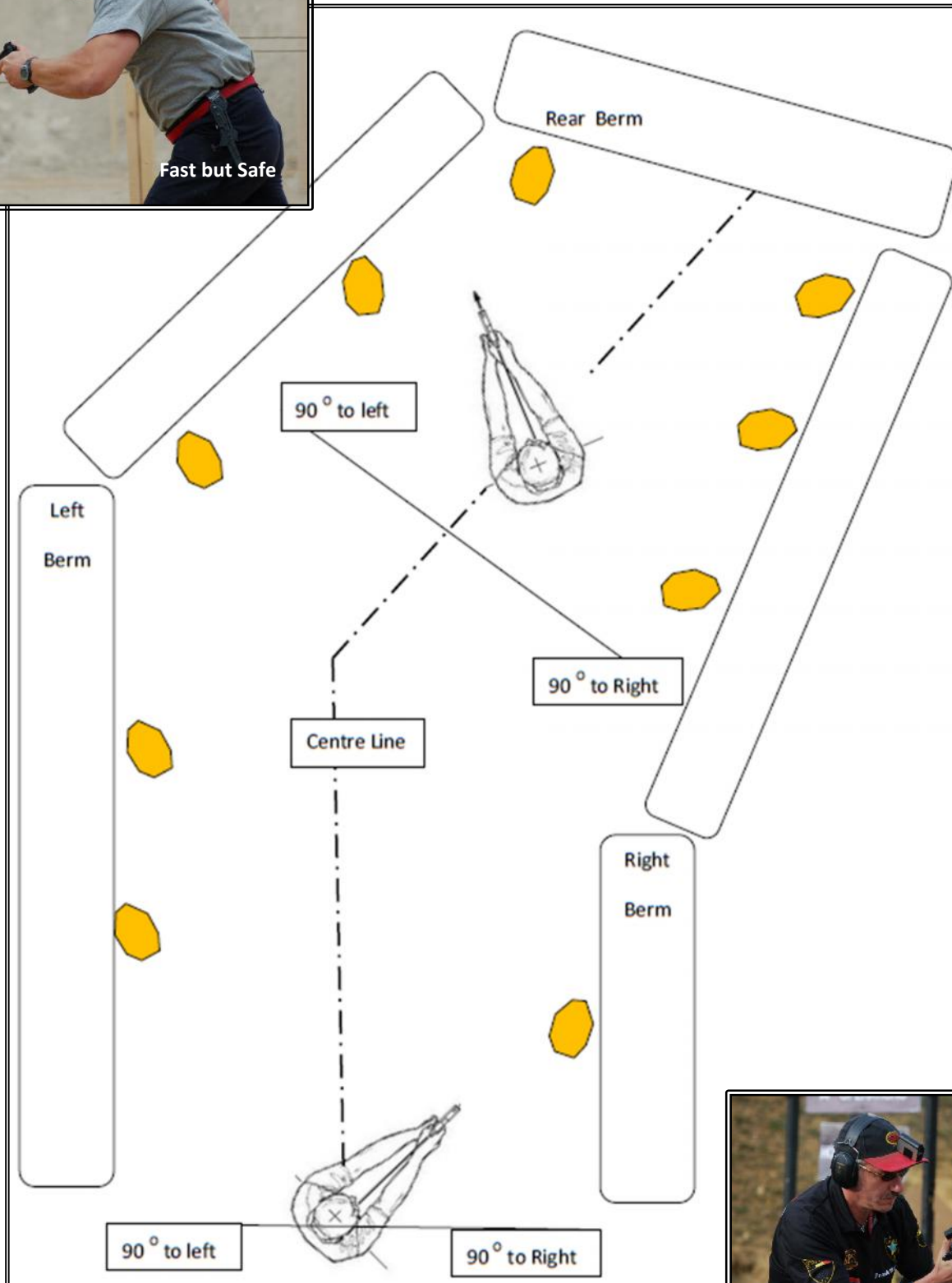
Shooting Positions Transitions

After having shot your last target at your initial position, turn your body and direct your feet in the direction you want to move. Keep your gun at shoulder height, arm slightly bent, muzzle directed towards the targets.

As you approach the next shooting position, prepare to be ready to shoot. As you move from one position to another, you may decide to leave both hands on your gun or to take your support hand off the gun.

During very short transitions (e.g. close aperture to aperture shooting) leave both hands on the gun, whilst for longer transitions take your support hand off the gun and use it as if you would do when trying to beat the hundred meters sprint world record. Start correctly gripping the pistol when you are a few steps away from your new shooting position in order not to waste any time and to ensure a steady and neutral grip. Once into position, extend your arms and engage your target(s).





Barricades

Barricades with or without cutouts or window(s) are a “must” in IPSC and are used to force competitors into engaging targets whilst being in (very) uncommon shooting positions. When changing from the left to the right side of a barricade, bring the gun closer to your body while maintaining you finger outside of the trigger guard.

