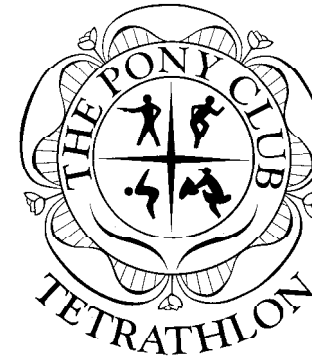


3. "The Firing Point Steward is in charge of the firing point and gives all orders." (Paragraph N34b, page 44).
4. "At all times air pistols must be stored in their boxes and locked in a secure place. (i.e. during a competition in a vehicle out of sight)". (Paragraph N32a, page 44). [Clearly this is when not being used on the range, when the FPS has given the command to unbox].
5. Pistols should be kept in their boxes until, in the shooting range, the Firing Point Steward gives the order to unbox. They must be boxed again before leaving the firing point. (Rule 51d, page 40).
6. "The modern air pistol can cause serious wounds at close range. The Firing Point Steward must maintain rigid control and treat the range just as if the pistols were lethal weapons. Not only will this prevent accidents, but it is also vital training for young people in the safe handling of weapons of all kinds." (Paragraph N32b, page 44).
7. "**Apart from safety matters**, the only briefing that should be necessary ...". (Paragraph N34e, page 44).
8. "Strict drills should be enforced about loading and firing and putting down empty before anyone moves forward of the firing point (most air pistols, once cocked, cannot be un-cocked without firing the gun). It is also much easier with a pistol than with a longer weapon to point it unthinkingly towards other people." (Paragraph N32d, page 44).
9. "The rules should be followed strictly - even in a local junior competition unorthodox orders such as "On Aim" distract competitors who have been trained by the book." (Paragraph N34c, page 44).
10. The commands given by the Firing Point Steward limit the occasions when pistols may be loaded. (Rule 56a, page 41/42, but see also paragraph N32d).
11. "Never at any time point a pistol, loaded or unloaded, at anyone." (Page 67).
12. "Always assume it is loaded until it is proved otherwise." (Page 67).
13. "Never leave a cocked or loaded gun unattended." (Page 67).
14. "Always point a gun down the range or in a safe direction." (Page 67).
15. "Safety goggles may be worn". (Page 67).

Occasionally one may observe a Firing Point Steward who does not positively enforce all of the safety rules. We have already discussed loaders who do not comply with item 11 above. The basic safety practices in 2, 5, 8, 11 - 14 should, in our opinion, always be enforced fully. This may be helped by displaying notices, or specifically making the point in the briefing, backed up by a vigilant eye and firmly correcting any observed lapses. In relation to item 8, it is less obvious on some pistols than others that the action is open, pistol uncocked, safety catch on, etc. Apart from trying to confirm this before persons move forward of the firing point, for instance between first and second targets, it is also important that Firing Point Stewards correct any competitor / loader who attempts to touch his pistol before the command is given that loading etc. may be resumed.



The Pony Club

Tetrathlon

Safety Guidance for Shooting Stewards & Firing Point Stewards

June 2002

The layout of the Tetrathlon rule book does not readily enable officials to quickly access all the safety-related issues pertaining to their discipline. Consequently this leaflet has been prepared to collect all such issues for the shooting phase into one place. Additionally, although it is recognised that the shooting phase seems to have a very low accident rate, we have included some additional guidance to help to eliminate some of the bad habits that have been observed in practice.

The Law

The main part of Appendix C of the rule book covers legal requirements. But when shooting in connection with a club (e.g. Pony Club branch) and on suitable premises youngsters have to be under the supervision of a person over 21 years. (Pages 66 / 67)¹. This is covered by various rules or other paragraphs in the Rule Book. (Rule 51 a - c, page 40).

While competitors and their parents have a responsibility to comply with the law there is inevitably a fair degree of ignorance of the Firearms Act 1968 (much amended). The main way in which this manifests itself is that children are seen carrying their own gun cases around. Under the law, and Tetrathlon rules, competitors under 18 years of age may NEVER carry an air pistol.

We suggest that all competition officials should be made aware that they should stop and correct any young competitor seen carrying a pistol, boxed or unboxed. Persistent offenders may be eliminated from the shooting phase, or disqualified from the whole competition (Rule 51a).

Responsibilities of Organiser / Chief Shooting Steward

In setting up the range and associated facilities, and allocating officials :-

1. “The actual shooting area should be forbidden ground to all except those actually concerned in that particular detail.” (Paragraph N32c, page 44).
2. To deal with ricochets when firing at the target :-
“The air pistol is quite powerful and if there is a hard background behind the targets, ricochets are apt to come back to the firing point ... and it is better to put something like straw bales, old tarpaulin, hessian or blankets hung over poles, as a background, to absorb the pellet after it has passed through the target”. (Para. N30, page 43).
“If target backings are of hard material they shall be angled so as to ensure that pellets are deflected downwards.” (Page 67)
3. “A bench or low table in front of each firer ... will also prevent a self-inflicted wound in the foot or leg if the pistol goes off prematurely”. (Paragraph N31a, page 43).

4. Loaders (who must be 18 or over) may be used. (Rule 53c, page 40).
5. “Care must be taken to afford ... enough room ... for ... loaders to do their work”. (2nd sentence of paragraph N28d on page 43).
6. The maximum calibre, and the limitation to air pistols only, restricts the maximum energy of shots discharged. (First sentence of Rule 55b, page 41).
7. “The Firing Point Steward should NOT have other duties such as collecting targets.” (Paragraph N33, page 44).

Loaders are often parents who have not received the safety training that their children receive at organised shooting practices. It is therefore not uncommon to see loaders pointing unloaded and loaded pistols at their own or neighbouring competitors during the loading process. This is particularly likely to happen when item 5 above, provision of enough space for loaders, has not been complied with. There may not be “enough room” if the loader cannot reload while continuing to keep the pistol pointing down the range from a position above the “bench or low table”.

Most target stands (such as the type in banks of 3 used at the Championships) allow sufficient space between competitors. However, it is sometimes the case that, when several stands are used (e.g. 4 banks of 3 making 12 competitors per detail), they are placed too close to each other. In the example given, every third loader has insufficient space. In general it should be possible to avoid this problem. If there is a practical reason why it cannot be avoided the Firing Point Steward should be advised to enforce staggered loading if it is not wished to reduce the number of competitors in each detail.

Another situation in which loading space is restricted occurs when there is a left-hander in amongst right-handers, or vice versa for that matter. Some branches arrange to avoid this by placing all left-handers (whose loaders would naturally work on their right) in the positions to the right of the range.

Responsibilities of Firing Point Steward

Most of the safety rules and guidance have to be enforced by the Firing Point Steward in the course of the competition. Apart from being aware of the issues listed above, the rule book includes :-

1. Close supervision is needed during the shooting phase. (Paragraph N55, page 51).
2. “~~In particular tetrathletes~~ *Competitors and others under 18* should not be allowed to be in possession of their pistols at any time unless supervised by an adult. *At the firing point the responsible supervision is provided by the Firing Point Steward; and this includes during the shooting itself.*” (Rule *51N55*, page *4054*).

¹ Page and paragraph numbers relate to the 2002 rule book