

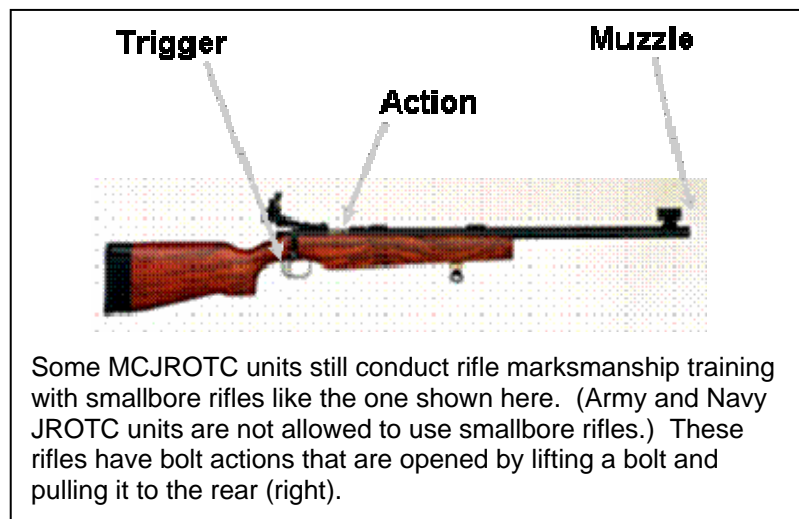
# Unit 7 – Air Rifle and Safety Marksmanship

## Errata Sheet

### Chapter 1: Air Rifle Safety and Marksmanship

#### Lesson 2: Firearm Safety and Safe Range Operation

##### Rules for Safe Gun Handling



### Chapter 1: Air Rifle Safety and Marksmanship

#### Lesson 2: Firearm Safety and Safe Range Operation

##### Shooting Ranges

1. **READY AREA.** Most ranges also have an area behind the firing line that is designated as a preparation or ready area. If there are other shooters who are waiting their turn to fire, this is the area where they should remain. If there are spectators, this also is the area where they should stand or sit. Individuals in the Ready Area must remain in that area and not go forward to the firing line until instructed to do so by the Range Officer.

# **Chapter 1: Air Rifle Safety and Marksmanship**

## **Lesson 2: Firearm Safety and Safe Range Operation**

### **Firing Procedures and Commands**

#### **SAFE LOADING PROCEDURE**

To load an air rifle while maintaining the highest level of safety, follow these steps:

1. Start with the bolt (action) open. After firing a shot, always open the bolt (action) as the first step in loading. Do not cock (charge) an air rifle with a closed action.
2. Cock (operate) the charging lever to charge the rifle with air.
3. Insert pellet in the loading port or breech end of the barrel.
4. Close the bolt (action).
5. Lift the air rifle into position to prepare to fire the next shot. Keep the index finger on the outside of the trigger guard while bringing the rifle into the firing position.

#### **SAFETIES**

A safety is a mechanical device that blocks the trigger or firing mechanism from working when it is engaged (safety is on). Many air rifles used in JROTC marksmanship programs have safeties, but many other target air rifles do not have safeties. Safeties are made for general purpose guns where there is a possibility that a gun may be carried loaded. For example, hunters use safeties when they carry a loaded rifle or shotgun in the field or woods. Safeties are not normally used in target shooting because the primary 'safety' in target shooting is the open action. More importantly, rifles on target ranges are loaded only on the firing line and only when they are to be fired at a target so there is never any reason to carry a loaded rifle to any other location on a range.

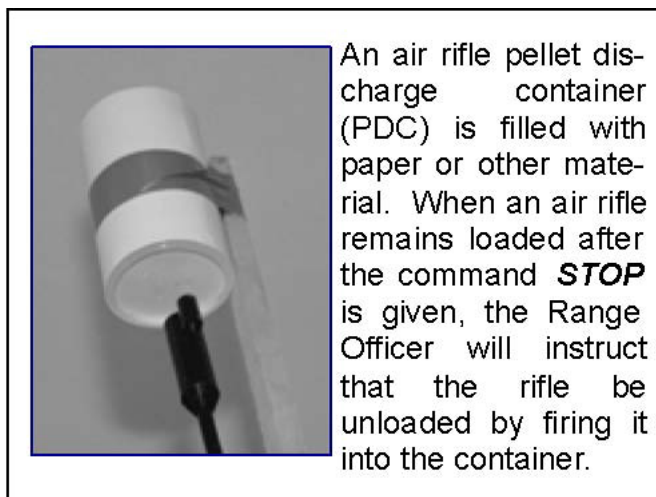
Even though engaging and disengaging the safety is not part of normal air rifle loading procedures on target ranges, your instructor may wish to have you practice with the safety so you will be familiar with safeties and how they work. However if you do this, you must understand that engaging a safety does not relieve you of the responsibility for following all of the rules for safe gun handling.