Once you are ready to engage your target(s), lean forward, bring your body weight onto your lead foot and avoid your arms/hands or firearm touching the barricade in order not to jeopardize your gun control and follow-through.



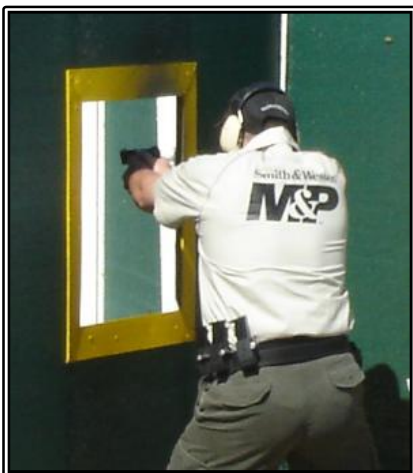
Apertures and Windows

When mandatory apertures or windows are used, the general rule is that scoring on targets behind the openings only occurs for bullets passed through these openings.

When engaging targets through an aperture do not move the muzzle of your firearm into the opening as the risk increases that your firearm, due to the recoil and subsequent upward movement, touches the barricade which could damage your sights or hinder the correct cycling of your firearms slide. You will also drastically limit your gun control.

When you have to shoot through an aperture, you should exactly know where your next target is. In fact, you should be able “to see” through the walls. Your gun should already be pointed in the direction of the target before it comes visible from the window.

Do not “rush” towards an opening, but gradually slow down before reaching the aperture in order to stabilize your body and quickly find your center of gravity to obtain a correct shooting stance in front of the window;



Doors

Before opening a door, check (preferably during your 'walkthrough') in which direction the door opens.

When reaching for the opening mechanism of the door take care not to sweep any part of your body with the muzzle of your firearm and keep your trigger finger outside of the trigger guard. Failure to do so will result in disqualification!!

You should use your free hand to pull or push the door to open it.

Keep your firearm parallel and rather high (shoulder's height) to the hand used to open the door.

Do not try to open the door with the muzzle of your firearm, the risk is high that by bumping into the door you will pull the trigger.



Prone Shooting

On the one hand, the prone position provides stability for long range shots that require accuracy. On the other hand and unless you do not have the choice, prone shooting is to be avoided as it's a very time consuming activity which is mainly to be used to engage targets through lower apertures. They are basically two technics for going prone.

Method 1 - Weaver

-) Draw you gun, finger off the trigger and muzzle pointing downrange.
-) Take a long step forward with your 'weak' foot.
-) Lean forward and simultaneously extend your weak hand in front of you and place it on the ground.
-) Bend your knees until your strong-side knee reaches the ground.
-) Finally start rolling and lay your body down on your shooting side while bending your weak-side leg in an angle of about 90 degrees.
-) Extend your arms and with your head resting on the inner side of your strong arm, place your pistol on the ground and align your sights.

**Method 2 - Isosceles**

-) Draw you gun, finger off the trigger and muzzle pointing downrange.
-) Repeat points 2 and 3 of Method 1.
-) Extend your feet/legs behind you and with the support of your non-shooting hand on the ground, lay flat on the ground, perpendicular to the targets.
-) Extend both arms flat in front of you and, with the pistol butt resting on the ground, align your sights. If your sight picture is hindered by low obstacles, raise your forearms slightly upwards with the elbows still touching the ground in order to have a sight picture which is clear of any obstacles.

When you are finished and with the finger outside the trigger guard and the muzzle pointing downrange, stand up prior to unloading your firearm under the supervision of the Range Officer.



Sitting

Some Courses Of Fire (COF) require the shooter to start in a seated position. The stage briefing may also include that you have to place your hands and feet on designated markings, so listen carefully to the Stage Briefing.

If the COF requires you to commence shooting whilst sitting down, try to keep your upper body just in the same way as you would in your Freestyle position, you are likely to be more assertive and to have a more comfortable shooting platform.



If it's not mandatory to commence shooting whilst sitting down, it's more likely that you will stand up rather than remain seated because in doing so you are going to shoot in a more familiar position. Therefore, when seated, place your feet in about the same way as you would do whilst standing in your Freestyle position (isosceles).

Stand up a few times as if you were to begin shooting and check the position of your feet in order to achieve a steady stance when engaging your target(s).

If, on the other hand, you decide to commence shooting whilst sitting down make sure that, **AFTER** the draw, the muzzle of your firearm does not sweep any part of your body, especially your leg.

Sweeping any part of one's body is a severe safety violation.

Picking Up from a Table

When this type of starting position is requested, usually there will be markings on the table indicating in which direction the muzzle of your firearm needs to be pointed. In this case we strongly advise you to strictly follow the Range officer's commands.

Under the RO supervision, place your gun flat on the table, the handle towards the hand you will be reaching your gun with.

Be careful whilst putting your gun flat on the table not to accidentally engage the magazine release button which will unlock your magazine without you noticing it.

