

# FIREARMS SAFETY IN THE FIELD



## THE HUNTER AND SAFETY

Almost every young person is interested in firearms. There is something about a gun, old or new, that makes us want to pick it up, see how it feels, and try to work its mechanism. When this interest is properly guided, young people can benefit in many ways. From old guns they can learn history and an understanding of some of the hardships faced by early pioneers who relied on such firearms for their lives. They can learn mechanical principles from studying gun actions. And from target practice with modern arms, they can develop physical skills that will help them in many other activities.

But guns are not toys. They must be treated with respect. If you want to learn how to shoot a gun be sure to learn from qualified instructors.

### NRA HUNTER'S CODE OF ETHICS

1. I will consider myself an invited guest of the landowner, seeking his permission, and so conducting myself that I may be welcome in the future.
2. I will obey the rules of safe gun handling and will courteously but firmly insist that others who hunt with me do the same.
3. I will obey all game laws and regulations, and will insist that my companions do likewise.
4. I will do my best to acquire those marksmanship and hunting skills which assure clean, sportsmanlike kills.
5. I will support conservation efforts which can assure good hunting for future generations of America.
6. I will pass along to younger hunters the attitudes and skills essential to a true outdoor sportsman.

### PRIMARY RULES

Handling a firearm properly is the key to safe hunting. The responsible hunter lessens the chance of an accident by following some basic rules of firearm safety.

- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded, at all times.
- Always keep the muzzle of the firearm pointed in a safe direction.
- Be sure of your target and beyond.

### FIREARM SAFETY WHILE HUNTING

#### Before Leaving Home

A responsible hunter learns before the hunt how to shoot safely and accurately. Regular practice provides a familiarization with the firearm. Knowing the range and effectiveness of various ammunition ensures the hunter that the correct ammunition for the gun being used and the game being hunted has been selected. The gun is always accurately sighted-in before a hunt.

Whether a gun is being carried in a car, boat, on a horse, motorcycle, or in any other vehicle, these rules of safe gun handling must be followed:

## Shoulder Carry

The “shoulder carry” is safe when walking beside or behind someone. Special care must be taken to keep the muzzle pointed upward. Do not use this carry when others are behind you.



## Sling Carry

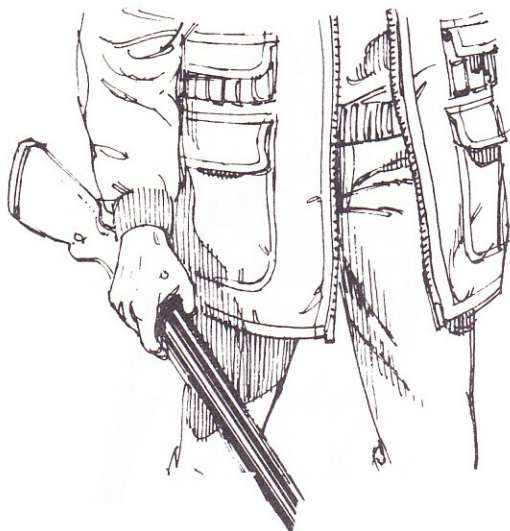
The “sling carry” is often used by hunters who must walk a long way before taking a shot. The sling carry leaves both of the hunter’s hands free. However, when walking in dense bush, it should not be used because the gun may get caught in brush and be pulled off the hunter’s shoulder.

The carry you use will depend on where your companions are and the kind of terrain you are in.



## Trail Carry

When the “trail carry” is used the gun is held by one hand at the point of balance. This carry should not be used when others are ahead of you.



When hunters are positioned in a line abreast, the hunters at either end should use the cradle or side carry. The hunters in the middle should use either the side or two-hand carry.

When walking single file, the leader may choose any of the carries except the shoulder carry. The other members of the party should use the two-handed or cradle carry. The last person in line may select the two-handed, cradle, sling, or shoulder carry.

## Determining Zones of Fire

When hunting with others, “zones of fire” must be established so each hunter will not endanger others.

2. Take time to fire a safe shot. If unsure, or if you must move too quickly, pass up the shot. When you wonder whether you should shoot—don't.
3. Use the right ammunition for your firearm. Carry only one type of ammunition to be sure you will not mix different types.
4. If you fall, try to control where the muzzle points. After a fall, check your unloaded gun for dirt and damage and make sure the barrel is free of obstructions.
5. Unload your gun before attempting to climb a steep bank or travel across slippery ground.
6. When you are alone and must cross a fence, unload your firearm and place it under the fence with the muzzle pointed away from where you are crossing. When hunting with others and you must cross a fence, unload the gun and keep the action open. Have one of your companions hold the gun while you cross. Then, take your and your companion's unloaded gun, so that they may cross safely.
7. Never use a scope sight as a substitute for binoculars.
8. Alcohol, drugs and hunting do not mix. Drugs and alcohol may impair your judgment. Keen judgment is essential to safe hunting.
9. Beware of fatigue. When you are so tired that hunting isn't fun anymore, go back to camp. Fatigue can cause carelessness and clumsiness which can cause accidents. Fatigue can cause you to see things that aren't there.
10. When you have finished hunting, unload your gun before returning to your vehicle or camp.

No firearm safety rule ever prevented an accident. Firearm accidents are prevented when people who are handling firearms care enough to do it properly and safely. While hunting, if your companions do not follow the rules of safe firearms handling you should refuse to hunt with them unless they are prepared to correct their behavior. Remember to be safe and not sorry for your actions.

# NRA Membership

Be sure to check your desired Membership Status, and print clearly so that your membership will be entered correctly. Thank you.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

- Check enclosed      Check magazine you wish to receive (choose one)
- Bill me       *The American Hunter*       *The American Rifleman*

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>NRA</b>                                   | <b>NRA SENIOR</b><br>(65 and over)          | <b>NRA ASSOCIATE</b><br>(spouse)            | <b>NRA JUNIOR</b><br>(Under 20)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$ 15  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$ 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$10  | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$12  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Years ..... \$ 40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life ..... \$150   | <input type="checkbox"/> (without magazine) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$ 5  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Years ..... \$ 60 |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year ..... \$ 5  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life ..... \$300    |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> (without magazine) |
- (deferred payment available)

Postage: Add per year, Canada \$2. Other countries \$3.  
Ten dollars of the membership is designated for magazine subscription.

## NRA Pledge

I hereby apply for membership in the National Rifle Association. I certify that I am a citizen of the United States; that I am not a member of any organization which has as any part of its program the attempt to overthrow the government of the United States by force or violence; that I have never been convicted of a crime of violence; and that, if admitted to membership, I will fulfill the obligations of good sportsmanship and good citizenship.



National Rifle Association  
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