



**DEM**  
RHODE ISLAND



# **GREAT SWAMP SHOOTING RANGE POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**Great Swamp Management Area  
RI Department of Environmental Management  
Division of Fish and Wildlife  
277 Great Neck Road  
West Kingston, RI 02892  
United States of America**

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# **General**

## **Purpose and Applicability**

This document serves to codify the Great Swamp Shooting Range's (hereafter "GSSR") policies and standard operating procedure to ensure a safe, inviting environment for all users and staff.

Documentation and maintenance of this manual will enhance transparency, consistency, and clarity regarding the GSSR operations.

This manual is directly applicable to the entirety of the GSSR site and GSSR operations. These policies are established under the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (hereafter "RI DEM") that serves as the property management organization.

GSSR staff have authority to apply these policies as well as discretionary authority for safety and site management. Comments and challenges regarding GSSR staff decisions and policies can be forwarded to the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Hunter Education Coordinator.

## **Facility Features**

The Great Swamp Shooting Range is a free, public shooting range situated in Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Great Swamp Management Area (approx. 3,500 acres).

Established in 1976, the range has gone through several renovations over the years. In 2018, through combined state and federal Pittman-Robertson funding, the range underwent a major renovation to update and improve its capabilities and accessibility. In this latest iteration, the facility offers areas for three distinct disciplines: archery, clay target shooting, and paper target shooting.

The archery range does not require range permitting. Two lanes offer up to 40 yards each of usable distance. Users can bring their own targets or ask RSO staff for foam block or cloth bag targets.

The clay target range uses a foot-operated clay target thrower machine capable of launching clay targets in fixed or random trajectory modes.

The main target firearm range is physically split between two 8-lane ranges: a 100-yard total range (with 50-, 75-, and 100-yard positions) and 50-yard total range (with 7-, 10-, 15-, 25-, and 50-yard positions). Both allow air guns, black powder, rimfire, and centerfire cartridges. Each numbered shooting station has a concrete shooting bench covered in rubber mat, adjustable height-and-position stool seating, and shell deflectors to either side. Users have the option to shoot while sitting or standing (no prone position) and from either side of the bench to accommodate right- and left-handed users, as well as wheelchairs.

The main target range area is paved and wheelchair accessible. RSO staff is available to help users with target setup down range. The archery, clay target, and parking areas are packed earth. During foul weather all earthen areas, including the target areas down range, can become muddy, snow/ice covered, and/or flood.

An ADA compliant portable toilet is onsite in the parking area and a hand wash station is provided outside the range office. A drinking water cooler dispensing commercially acquired bottled water is always available inside the range office, but please ask an RSO before entering.

## **Hours of Operation and Severe Weather Policy**

The facility is open seasonally, generally opening in early- or mid-April, and then operates continually for six months into the early Fall. Public access and shooting hours are 8:30AM to 6:00PM, seven days a

week, holidays included. Users may arrive as late as 5:30PM to begin using a range, but all use range stops at 5:45PM to allow users and staff to clean, close, and lock the facility by 6:00PM. RI DEM reserves the right to close the range, either partially or completely, to public use for the purposes of outreach events and educational programming. Advance notice will be given whenever possible.

Severe weather will close the facility if it is deemed there is a risk to users. Rain will not cause a closure or shooting suspension but sustained heavy winds may require facility closure. During lightning, users will be asked to pack up their belongings and standby in their vehicles until RSOs deem it safe to resume operation or close the range. If conditions are such that traveling to and from the range may become dangerous or impossible, such as due to snow or fallen trees, the range will be closed. Facility availability decisions are made by GSSR staff in the interests of safety and must be respected by our users.

If in doubt regarding severe weather or local circumstances, check the GSSR website, RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife Facebook page, or contact the range supervisor cell phone, listed under the "Contact" heading, for up-to-date information or a voicemail status message.

## Staffing

The range only operates while under the supervision of RI DEM-approved Range Safety Officers (hereafter "RSOs"). All employed RSOs will have military or law enforcement credentials, a RSO certification, a firearm instructor certification, or sufficient prior RSO experience (with verifiable references) per RI DEM discretion.

A minimum of two RSOs will be on-duty at all times. If for any reason a user finds the range accessible, but with no RSOs present, the user should not unpack or handle firearms, nor go down range. Users should contact the range supervisor, listed under the "Contact" heading, to report an extended absence.

## Donations

The GSSR is funded through state and federal means, primarily Pittman-Robertson taxation on firearm and hunting industry goods. Monetary donations, while appreciated in thought, are not necessary for the continued operation of the range. If a user wishes to discuss gifting relevant commemorative items to the range, please contact the range supervisor, listed under the "Contact" heading.

## Volunteering

During instances where outreach events require more assistance, RI DEM reserves the ability to designate approved volunteers as RSOs. Outside of such events, volunteer help is generally not needed for facility upkeep. Any user who still wishes to explore volunteering time or effort to the range is welcome to contact the range supervisor, listed under the "Contact" heading.

## Contact

Questions, comments, or concerns can be directed primarily to the range supervisor, Branton Elleman. They may be reached at 401-575-6331 or [Branton.Elleman.CTR@dem.ri.gov](mailto:Branton.Elleman.CTR@dem.ri.gov).