To grab your pistol towards your Freestyle Grip, place the fingers of your weak hand under your rear sights and lift your pistol up a few centimeters, this action creates an open path for your strong hand to slide into position and to achieve a firm grip.

If you have to start with an empty gun, place the magazine(s) with the back of the magazine(s) on the table (bullets facing upward), to enable you to pick them up in the same way you would do when drawing them from your magazine pouch(es).



Here we are !

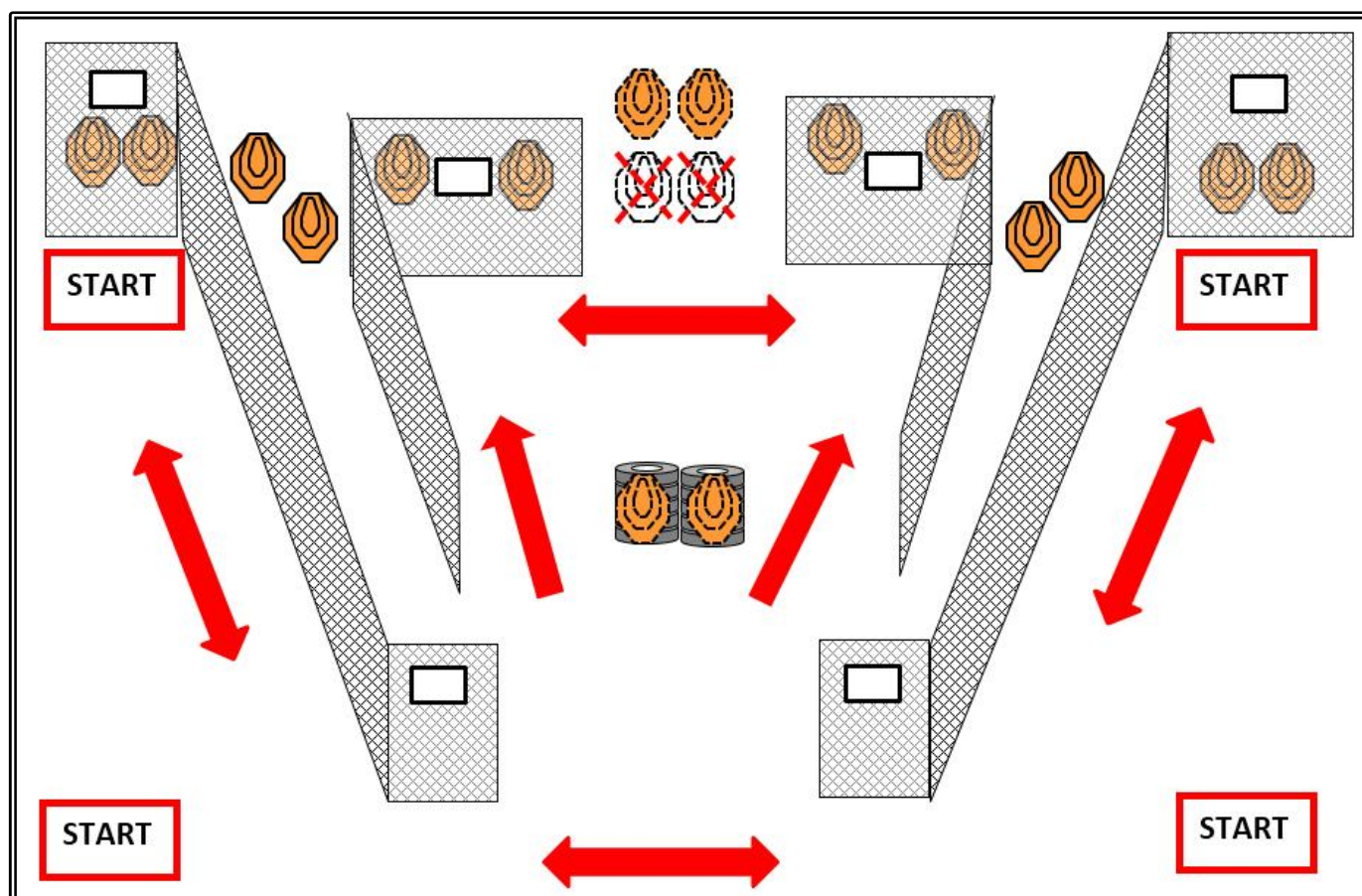
At the end of your Basic Skills Course, your BPSA Pistol Coaches will take pride in introducing you to your first IPSC Match. The main objectives are to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to respect the IPSC safety rules, understand the range commands and carefully put in practice the shooting skills taught to you.

It's not uncommon to be a little bit nervous during your first IPSC match. Don't worry since you will be invited to shoot the match with your BPSA Pistol Coaches and affiliates of your club at your side and, if the case may be, the other novices of your initiation course.