# Chapter 1: Air Rifle Safety and Marksmanship

## Lesson 2: Firearm Safety and Safe Range Operation

### Additional Safety Rules

1. **MALFUNCTIONS.** If at any time during a firing exercise, your air rifle fails to fire or does not function properly, keep the muzzle pointed downrange, raise your hand so the Range Officer can see it and announce **Malfunction**. The Range Officer will then give instructions on what to do with the air rifle. If the air rifle has a charge of air or is loaded with a pellet, the air charge must be released and the pellet cleared from the barrel before the air rifle may be removed from the firing line. Even if the air charge cannot be released, the bolt (action) must still be opened and the pellet removed from the barrel. The Range Officer may use a .177 cal. cleaning rod to remove the pellet from the barrel before the air rifle is taken off of the firing line.
2. **LOADED RIFLE.** A loaded air rifle is an air rifle that has either a charged gas chamber and/or a pellet in the barrel. Your rifle's air charge must be discharged and any pellet that is the barrel must be removed before the air rifle may be grounded or removed from the range. If you still have a loaded air rifle after the command **STOP** is given, keep the muzzle pointed downrange, raise your hand and announce **Loaded Rifle**. The Range Officer will give you instructions for discharging your air rifle to unload it. This may be done by instructing you to fire into an open target backstop or to fire into a pellet discharge container (PDC).



3. **GROUNDING RIFLE.** When you bring your rifle to the firing line, you may be instructed to "ground" it. You may also be instructed to ground your rifle

after you finish firing and it is checked by the Range Officer. Rifles are grounded so that no one will be handling them while people go downrange or while relays of firers change. To ground a rifle, be sure the action is open and that the air rifle is not cocked, does not have a pellet in the barrel and was checked by a Range Officer. The rifle must then be placed on the floor, shooting mat or a bench at the firing line with the muzzle remaining pointed downrange.

4. **LINE IS HOT/LINE IS SAFE.** When conducting firing, the Range Officer will alternately describe the firing line as being “hot” or “safe.” A firing line is hot when all persons on the range are in proper locations behind the firing line and the line is prepared for live firing. A firing line is safe when all firing has been completed and all rifles are unloaded, checked and grounded. No one can move forward of the firing line until it is safe.
5. **PERSONAL HYGIENE.** Lead is a toxic substance that must not be ingested. Medical research conducted at the U. S. Olympic Training Center confirms that simple hygiene precautions effectively prevent individuals who shoot air rifles from ingesting any lead. The rules are simple: Do not bring any food into the range or consume any food on the range. Do not bring any drinks into the range unless they are bottled and can be closed. Wash your hands after handling air rifle pellets (preferably in cold water). Cleaning the backstop area of spent lead pellets must be done only by the instructor or another adult.
6. **GUN CASES.** Air rifles are often brought to the ranges in gun cases that can be locked for security and are used to transport the rifles. When an air rifle is taken from its case, the first thing that must be done when the case is opened is to open the bolt (action) of the rifle. Even if the rifle is lying in an open case, the action must be open. When the Range Officer gives instructions for taking air rifles and equipment to the firing line, remove the rifle from the case with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction. Immediately control the rifle so that the muzzle points up, then take it to the firing line. When firing is completed, after your air rifle is checked by the Range Officer, you may replace it in the case. Only after the gun is in the case and the case is ready to close, can you close the action.
7. **AIR RIFLE STORAGE.** After a shooting session is completed the air rifles must be stored in secure, locked storage. When firing is completed and your air rifle is checked by the Range Officer, you may be instructed to bring the rifle to the storage area where your instructor will be in charge of

accounting for and locking up the rifle. Whenever you carry your rifle from the range to the storage area, be sure to keep the muzzle pointed up and in a safe direction.

8. **AIR OR CO<sub>2</sub> CYLINDERS.** Some air rifles used in JROTC marksmanship activities utilize air or CO<sub>2</sub> cylinders as a means of propulsion. These cylinders are safe if handled properly, but proper safety precautions must be taken. When screwing filled cylinders into air rifles, hand-tighten the cylinders; do not use a wrench or other tools to tighten them. When filling cylinders from a master tank, always stand to the side of the cylinder; do not allow its end or base to point at you or another person. Tighten the cylinder only tight enough to prevent gas leakage; never over-tighten it. High pressure air or gas cylinders come with factory recommendations for periodic inspections; these must be followed.

## Other Resources:

**Rifle Safety and Marksmanship.** A CD produced by the Civilian Marksmanship Program. See the section on "Safety and Getting Started." Copies of the CD can be ordered for \$14.95 each from the CMP, <http://www.odcmp.com/Programs/publications.htm>.

### **National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rules**

The official rules for air rifle competitions are issued by the National Three-Position Air Rifle Council. The JROTC Command is a member of the Council. See the "**Safety Rules for Air Rifle Ranges**" that are printed on the inside front and back covers. Section 2 of the rule-book titled **2.0 SAFETY**, starting on page 5 and Section 7, titled **7.0 COMPETITION PROCEDURES** provide detailed rules covering the safe conduct of firing during formal competitions.

**Air Rifle Safety Rules** A safety poster produced by the CMP for display on air rifle ranges. Copies are available to JROTC units. The poster shows the basic rules of safe gun handling and important rules for air rifle range safety.

**Shooters Guide to Position Air Rifle.** A safety and marksmanship training guide produced by Junior Shooting Sports USA. Many JROTC units have copies of this guide. See Chapter 3 titled "Gun Safety and Range Commands."