**If the range must be reached for emergency reasons, and the supervisor is unavailable, users should contact the Outdoor Education Office at 401-539-0019.** Staff there will be able to coordinate further action.

## Definitions

*Range Safety Officer (RSO):* A RI DEM staff member, or specifically staff-approved volunteer, who oversees the safe function of the entire range facility and firing line. All RSO operational commands must be followed as quickly as is safely possible and without argument. The RSO is authorized to establish and enforce facility policy and management decisions. RSO decisions carry the force and compliance authority of the RI DEM organization.

*Down Range:* The area on any range forward of the designated firing line. On the main target ranges, this is the area enclosed by the earthen berms. On the clay target range, this is the open field surrounded by the tree line. On the archery range, this is the cleared area forward of the chosen shooting distance.

*Firing Line:* One (1) continuous painted red line, forward of the shooting benches, separating the main target range shooting stations from down range.

*Ready Lines:* Two (2) continuous painted yellow lines, making an approximately 2 foot "lane" located directly behind the main target range shooting stations.

*Ready Area:* Area behind both ready lines, but still under the covered structure. The picnic tables and chairs located here are free to use on a first-come basis. NO UNCASING/CASING FIREARMS IN THIS AREA. Non-permitted guests may stay within this area, going no further forward than the ready lines.

*Direct Supervision:* Closely monitoring someone, or something, as the priority and primary point of attention and thus being able to respond immediately due to close physical proximity. Any incidents while under direct supervision reflect on those supervising as well as those being supervised.

*Armor Piercing Ammunition (18 U.S. Code § 921):* A projectile or projectile core which is constructed entirely (excluding the presence of traces of other substances) from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium.

*Aimed Fire:* Firing while using functional sights that are aligned with the shooter's eye AND target.

*Uncontrolled Rapid Fire:* Taking multiple shots at such a speed that projectiles hit the baffles, cross into adjacent lanes, or impact the ground unreasonably close to the firing line. To preemptively prevent incidents, RSOs may still ask a user, at any time and for any genuine reason, to slow down their rate of fire if on-target impact groupings are too inconsistent and/or unpredictable.

*HOT Range:* Users are allowed to commence fire. No users may be down range. (see *Hot/Cold Range Procedure*, page 15)

*COLD Range:* Users are forbidden from handling firearms. Users may travel down range. (see *Hot/Cold Range Procedure*, page 15)

*Cease Fire:* Users are to immediately stop firing and place firearms on the shooting bench or shotgun rack. (see *Cease Fire Procedure*, page 16)

*Misfire:* Failure of a firearm to correctly function.

*Hang Fire:* Unexpected delay between the triggering of the firearm and the ignition of the propellant in the ammunition.

*Squib Load:* A malfunction of a firearm in which a fired projectile does not have enough force behind it to exit the barrel and thus becomes stuck.

# Target Range Regulations

## A. Range Operation

1. Daily operation of DEM operated target range(s), such as the Great Swamp Shooting Range, including but not limited to the process to obtain a permit, permit holders signing in and out of the range, transporting firearms to and from the range, safe use of the range, firearm handling requirements, allowable targets at the range, allowable calibers for use at the range, etc., shall be regulated by target range policies and procedures designated by the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife.
2. All target range users are responsible for adhering to Rhode Island Code of Regulations Title 250-RICR-100-§1.33, as well as current target range policies and procedures designated by the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife.
  - I. A copy of the policies and procedures and/or link to the online PDF document will be provided to each permit applicant during the initial and renewal permit process.
  - II. A copy of the policies and procedures will be kept at the Great Swamp Shooting Range for permit holders and staff to refer to.
  - III. Printed copies of the policies and procedures will be available upon request at the Great Swamp Shooting Range.
  - IV. The policies and procedures manual will be available on the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife website.

## B. Administrative Rules

1. All users must obtain a range permit prior to using the target range. The Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife reserves the right to limit the number of permits issued. Target range Permits are non-transferable.
  - I. To apply for a range permit, all applicants twenty-one (21) years of age or older must:
    - a. Obtain an application from the Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife, Great Swamp Field Headquarters, 277 Great Neck Rd., West Kingston, RI 02892 or the Fish and Wildlife Education Office at 1B Camp E-Hun-Tee Place, Exeter, RI 02822 or at [www.dem.ri.gov/GreatSwampRange](http://www.dem.ri.gov/GreatSwampRange).
      1. Complete the application form and have his/her signature notarized.
      2. Attach a copy of your driver's license or other government-issued photo ID along with one (1) of the following certifications:
        - i. State-issued Hunter Safety Education Card
        - ii. State-issued, Firearm Hunting License
        - iii. Rhode Island Pistol Carry Permit
        - iv. RI DEM Pistol/Revolver Certification Card ("Blue Card")
        - v. Active-Duty or Retired Police/Military ID
        - vi. Equivalent certification as determined and approved by the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife.
      3. Mail the completed application package along with a LEGAL SIZE, self-addressed stamped envelope to: Range Permit, Rhode Island

Division of Fish and Wildlife, 1B Camp E-Hun-Tee Place, Exeter, RI 02822.