First things first.... forget about speed for the time being, just focus on safety and follow the instructions of the Range Officers and your Coaches. Pay attention to the fundamentals you learned and apply them on demand without any haste. Focus on shooting all "A" hits, maintaining a good sight picture and controlling the direction of your muzzle and your trigger finger.

Below you will find an example of stage setups you may encounter and in which you will have to apply a large portion of the skills and fundamentals you learned. The match official in charge of designing the stage's setup is called the Course Designer (CD).

Have a safe and fun shooting experience ! IPSC matches are social events as well as shooting contests.



Match conditions

Novice shooters, and to a certain extent some experienced competitors, will get nervous when they enter an IPSC match (preferably a Level I for beginners) and that they have to 'approach' a stage regardless the size or the number of rounds. During club training sessions, they have probably learned on how to perform a 'stage walkthrough' and what to look for in terms of reloading plan, the correct path to follow and the most critical maths to perform in the process.... However, these are club training sessions and they are very different to approaching stages under **Match Conditions**.

This means there will be:

-) No entry to the stage area before your squad briefing
-) A timed walkthrough, usually 3 to 5 minutes depending on the stage and/or the number of competitors in the squad. This will be the same for all squads whilst during training sessions, this is something that is usually forgotten whereby the competitor can perform multiple walkthroughs instead of the usual one or two.
-) One last quick walkthrough when the shooter before you is being scored and the stage reset from his run.
-) Very few people to help you out since they also need to scout the stage and make their mental plan in a very short time frame. So most of the time you are on your own to deal with the complexity of the stage(s).

You might consider setting up stages for each other when you train and then approach them under simulated match conditions. If you train in a group then stay away from the build and have one of the others put you through like a match RO would do it

Stage Strategy and Planning

Match planning can be broken down in **FIVE levels** :

-) **Level 1** : Pre-match preparation
-) **Level 2** : Physical stage walkthrough
-) **Level 3** : Mental stage walkthrough
-) **Level 4** : Shooting the stage
-) **Level 5** : Self-debriefing

Pre-match level

-) Since IPSC is a mental game, get your accountabilities and priorities right (see below – Is IPSC a mental game??)
-) If the stages are announced and available on the net, print a copy of the courses of fire to bring with you when you walk the stage.
-) Prior to the match, try to relax with some music, game or whatever works for you.
-) Try to practice stage walkthroughs during training sessions (see above)

Physical stage walkthrough:

-) Listen to the R.O. briefing of the stage and remember the most important details : number of **R**ounds; number of **T**argets ; **S**tarting position and **S**hooting positions or **R-T-S-S**.
-) After the briefing and when performing a stage walkthrough count the number of targets and subsequently the number of rounds in order not to overlook a target.
-) As for the round and target count, go over the stage and pick up the spots where you need to perform a reload. Preferably during 'off times' e.g. when moving from one shooting position to another.
-) If you are a novice shooter or you are not sure about your shots on specific targets, like far away targets or little plates, you should calculate them in for eventual extra shots in order not to compromise the spot where you are to perform your reload. So always have a plan B in your head when plan A should fail.
-) Determine exactly where to stop to shoot at your target(s) and watch out for unusual shooting angles where you could break the **90°**. Try to do multiple passages on these spots and simulate the gun and direction of the barrel (index finger) with your hands **ONLY**.

- J Keep an open mind and try to explore all your options. If time permits, try different things during a walkthrough. Keep an eye on other competitors and see how they will tackle the stage. But once your mind is set, don't change your plan in a very last minute as this will not end well most of the time.
- J Draw on past matches and stages to help you make your stage plan.
- J When the R.O. issues the order "clear the range", it's time to pursue the next level (at least when you are not called on-line). If the latter is the case, skip the mental stage walkthrough all together.

Mental stage walkthrough

- J After the physical walkthrough, you find yourself a quite spot to perform a mental walkthrough by going over the stage once again in your mind. Try to remember the whereabouts of all targets. In doing so, count the minimum number of rounds you will require to complete the stage. Compare this with the briefing notes and if required, repeat until all targets are accounted for.
- J When 'on deck-deck', use the limited time to go over your plan in your mind once more, eyes closed. Whilst doing this it is also useful to repeat the movements (like reloads) physically with the hands.
- J Use the final walkthrough (when 'on deck') while the crew reset after the previous shooter just to remind yourself of the shooting positions and reloads. This can be done physically or mentally, your choice

Shooting the stage

- J When on-line try to put your mind at rest, remember to breathe before the start signal and shoot at a pace that's within your capabilities.
- J Whether you be a newbie or experienced shooter, you will probably experience an adrenaline rush when going online. You will feel your heart pumping and some will even get a slight discomfort or anxiety .This is not necessarily a bad thing because you can put it to your advantage as it's known that an adrenaline rush will let you transcend your usual performance.
- J DO NOT deviate from your original plan unless circumstances make you to do so.
- J If you need more shots during a string than foreseen, your game plan will change and in a worst case scenario you will need to improvise for the remainder of the stage (reloads; positions....).
- J Remain focused on the number and positions of the targets.
- J Remain attentive to the Range Officers commands and perform the requested gestures accordingly (unload and show clear, if clear.....).
- J If possible, check the targets before they are scored or have someone from your squad to do this. This will help you for the next level debriefing.

Self-debriefing

- J Once the command "Range is safe" is issued, either check the scoring with the stats officer or if required, go back to the squad.
- J When all the 'paperwork' is done and you signed the scoresheet, go back and try to find a quite spot for self-debriefing. This is an important level which should not be underestimated, certainly when things went wrong during the stage and misses /non shoots / procedural errors were recorded.
- J Take ownership and acknowledge things that went wrong in order to avoid making the same mistakes in later stages.
- J Congratulate yourself and pat yourself on the back (if possible) when things went well- this will be a positive motivator for next stages.

When your turn comes around and you are still confused due to a variety of distractions like a previous late night out, gun trouble... then you can fall back on these very basic points to survive or the **3 R's**.

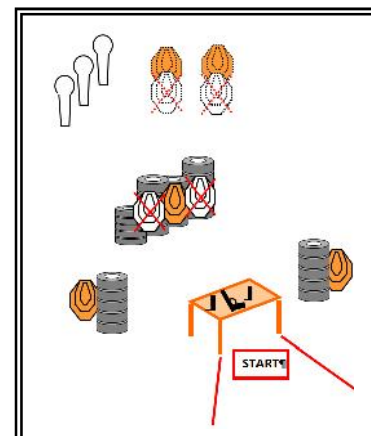
ROUNDS RELOADS RELAX

Chances are you'll get through and not blow the match on this one stage, remember that there are more stages to come (certainly in L3 matches) to make it up again and you just need to forget the way the confusion felt before you move on to the next stage.

Some fellow IPSC shooters are keen to share their pearls of wisdom with you like...

- 'Shoot fast and don't miss' ...or...
- 'Try not to forget any targets' ...or...
- 'Shoot at all targets' or even worse...
- 'How will you shoot this stage?' ...

Don't let these phrases get into your head as they will overpower your game plan and could only lead to confusion



Is IPSC a mental Game ?

Top shooters and coaches pretend that "the game is 90% mental". This is thought to be true. So how can we improve our game ? There are a lot of theories, writings and even voluminous booklets on the subject that is not limited to the shooting sport alone but in general applicable to all sports...

Well its all about **accountability** and **priority** and how they relate to a match environment.

Accountable

-) Everything matters, ALL the time....and you will not be awarded a second chance during a match !!! (except for a re-shoot).
-) You own what you do in practice, during every stage of every match.
-) In practice you apply this by owning your inevitable mistakes because if you do not recognise your mistakes, you will not own them and if you do not own them you cannot correct them by doing whatever it takes regardless of where, when or how it occurred.
Example: *At matches, we've all seen (and have likely been at one time) the guy that trashes a stage, walks off, and says "well, I was rusty because I haven't been getting my practice in lately. That isn't me. That doesn't really count. I'll get 'em next time. I'll be ready by the time the state championship rolls around."* **That is not being accountable.**
-) You have to have a goal: During training or practice you must push your skills to new levels otherwise you will stand still and there will be no more progress. Obviously when doing so, you will screw up on several occasions, but that OK since it means that are exploring your limits and working to push them further.
-) The learning curve in IPSC is very steep in the beginning and will only level out if you want it to level out !! Don't fall in the trap by saying at one stage ' well after so long I know what I can or cannot achieve' as this is a false statement. Be motivated and organised above all.
-) So in practice it can't be OK if you shoot a delta between your current performance and where you want to be. That delta should leave you with an uncomfortable feeling and be your motivation to continue in avoiding this next time around.

Priority

-) "Pay yourself first consistently" !! This is the second aspect of the mental approach.
It means that your nest egg is your highest financial priority. When you receive income, you put a pre-determined percentage into savings immediately, and then you spend or live on what is left. Doing the opposite (spending first, and saving what is left) is a great way to hardly ever save a euro.
-) The same concept applies to improving as a shooter. The majority of us have jobs or family obligations that dominate our time, and that is fine, and virtually unavoidable. But you will never maximize your potential as a shooter until you can maximize the time priority that you put toward improving.

⌋ If you want to improve, it is important to set your shooting goals first and then allocate time to exercise be it dry fire or live fire. Plan your training sessions and stick to your planning. Don't put it off because you rather watch a movie on TV or you feel you deserve to have a drink with the guys... or you will never get there !

Using 'leftover time' is not an option for someone who wishes to attain a certain level in this sport. As with anything else worth doing, you cannot expect to get more out of the sport than you are willing to put in.

Match Etiquette

An IPSC match must be enjoyable for you and also the other competitors, officials and spectators. Most of the following is common sense but it is always good to remind you to behave respectfully towards the staff and fellow shooters in order to ensure that everyone goes home satisfied and with a happy feeling.