4. When this material is received, applicants will be notified that they are eligible to attend a range safety briefing. A range pass will be issued at the successful conclusion of the range safety briefing. Applications for minors (under twenty-one (21) years of age) must include the notarized signature and a copy of the driver's license or other government-issued photo ID of a parent or legal guardian. Illegible, incomplete, or incorrect permit applications will not be processed.
5. For renewal of expired permits, please complete the Target Range Permit Application. Check the RENEWAL box at the top right and attach your ID and previous permit. It is not necessary to attach your gun safety certification or have your signature notarized unless you are moving from a "minor" to an "adult" permit in which case you must reapply in full. Users who renew must attend a range safety briefing to be updated on any changes in regulations or policy.
  - II. All minors (under twenty-one (21)) must be accompanied by a "qualified adult" when using the range. A "qualified adult" is any person twenty-one (21) years of age or older who is permitted by law to possess and use a firearm. The "qualified adult" must also possess a valid range permit and is directly responsible for the actions of minors under their supervision. The "qualified adult" must assure by direct supervision that minors follow all safety and facility policies. The "qualified adult" shall supervise only one (1) minor at a time.
  - III. All individuals must display their Range Permit on the corresponding range station clips (located on vertical posts behind the ready lines) so that it is visible to other users and to supervisory personnel. The permit will remain displayed for the duration of the visit and will be reclaimed on exit.
2. Persons so designated by the RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife are authorized to carry out the rules and regulations with regard to target range users. Such persons may include full-time employees, part-time employees, seasonal employees, contract employees, and volunteers.
3. Hours of operation will vary by season, availability of staff, and environmental or other conditions. The RI DEM Division of Fish and Wildlife reserves the right to alter hours and days of operation as conditions warrant.
4. The primary use of a RI DEM operated target range is for Hunter Education training. Secondary use is for public practice. Range(s) may be closed without notice for special training, maintenance, safety, or weather conditions.
5. Assumption of Risk and Hold Harmless Agreement: In exchange for a person's use of the target range facility, issuance of a range permit for such use, or the issuance of a range permit to a minor at the person's request, said person agrees that they shall assume—at all times—full liability for any injuries which they or the subject minor may suffer while at or near the target range facility. In addition, said person shall hold the State and its agents harmless from all claims or damage suits arising from the person's or the subject



minor's actions at or near the target range facility, either by way of omission or commission.

### **C. Administrative Suspension/Revocation of Permit**

1. With the understanding that public safety is a primary goal of the Division of Fish and Wildlife; the use of a RI DEM operated target range(s) is a privilege extended only to those individuals who demonstrate the knowledge and skills to safely use a firearm in public. Due to potential risk associated with the public use of firearms in a manner other than as dictated in these Regulations, a Range Safety Officer has the authority to immediately seize the range permit of any individual who demonstrates unsafe behavior. A Range Safety Officer has the discretion to impose a temporary suspension (1 day, 1 week, or 1 operational season) of shooting privileges and/or a repeat range safety briefing. In the event of severe or repeat infractions, shooting privileges may be permanently revoked.
2. Any person aggrieved by a suspension decision pursuant to § 1.33 of this Part, permanent revocation of a range permit, or determination to suspend or revoke a range permit, may appeal the decision in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, R.I. General Laws § 42-35 and the Administrative Adjudication for Environmental Matters Act R.I. General Laws Chapter 42-17.

### **D. Administrative Penalties**

1. Any person who is found, pursuant to the authority of RI General Laws § 42-17.1-2, to have used or to have attempted to use a target range prior to having been issued a range permit or during a period when a target range is closed shall be assessed an administrative penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
2. Any person who is found, pursuant to the authority of RI General Laws § 42-17.10 to have used or to have attempted to use a target range during the period of a suspension/revocation of their range permit pursuant to § 1.33(C) of this Part, shall be assessed an administrative penalty in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
3. Any person aggrieved by a final decision pursuant to § 1.33(D) of this Part, may appeal the decision in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, RI General Laws § 42-35 and the Administrative Adjudication for Environmental Matters Act, R.I. General Laws § 42-17.10.

## **Target Range Policies**

### **A. Firearm Handling Requirements**

1. While using the target range:
  - I. Treat all firearms as if loaded.
  - II. Always keep the muzzle of the firearm pointed in a safe direction.
  - III. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
  - IV. Keep the action open and the firearm unloaded until ready to shoot.
  - V. Know your target and what is beyond.
  - VI. Know how to safely operate your firearm.
  - VII. Use only the correct ammunition for your firearm.

- VIII. In case of a misfire (failure of a firearm to correctly function), hang fire (unexpected delay between the triggering of the firearm and the ignition of the propellant in the ammunition), or squib load (a malfunction of a firearm in which a fired projectile does not have enough force behind it to exit the barrel and thus becomes stuck) keep the firearm pointed down range until it can be safely cleared.
- IX. Never use drugs or alcohol before or while shooting.
- X. Always wear eye and ear protection while shooting.

## **B. Facility Policies**

1. Obey all range rules, regulations, policies, and commands issued by RSOs.
2. All range users must sign in before using the range and sign out upon leaving (see *Sign In/Out Procedure*, page 15).
3. Non-Permitted guests are allowed on the property but not allowed on the firearm firing lines (forward of the ready lines).
4. There is no minimum or maximum age for permitted range users.
  - I. RSOs reserve the right to limit users from shooting if they are unable to safely handle their firearms or appropriately respond to RSO commands
5. No cell phones or electronic devices not related to shooting are allowed on the firing line. Cell phones and other such electronic devices must be put away and silent while on the firing line. If a user is required to have a cell phone or other device for special circumstances it should be set to vibrate, or they must make special arrangements with the RSO prior to shooting. However, at no time are users allowed to answer, check, look at, or otherwise handle a cell phone or electronic device while on the line. If the cell phone or device must be checked the firearm must be unloaded, placed properly orientated on the shooting bench, a chamber indicator inserted in the firearm, and the user must leave the firing line before answering, checking, or handling the cell phone or electronic device.
6. Dress properly. No flip flops, sandals, or open-toed shoes. No low-cut shoes without socks. No sleeveless shirts, tank tops, bikini tops, or low-cut blouses. "Top" and "bottom" garments must be worn.
7. Food and drink are allowed in the ready area. Please wash hands and face thoroughly before consuming food or drinks and keep containers closed, when possible.
8. Individuals are responsible to properly dispose of all trash generated, including shell casings and targets, prior to leaving the range. Please inspect all waste to ensure it is inert and harmless, ensure that no live ammunition is mixed in accidentally. Propellants, black powder, and other chemical wastes should be kept separate from other trash and brought to the staff for proper disposal.
  - I. Adhesive backed targets may be left on target frame backer boards.
  - II. Brass shell casings, including plated, may be donated to the range for recycling in the provided white buckets.
  - III. All other shell casings (steel, aluminum, plastic shotshells) should be discarded in the trash.
9. Maintain awareness and control of your possessions to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

- I. RSO staff are not allowed to forcibly remove locks or gain entry to containers due to theft and liability concerns.
10. Young children must be under direct supervision at all times. Children are not allowed to be left in a car unless accompanied by an adult guardian. At no time should children be allowed to interfere with safe range operation or allowed to wander unsupervised.
11. Pets must be leashed and under direct supervision at all times. No pets are allowed forward of the ready lines. At no time should pets be allowed to interfere with safe range operation. Users may be asked to remove themselves and/or their pets if staff find the pet to be continually and negatively affecting users' personal range enjoyment (e.g., making disruptive noises or causing a user undue stress).
12. Smoking is prohibited during range use, inside the range office and within twenty-five (25) feet of the archery, clay and/or main target firearm ranges.
13. Retrieval of copper and/or lead from berms and backstop is prohibited.
14. Climbing on either side of berms or backstop is prohibited.
15. Parking is allowed in designated parking area only.
16. Please limit range time to one (1) hour when others are waiting to shoot.
17. While attending a range safety briefing is not mandated every year, users should check for new regulations or policy changes at the start of each season.
18. The RI Wildlife Management Area requirement of solid daylight fluorescent orange is not required of active range users.
19. Per RI Code of Regulation (250-RICR-100-00-1.17), holstered firearms are not permitted to be carried in state parks or management areas, including the Great Swamp Management Area.
20. Per 18 U.S. Code § 922, users of controlled substances—such as marijuana—are not permitted to purchase or possess firearms.

### **C. General Range Policies**

1. Transport firearms to and from the parking lot unloaded and in a case, bag, or "sock". All firearms in a case must have muzzles pointing in the same direction.
2. Human silhouette targets and targets that depict people are not allowed. Basic silhouette targets may be folded or cut to obscure the human form.
3. No incendiary, reactive, or explosive targets are allowed.
4. Perform aimed fire only. No uncontrolled rapid fire, shooting from the hip, or drawing from a holster.
5. Firing at targets placed directly on the ground is prohibited.
6. Placing targets on the berms or backstop is prohibited.
7. Firing at objects other than prescribed targets is prohibited.
8. Armor piercing and steel core ammunition is prohibited.
9. Incendiary—including tracer type—ammunition is prohibited.
10. The use of handloaded and reloaded ammunition is conditionally allowed. Any ammunition brought to the range in aftermarket containers, or believed to not be factory production, is subject to inspection per RSO discretion. All ammunition must behave predictably and consistently.
11. 3D printed firearms are prohibited.
12. Stockless shotguns are prohibited. Firearms such as combination .45 Colt/.410 bore PISTOLS are allowed.

13. Derringers, mini-revolvers, pocket-pistols, and other small handguns without adequate, safe gripping surface—per RSO discretion—are prohibited.
14. The use of one-point or two-point slings to hang firearms freely from the torso is prohibited.