Here are a **NINE** pointers and guidelines on how to act during a match and what to look out for :

1. Squad number / Competitor number

It is always possible that even within a squad, there are 2 persons with similar names or that names are not always pronounced correctly. So in order to avoid extended waiting times, remember you competitor number and squad number since these are the ones that can be used especially in bigger matches.

2. Your squadding schedule

Timing is of the essence when running matches in order to ensure that all competitors can finish on time. It is your responsibility to stay with your squad and not to cause unnecessary delays or disruptions so be very mindful of the following:

- ⌋ Pay attention when officials call out the names of the shooter on line and on deck. So you are prepared when you are up for shooting the stage.
- ⌋ Pay attention when transiting from stage to stage that you are not falling behind.
- ⌋ It is good practice to assign 1 member of the squad to handle the competitors stage sheets (if available) in order to smoothen the process.

3. Stage briefings

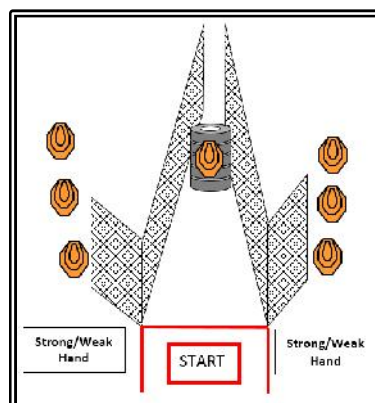
Listen to the stage briefing from the R.O. without interrupting him or without asking questions to your fellow shooters as this will disrupt the given time schedule. Questions can be asked when the stage briefing is finished and the official asks : *'any more questions?'*

4. Stage walkthrough

Do not rush into the stage but patiently await your turn to conduct your walkthrough. Also respect the time given by the official for the whole squad to perform the walkthrough.

When doing the walkthrough, do not hinder your fellow shooters but give them enough room to manoeuvre, as you would like them to do for you.

When on deck, you can perform a final full or partial walkthrough when the circumstances or the officials permit you to do so. Do not do it without their prior approval !



5. Reflection time

Do not interfere with a shooter on line or on deck as they most probably will be busy rehearsing the stage mentally. If you want to ask a question to your fellow shooters, its common practice to ask first : 'can I ask you something'... Do not block the view of the shooter on deck as he is next to tackle the course.

6. On line :

The LAMR command is not the time when you should start to practice the run in your head or to realize that you forgot to put on an extra magazine on your belt .This should have been done beforehand and it will only disrupt the good functioning of the match.

So rehearse the stage mentally when on deck and check your mags before going on deck.

7. Silence

It is common courtesy to remain silent when a fellow shooter is preparing on line or is shooting his stage. This can only disrupt the mental process of both the shooter and/or the official. Shouting to a shooter who is performing his stage could result in an official warning or disqualification for unsportsmanlike behaviour.

8. Help !

Ever so often, and due to a lack of staff, you could be requested to help out with resetting the stage or to patch targets. Please do not argue and help out as requested. Nobody gets paid in our sport so the match officials perform long hours in order to accommodate all shooters. A simple 'thank you' and a handshake would make the officials appreciated.

⋮

9. Complaints

Things can go wrong during a stage and you might feel dissatisfied with either yourselves or even the officials. Don't start shouting or insulting the man or woman but ask him/her in a polite way if he/she has the time to discuss something. If you are unhappy with the overall match setup (catering, patches....) you can have a quiet word with the match director (if available). If you have complaints in respect of points, misses or any other matter, please follow the prescribed match complaints protocols.

Warnings

Warnings are strong recommendations from match officials, before/during or even after a course of fire, pointing out to the competitor that he/she is not acting in line with the general rules. In a first occurrence, these warnings have no immediate impact on the match results but will be recorded on the competitors scoring sheets. They should be taken seriously and corrective action should be taken immediately.

Warnings are generally not cumulative, but if the case maybe, a second offense might result in penalties or disqualification from the match. During your training sessions, your coach will point out eventual shortcomings or oversights by issuing warnings.

A few examples where warnings will be issued


- J When you carry your handgun in a holster with no empty magazine well.
- J When you carry your handgun in a holster with the hammer cocked or striker not decocked.
- J When, once the appropriate command has been given, you move away from the start location prior to issuance of the Start Signal without the prior approval of the Range Officer.
- J When you receive any kind of assistance during a course of fire (except Range Officers safety warnings).
- J When you take a sight picture and/or dry fire prior to the Start Signal.
- J When you enter/move through a course of fire without the prior approval of a Range Officer.
- J When you or a person, other than an authorized Match Official, handle an original score sheet after it has been signed by a competitor and a Range Officer.
- J When you are creeping (e.g. moving hands towards the firearm a reloading device or ammunition) or physically moving to a more advantageous shooting position or stance after the "Standby" command and prior to issuance of the Start Signal AND, if the Range Officer can stop you in time, you will be issued a warning for the first offense.
- J When you or your delegate approach a target closer than one meter while scoring is in progress will incur a warning for the first offense.

Procedural Penalties

Procedural penalties (assessed at minus 10 points each) are imposed when a competitor fails to comply with procedures specified in a written stage briefing and/or is found to be in violation of other general rules. The Range Officer imposing the procedural penalties must clearly record the number of penalties, and the reason why they were imposed, on the competitor's score sheet.

Procedural penalties can be issued immediately for a first offense or as a second offense (e.g. after a warning)

A few examples where procedural penalties will be issued

- J When you fire shots, while any part of your body is touching the ground or any object beyond a Fault Line, you will receive one procedural penalty for each occurrence.
If, on the other hand, you have gained a significant advantage when faulting, you might receive a procedural penalty per shot fired. No penalty is assessed if you do not fire any shots while faulting.
- J When you fail to comply with a procedure specified in the written stage briefing  you will receive one procedural penalty for each occurrence. If, on the other hand, you have gained a significant advantage when not complying, you might receive a procedural penalty per shot fired.
- J When you fail to comply with a mandatory reload you will receive one procedural penalty for each shot fired after the point where the reload was required until a reload is performed.
- J When, in a Cooper Tunnel, you disturb one or more pieces of the overhead material you will receive one procedural penalty for each piece of overhead material which falls.
Overhead material, which falls as a result of you bumping or striking the uprights, or as a result of muzzle gases or recoil, will not be penalized.

- J When you are a creeping (see also 'warnings' above) you will receive one procedural penalty.
- J When you fail to engage any scoring target with at least one round you will receive one procedural penalty per target.
- J When a course of fire (or part) stipulates shooting strong or weak hand only, you will receive one procedural penalty for each occurrence of touching the handgun (or scooping it from a table etc.) with the other hand after the Start Signal (or from the point where single hand shooting has been stipulated). Exceptions are releasing an external safety (without scooping), reloading or correcting a malfunction. However, the procedural penalty will be applied on a "per shot fired" basis when you use the other hand or arm to support the handgun or the stipulated wrist or arm while firing shots or when seeking increased stability on the ground, a barricade or another prop while firing shots.
- J When you fire shots over a barrier constructed to a height of at least 1.8 meters you will receive 1 procedural penalty for each shot fired.

Disqualifications (DQ)

A disqualification will incur for a competitor who commits a safety infraction or any other prohibited activity during an IPSC match. He/she will be prohibited from attempting any remaining courses of fire regardless of the schedule or physical layout of the match, pending the verdict of any appeal submitted. Your pistol coach/trainer will elaborate more in detail on any occurrences to avoid repetition.

A few examples where disqualification will incur

Accidental discharge (AD)

- J When you fire a shot, which travels over a backstop, a berm or in any other direction, specified in the written stage briefing by the match organizers as being unsafe.
 - J When you fire a shot, which is striking the ground within a radius of 3 meters from yourselves.
 - J When you fire a shot while actually loading, reloading or unloading your firearm.
 - J When you fire a shot as a result of a remedial action in the case of a malfunction.
 - J When you fire a shot while transferring a handgun between hands.
 - J When you fire a shot during movement, except while actually shooting at targets.
 - J When you fire a shot at a metal target from a distance of less than 7 meters.
- Note:** No disqualification will be invoked if it can be established that the cause of the discharge is due to a broken or defective part of the firearm.

Unsafe gun handling

- J When you handle your firearm when not in a designated Safety Area or when not under the supervision of, and in response to a direct command issued by, a Range Officer.
- J When you allow the muzzle of your firearm to point beyond the safety angles of the course of fire.
- J When, during a course of fire, you drop your firearm or cause it to fall (loaded or not !)
- J When you draw or holster your firearm within the confines of a tunnel.
- J When you allow the muzzle of your firearm to point at any part of your body during the course of fire (= sweeping).
- J When you allow the muzzle of your loaded handgun to point rearwards, uprange beyond a radius of one meter from your feet during drawing or re-holstering.
- J When you use or wear more than one firearm during a course of fire.
- J When your finger is not outside the trigger guard :
 - o When clearing a malfunction.
 - o During loading, reloading or unloading the firearm.
 - o During movement.

- J When your loaded and holstered handgun is in the following condition:
 - o Your SA (single action) pistol has a chambered round and safety lever is not applied.
 - o Your DA (double action) or SA (selective action) pistol has the hammer cocked and the safety not applied.
- J When you handle live or dummy ammunition in the safety area.
- J When you have a loaded firearm without prior authorization from the RO.
- J When you retrieve your dropped firearm since the latter needs always to be retrieved by the RO.
- J When you use prohibited and/or unsafe ammunition.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- J When you cheat, being dishonest or fail to comply with the reasonable directions of a Match Official, or any behavior likely to bring the sport into disrepute.