## D. Policies for 100-Yard and 50-Yard Target Ranges

1. All firearms entering and leaving the range shall be brought through the main paved entrance walkway adjacent the range office.
2. Upon entering the firing line, firearms must be uncased on the shooting station bench with the muzzle always pointed down range. (see *Hot/Cold Range Procedure*, page 15)
3. Handling of a firearm, ammunition, or the loading of magazines at the firing line or shooting station is prohibited when any users are down range. (see *Hot/Cold Range Procedure*, page 15)
4. When adjusting the sights or scope of a firearm it must first be unloaded, the action opened, and the magazine removed when possible.
5. The use of shot ammunition which has more than one projectile is limited to function checks and patterning for seasonal hunting only.
6. Users are not to load more than ten (10) rounds of ammunition into the firearm or magazine at a time.
  - I. Effective 2023, magazines capable of holding more than ten (10) rounds of ammunition intended for use in **semi-automatic firearms** are not allowed.
    - a. This includes attached tubular magazines, with the exception of those only capable of holding .22 caliber rimfire ammunition.
7. No firing from positions other than a designated shooting lane from behind the firing line.
8. Use only the provided target stand designated for your shooting lane. No cross firing to other shooting lanes.
9. Affix targets at a suitable height so that shooting is in a relatively horizontal plane and does not cause damage to the baffle system or cause preventable ricochets.
10. Targets should fit within the confines of the target frame and backer board (approximately 16 inches by 24 inches).
  - I. Folding or cutting targets to fit is allowed
11. Targets can be paper or cardboard. No metal targets.
12. No hanging targets by any means other than adhesive, tape, or light-duty staples.
13. Return target frames to the closest possible position prior to leaving the range.
14. Air pistols and rifles are allowed but must be treated in the same manner as firearms.
15. Any other projectile device that fails to pierce the plastic target backer boards reliably and accurately is prohibited (e.g., airsoft, paintball, low-power metal or ceramic BBs).
16. Any ammunition that produces over 5,000 ft.lb. of muzzle energy is prohibited.
  - I. For example: .300 Winchester Magnum is OK, but .338 Lapua Magnum is not.
17. Regulations for muzzleloader, black powder, or black powder substitute firearms:
  - I. For range purposes, muzzleloader firearms are considered unloaded when free of powder AND projectile AND primer.
  - II. Never load directly from the horn or flask into the barrel of a muzzleloader, always measure the proper amount of powder using a calibrated powder

- measure then load powder into the muzzleloader directly from the measuring device.
- III. No bulk powder containers on the shooting bench. Load powder measures in the ready area.
  - IV. The use of smokeless powder in any muzzleloader not designed for the use of smokeless powder is strictly prohibited.
  - V. Inline muzzleloaders will be placed with the action open to demonstrate that no primer is present in the pocket when the range is cold.
  - VI. Black powder revolvers will have the cylinder removed from the firearm when the range is cold, if possible.

## **E. Policies for Clay Target Range**

- All shotguns entering and leaving the clay target range shall be brought through the fence gap in the corner of the parking area.
- When entering the clay target range users will uncase firearms on the provided picnic table, always pointing them in a safe direction down range or straight up (away from body parts).
- Takedown shotguns should prioritize barrels pointing down range/straight up first.
- Shotguns are to be carried unloaded with the actions open and MUZZLES POINTED STRAIGHT UP when moving between the picnic table, standby racks, and designated shooting stations.
- Shotguns should be placed in the standby firearm racks with muzzles up and action open until it is your turn to shoot. Do not leave shotguns in or on the shooting booth.
- Only two (2) shooters may simultaneously utilize the clay target range.
- Users must shoot from the designated shooting stations only.
- Users are not to load more than three (3) shells at a time.
- The discharge of any firearm other than a shotgun is prohibited on the clay target range.
- No handling firearms or standing in the shooting booths while others are down range.
- Ammunition is limited to a maximum shot size of #7 lead or equivalent dimensions nontoxic shot. No larger shot size or slugs are allowed on the clay target range.
- Biodegradable AND nontoxic clay targets are the only allowable target on the clay target range. Any clay target made with pitch or tar is prohibited.
- Do not load the clay target thrower until it is powered off.
- Users may travel down range to collect unbroken clay targets or clean up shell casings only when all shotguns are either racked or cased. Wads may be left in the down range area.
- At no time shall shots be fired, or clay targets launched, toward the parking area or 100- or 50-yard ranges.

## **F. Policies for Archery Range**

1. While a Great Swamp Shooting Range Permit is not required to use the archery range, users must check-in and notify the RSO staff before using the archery range.
2. Users may bring their own targets or use archery targets available from RSO staff. The blue foam boxes are intended as backstops, not primary targets.
3. Long bows, recurve bows, compound bows, and crossbows are allowed on the archery range.

4. Broadheads, both fixed and mechanical, are allowed. Broadhead blades must be carried in a covered quiver or enclosed carrying case.
5. Bows must be put down and arrows removed from the nock while anyone is down range.
6. All users must stand at the same shooting line, not forward or behind each other, while using the archery range.
7. Archery proficiency testing can be scheduled through the range supervisor.

## **Range Safety Enforcement**

### **Corrective Actions**

Due to the seriousness of firearms safety, in instances where bodily harm or property damage is imminent, RSOs are allowed to take physical control of a firearm. RSOs should make every effort to first correct behavior verbally, but if immediate action is necessary, user shall passively allow the RSO to take corrective action without argument. RSOs may need to alter hand, arm, leg, or feet positions in such situations, but should do so in the least invasive way possible while still rectifying the safety concern. If, after the situation has been deemed safe, a user finds the actions of the RSO unreasonable or unprofessional, they are encouraged to accurately log the event and contact the range supervisor. Any significant safety incident will always be officially logged by RSO staff.

### **Administrative Penalties**

In the event safety on the range is put at risk, disciplinary action against a range user may be necessary. The following are general guidelines only as each RSO may use personal discretion to inform their decision. RSOs are required to report all administrative penalties to the Range Safety Supervisor and a log is kept of all instances.

The following examples are not exhaustive. Compliance and safety matters will be managed at the discretion of the RSO as necessary. User attitude and cooperation will be factored into the enforcement decisions by the RSO. Impact on other users, guests, the facility, and the environment will also be factored into the enforcement decisions by the RSO.

#### 1 Day Ban – Minor violations, such as:

- Poor muzzle and/or trigger discipline, minor procedural infraction (e.g., handling items on shooting bench during cold range condition), repeated accidental facility damage, disruptive behavior, harassing other users
  - Permit retained by user

#### Permit Suspension – Moderate violations, such as:

- 1 week – dangerous muzzle and/or trigger discipline that endangered self or others, serious procedural infraction (e.g., gun handling during cold range condition)
  - Permit withheld by RSO
- 1 operational season – repeated serious infractions
  - Permit withheld by RSO

#### Permit Revocation – Severe violations, such as:

- Reasonable suspicion of drug or alcohol use, intentional facility damage, intentional disregard for gun safety and/or range regulations, assault and/or battery
  - Permit seized by range supervisor

# Operating Procedures

## Sign In/Out Procedure

Any user entering the range for the first time that visit shall promptly sign in using the provided sign-in sheets. Users may sign in before gathering their firearm and accessories or lay them down temporarily while signing in.

A clipboard with the sign-in sheets and pen will be hung under the covered range structure to the left of the range office where users enter using the paved walkway.

Users will fill in the next blank section completely, except “TIME OUT.” If multiple ranges, firearm actions, or calibers/gauges will be used during the visit, users are encouraged to check off all that will apply versus having to return to sign-in sheet as they change activity.

After signing in, but before taking the line, users will be either assigned or allowed to choose a shooting station. Each station has a corresponding support beam directly behind with a clip where user will attach their valid permit—with photo identification—for the duration of their visit. The clay target range and archery range have clips directly behind the sign-in clipboard.

Before leaving the facility, users will reclaim their permit and enter their “TIME OUT” on the sign-in sheet. This has emergency procedure ramifications so please faithfully signify you have left our facility safely to ensure accurate head counts.

In the event a specific range is full and RSOs indicate no user is yet out of available time, please sign in using the next available section. The “TIME IN” indicated will place you in queue for the next available shooting position. If you then decide to leave before taking the line, indicate the time you are leaving and strikethrough both “TIME IN” and “TIME OUT” to indicate for range records that you were not able to use the range due to an extended wait time.

## Hot/Cold Range Procedure

The 100- and 50-yard target ranges operate in three basic operational states: hot range, cold range, and cease fire (see *Cease Fire Procedure*, page 16). The 100- and 50-yard ranges are considered safely separate and may change operational states independently.

**When a range is hot**, gunfire is allowed, casing and uncasing of up to two (2) firearms is allowed, and no users may cross in front of the red firing line. **When the range is cold**, gunfire is prohibited, any gun handling (such as touching, moving, casing, uncasing) is prohibited, and users may move down range to view or alter targets.

The GSSR has overhead lighting to help indicate the current range condition. A hot range displays GREEN lights, and a cold range displays RED lights (GREEN means GO for firearm use, RED means NO-GO for firearm use or handling). Range condition can be changed by an RSO when all users are safely behind the yellow ready lines and have finished making their firearms safe or altering their targets down range. Always check that other users have moved away from their shooting station and the RSO has made the verbal/visual declarations before moving down range.

In the event the controllers for the range lights are malfunctioning, YELLOW lights may be switched on, and left on, indicating the range condition status has gone verbal-only. All normal procedures apply, but please be especially attentive to RSO commands before attempting to walk downrange or handle firearms.

**Before a range can be declared COLD**, all uncased firearms must be laid on the shooting bench, ejection ports up when possible, and have the ammunition source emptied and/or removed, the action open (or rendered as safe as possible per RSO discretion for non-reciprocating/atypical firearms), and a provided chamber flag (red plastic cord) partially inserted into the barrel from the breech end. Once all criteria have been met to make firearms safe and all users have stepped behind the ready lines, the range may be declared cold verbally by the RSO and the lights changed to reflect its status.

Users may then proceed down range and WILL NOT take or reach for ANY items on their shooting station's bench or inside their firearm case(s). Magazines, ammunition, targets, etc. must be taken from the bench or case BEFORE the range is declared cold. In the event a user forgets this rule, an RSO *may*, under their direct supervision, allow a user to take targets from the bench to be used down range if the firearm does not need to be touched or moved. Users may handle ammunition and/or magazines freely, away from the shooting bench, during cold status. Bags or containers separate from a user's firearm case(s) may be handled if on the ground, stools, or in the ready area. If a user wishes to step away from their bench and uncased firearms for more than a moment and will leave the immediate area (such as when using the portable toilet, washing hands, etc.), they should make their firearm safe as described above to not impede range status changes in their absence.