Prohibited Substances

- J When you are in abuse of alcoholic products, non-prescription and non-essential drugs and the use of illegal or performance enhancing drugs.

Handgun Malfunctions

The majority of modern semi-automatic pistols, of any brand or model, are generally highly reliable firearms. However, they remain shooting tools exposed to mechanical problems (broken or damaged parts, malfunctions,...) which can render your pistol inoperative at the most crucial moment of the competition.

The reliability of your firearm does not only depend on its mechanics, but also on the magazines (dirty magazine, damaged lips,...), the ammunition (wrong bullet profile, reloaded ammo, insufficient pressure to cycle the gun,...) or the shooter himself (unclean gun, activating the safety, touching the slide, "limp-wristing," ...).

Serious competitors limit the risks of malfunctions by performing regular and thorough basic maintenance like cleaning, inspecting and lubricating their gun after each training session, looking for worn parts, reloading quality ammunition and using the correct shooting grip.

Whatever the reasons of gun failures are, the results are that several types of handgun malfunctions can occur in a semi-auto handgun like failure to feed, lock, chamber, eject, extract,...,

The novice shooter will retain three types of failures which are visually easy to identify and which require a minimum of movement and learning on how to clear them.

Safety Warning

When clearing a malfunction, your finger **must** be clearly outside the trigger guard, infringing rule #3 while solving a jam will result in an immediate disqualification and you will be prohibited from attempting any remaining courses from the competition.

Failure to Eject or “Stovepipe”

Description

A stovepipe occurs when the casing from the round that was just fired is not fully ejected. The casing is caught in the ejection port by the slide. The next round rests on the feeding ramp. When trapped into the ejection port, the jammed casing looks very much like a smokestack.

Remedial

With the finger out of the trigger guard, shooter's weak hand slaps onto the top of the slide and wipes out the trapped case. Removing the jammed casing allows the slide to move forward with its own spring tension and to chamber a new round. The shooter reacquires the target and go on shooting.



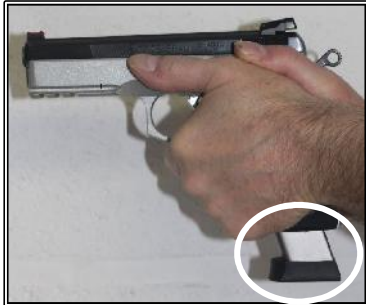
Failure to Feed or “Click”

Description

Failure to feed is a (very) common malfunction among IPSC shooters caused usually by not inserting the magazine properly into the handgun during the “Load and Make Ready” procedure. The shooter presses the trigger, but instead of firing a round, the hammer falls and makes a “Click”. The magazine hangs a few centimetres lower in the magwell and the slide's forward motion has stopped before picking up the next round out of the magazine.

Remedial

The appropriate drill is here the “Tap & Rack” method. With the finger out of the trigger guard, tap the bottom of the magazine with the palm of the support hand and push the magazine back into the firearm. Then pull the slide back, load the next round and restart shooting.

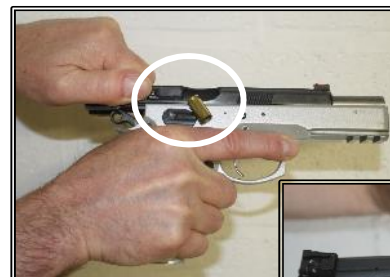
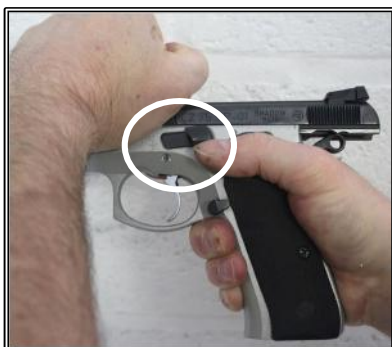
**Failure to go into Battery – Immediate Action (IA)****Description**

Failure to go into battery is a generic term for all other type of malfunctions that a competitor may encounter like double-feed, tip-up malfunction, short stroke, failure to eject, to chamber, to lock, to extract..., or whatever the jam is and that the shooter cannot immediately and clearly identify the causes of it.

Immediate Action is the technique to use to effectively and simply solve all handgun malfunction cases including the two previous ones. This method does without the initial problem identification phase, which generally saves time while ultimately only having to assimilate a single malfunction drill for all the cases that arise.

**Remedial**

With the finger out of the trigger guard, rack the slide to clear the action and lock it back with the slide stop. Push on the magazine lock to free the magazine, if needed, (hard) strip the magazine from the gun, cycle the slide two or three times quickly and get rid of the cartridge(s) and/or case(s) causing the jam. Visually inspect the chamber and ejection port area. Insert a fresh magazine, cycle the slide and resume shooting.



Belgian Parcours Shooting Association
Safety Rules and Basic Skills Course for IPSC Beginners