If a user wishes to take an extended break away from the firing line, firearms should be re-cased during the next HOT status and secured in their vehicle or with an accompanying adult user.

**Before a range can be declared HOT**, all users must be behind the ready lines and acknowledge they are finished making any alterations to their target or target frame distance. While a range is hot users may handle their firearms and commence fire from their assigned shooting station but WILL NOT approach or cross the firing line. Hands and feet shall stay within the zone created by the front edge of the shooting bench, adjacent shell deflector screens, and forward of the ready line. At no point shall uncased firearms leave the shooting station. If a user is given permission by another, they may move between stations at will to handle or fire other firearms. Firearms MUST be cased if moving between stations or off the firing line. While either range is hot, hearing protection is required for spectators in the ready area.

## Cease Fire Procedure

If for any reason, at any time, a person on the range believes bodily harm, property damage, or an otherwise unsafe condition is imminent they may call a cease fire. While we want to prevent "false alarm" cease fire incidents, we encourage users to declare a cease fire whenever safety is in question.

The 100-yard, 50-yard, clay target, and archery range operate independently, but users should assess their area's safety when a cease fire is called on another range.

A cease fire verbal declaration should be done with loud, clear authority. After the cease fire call is made, users should respect the following sequence of steps:

Any user using a shooting station on the main target ranges must:

1. Immediately stop firing
2. Lay any firearm in their control on the table, muzzle pointing down range.
3. Do not attempt to remove ammunition or manipulate the action
4. Even if the firearm is not pointing strictly down range when placed, DO NOT handle it further.
5. Move behind the yellow ready lines
6. Await further instruction from the RSO



Any user using a shooting booth on the clay target range must:

1. Immediately stop firing
2. Point shotgun muzzles high above the down range tree line, near vertical as possible while still facing down range
3. While maintaining muzzle discipline, empty the ammunition source and chamber
4. When empty, point muzzle up to near vertical, away from face
5. Lock action or hinge open
6. Maintain vertical muzzle orientation and exit shooting booth
7. Place shotgun in the standby rack
8. Assess range conditions and/or notify RSO

Any user using archery equipment on the archery range must:

1. Immediately stop firing
2. Remove any nocked arrows or bolts
3. Place bow on rack, in case, or on ground
4. Place arrows in quiver, in case, or on ground
5. Assess range conditions and/or notify RSO

If it is safe to continue normal range use following the cease fire, the RSO will inform users how to resume. In the event a firearm was left with a dangerous muzzle direction or in a dangerous condition, the RSO will supervise the user as they resume safe control. RSOs may need to take temporary direct control of a firearm if deemed a safety issue.

In the event the cease fire was called unreasonably, the RSO will use their discretion to either educate or reprimand the person who called it. The cease fire will be logged using an Incident Report Form and the range supervisor notified in all instances.

## **Firearm Malfunction Procedures**

In the event of a firearm malfunction, please observe the following sequence of actions. If in doubt, focus on muzzle pointed down range and call an RSO for assistance.

Trigger pulled, no perceived firing:

1. KEEP MUZZLE POINTED DOWN RANGE
2. Maintain firm, controlled grip
3. Check for a hang fire; wait AT LEAST thirty (30) seconds with muzzle pointed down range, two (2) minutes for black powder firearms
4. Drop magazine or empty internal ammunition source WHILE KEEPING MUZZLE DOWN RANGE
5. Manipulate and lock the action to the rear to eject chambered ammunition.
6. Verify the action is locked open and no cartridge has been chambered into the barrel.
7. Check for loose ammunition indicating a cartridge feeding issue or jamming.
8. Place firearm down on shooting bench while keeping muzzle down range
9. Observe the ejected ammunition
  - a. Is it an unfired cartridge WITH a visible primer strike?
    - i. Rechamber firearm and attempt to fire again
      1. Normal operation
        - a. Continue as normal, paying attention for further misfires
      2. Primer strike with no firing again

- a. Inspect firing pin and chamber area for excess lubricant, residue, or debris
    - b. If available, test different ammunition
  - b. Is it an unfired cartridge WITHOUT a visible primer strike?
    - i. Rechamber firearm and attempt to fire again
      - 1. Normal operation
        - a. Continue as normal, paying attention for further misfires
      - 2. No primer strike again
        - a. Inspect firing pin and chamber area for excess lubricant, residue, or debris
    - c. No ejected ammunition
      - i. Loading sequence mistake
        - 1. Rechamber or reload and continue as normal
      - ii. Ammunition jammed in chamber area
        - 1. Verify magazine or ammunition source is operating correctly
        - 2. Verify chamber and barrel is clear
        - 3. Reload firearm with appropriate, deliberate force and attempt to fire again
        - 4. Normal operation
          - a. Continue as normal, paying attention to loading procedure

Trigger pulled, perceived “light” firing, either in recoil, loudness, or both:

1. Drop magazine or empty internal ammunition source WHILE KEEPING MUZZLE DOWN RANGE
2. Physically lock back or open/expose the action.
3. Place firearm down on shooting bench, muzzle down range
4. Check barrel for obstructions
  - a. Chamber flag cords work well on handguns, ask RSO for longer lengths if necessary for rifles.
5. If no obstruction, continue as normal, paying attention to sound and feel of following shots
6. If a lodged projectile or other debris (aka “squib”) is detected in the barrel, notify an RSO before attempting to displace it.

Trigger pulled, normal firing, but subsequent physical operation malfunction:

1. If action failed to cycle back at all and/or casing is still in barrel
  - a. Drop magazine or empty internal ammunition source while keeping muzzle down range
  - b. Attempt to forcefully manipulate the action to eject the cartridge while keeping muzzle down range
  - c. If unable to do so, notify an RSO
    - i. Do NOT attempt to clear a firearm through vertical inertial impact, aka “mortar clearing.”
2. If action does not cycle fully rearward
  - a. If ammunition has been partially pulled from the magazine but not fully into battery
    - i. Drop the magazine
    - ii. Operate the action manually until chamber is clear of loose ammunition WHILE KEEPING MUZZLE DOWN RANGE
    - iii. Check for magazine damage or damaged/dislodged cartridges
    - iv. Reseat the magazine securely

- v. Attempt to chamber and fire again
  - b. Verify firearm is being held securely with firm pressure and proper grip when firing
- 3. If action cycles rearward, but not fully forward
  - a. If a spent shell casing is stuck in the ejection port
    - i. Clear it with a swift palm swipe, keeping fingers clear of parts under spring tension
  - b. If ammunition has been partially pulled from the magazine but not fully into battery
    - i. Drop the magazine
    - ii. Operate the action manually until chambered or clear of loose ammunition  
WHILE KEEPING MUZZLE DOWN RANGE
    - iii. Check for magazine damage or damaged/dislodged cartridges
    - iv. Reseat the magazine securely
    - v. Attempt to chamber and fire again

\*If a firearm is continually malfunctioning and in need of more than basic field disassembly, verify all live ammunition is removed, the barrel is clear, and prepare to case the firearm for transportation home or to a gunsmith.

## **Emergency Operations Plan**

### **Medical or Trauma Related Emergencies**

1. Call a facility-wide CEASE FIRE
2. Notify the nearest RSO and call 911.
3. Range users should follow all instructions given by 911 and the RSO
4. If any medical professionals are on scene, the highest credentialed provider should lead everyone in medical care. If no medical professionals are available, the RSO will oversee medical care.
5. Render aid.
  - a. Medical supplies are located inside the range office, under the main counter.
  - b. An AED is located inside the range office, near the mini-refrigerator in a yellow case.
6. The RSO should contact the Range Supervisor who will in turn contact the Hunter Education Safety Coordinator.
  - a. This notification process should never impede care being given to the victim.
7. Assign someone to drive to the end of the road (just past the front gate) to direct in emergency vehicles.
  - a. This person should also stop anyone from entering the range during the emergency unless they are a medical professional, DEM staff, or emergency personnel. Have all others stage off the road in the dirt lot on the right prior to arriving at the front gate until the emergency is concluded. Do not allow vehicles or bystanders to block access to the facility.
8. Direct someone to take notes (including time incident occurred, time AED applied, time CPR started, time tourniquet applied, and any vital signs such as pulse or respirations) using a Medical Emergency Report Form, available inside the range office.
9. It may be necessary to close the range or the entire facility for post-event investigation, cleanup, and restoration of function. Conditions at the time of the emergency should be preserved in their undisturbed condition as much as possible for reasons of investigation and corrective action.

## Fire Related Emergencies

1. Call a facility-wide CEASE FIRE
2. Notify the nearest RSO on duty and call 911 immediately.
3. Evacuate all range users, staff, volunteers, and anyone else in the area to nearest AND safest designated area as declared by the RSO:
  - a. Covered picnic pavilion behind parking area
  - b. Grass field northwest of range along access road
  - c. Gravel bank prior to red range entrance gate
    - i. The location of assembly may need to change based on changing site conditions as decided by the most senior staff member.
4. The RSO will grab the sign-in clipboard if safe to do so and take a headcount of all evacuees.
  - a. Nobody should leave the site until counted and authorized to leave by the most senior staff member
5. The RSO will grab the nearest fire extinguisher, and if safe to do so, attempt to extinguish the fire.
  - a. If ammo or firearms are on fire this should not be attempted.
  - b. No structure that is on fire or has a fire in it should be entered.
6. The RSO should assign someone to walk (or drive if getting to vehicles is safe) to the end of the road (just past the front gate) to direct in emergency vehicles.
  - a. This person should also stop anyone from entering the range during the emergency unless they are DEM staff, or emergency personnel. Have all others stage off the road in the gravel lot on the right prior to arriving at the front gate until the emergency is concluded. Do not allow vehicles or bystanders to block access to the facility.
7. It may be necessary to close the range or the entire facility for post-event investigation, cleanup, and restoration of function. Conditions at the time of the emergency should be preserved in their undisturbed condition as much as possible for reasons of investigation and corrective action.