Equipment Familiarization
&
SAFETY BRIEFING
FOR AIR RIFLE SHOOTERS

Becoming Marksmanship Qualified:

Below are the minimum safety requirements that JROTC cadets complete that will make them “marksmanship qualified” in order to fire on the air rifle range.

**Safety Training Class.** Cadets must receive a safety training class from their JROTC instructor that uses the JROTC Marksmanship Instructor Course Session IV presentation or that is based on the Cadets Guide to Air Rifle Safety and the Marine JROTC Leadership Education I, Category 5 Curriculum, Lesson 8.

**Safety Exam.** Cadets must complete and achieve a grade of 100% on a standardized safety exam.

**Cadets Safety Pledge.** Cadets must review and sign the Cadets Safety Pledge.

**Purpose of JROTC Gun Safety Training**

**Learning to Handle Guns Safely:**

These are steps to be followed in developing the commitment, knowledge and skills to handle guns safely.

**Goal.** The goal of JROTC gun safety training is not just to reduce gun-related accidents, it is to eliminate them altogether. This goal is established with the conviction that it is possible to have a perfect safety record in shooting sports activities.

**M-A-T.** The primary gun parts, the muzzle (M), action (A) and trigger (T), are the keys to leaning the rules for safe gun handling. Everyone must know these gun parts, whether they ever do any target shooting or not.

**M-A-T Performance Standards.** The basic rules for safe gun handling that must be mastered focus on the muzzle, action and trigger.

**Practice Safety.** To be able to handle guns safely, a JROTC cadet must not only learn the rules and procedures for safe gun handling, but they must master those rules and procedures by actually handling air rifles during range firing activities. Safety is not mastered unless it is actually practiced.

**Safe Gun Handling Rules are Universal.** The rules JROTC cadets will learn about safe gun handling can be applied to other guns or firearms that cadets may encounter in their homes or in other situations.
Equipment Familiarization

Primary Gun Parts and Their Functions: M-A-T

The first step in being safe with air rifles or any other guns is to learn the three primary parts of the gun and their functions. These key gun parts are the basis for the Safe Gun Handling Rules that everyone who handles, fires or is in an area where guns are handled must know.

MUZZLE. The forward end of the barrel. This is the point where the pellet or projectile leaves the barrel when the gun is fired. A gun is aimed by pointing its muzzle at the target. When a projectile is fired it will strike exactly where the muzzle is pointed.

ACTION. The working mechanism of the gun. Gun actions typically have a bolt or cocking lever that is used to open and close the action so that the gun can be loaded and unloaded. Fundamentally, a gun cannot be fired unless its action is closed and locked.

TRIGGER. The trigger is part of the action or working mechanism of the gun. The trigger is a lever that projects out of the bottom of the action. A trigger guard protects the trigger. After a gun is loaded and the action is closed, the gun is fired by pulling or applying pressure to the trigger.

CBI—Clear Barrel Indicator:

The CBI is the basic means of assuring and demonstrating that air rifles are in an unloaded condition. An inserted CBI clearly and visibly demonstrates that the rifle action is open and there is no pellet in the barrel.

• CBIs are made from orange or other bright-colored weed eater or heavy monofilament cord. They are cut long enough so that when inserted in an air rifle barrel, the cord projects out of both the breech and muzzle ends of the barrel.

• CBIs must be inserted in air rifle barrels whenever they are taken from gun storage and to the range.

• CBIs remain in air rifles until a firing exercise begins and the Range Officer gives instructions to begin preparing for firing. When preparation for firing begins, CBIs can be removed.

• After you complete a firing exercise, immediately open the air rifle action, place the rifle on the ground, bench or mat and insert the CBI. You may also insert a CBI before grounding the rifle.

• Take care to keep CBIs clean and off of the floor. Use a soft cloth to wipe off the CBI before inserting it in the air rifle. This will prevent the CBI from picking up grit and getting it in the barrel.

The Shooter: The most important component of rifle safety and any weapons safety is the person holding the rifle. It takes strong personal discipline to do this, but with discipline and focus, the safety of all shooting sports participants can be assured. Even though air rifles have muzzle velocities lower than standard weapons that rely on gunpowder as a propellant, the projectiles can still cause severe injury if air rifles are not handled in a safe an approved manner.
Safety Handling Rules

Safety Rule 1—Muzzle Control:
The first thing that anyone who handles a gun must do whenever they pick up or receive a
gun is to control the direction the muzzle is pointing.
• Gun muzzles must always be pointed in a safe direction. That means never pointing the gun
at another person.
• In most cases, pointing a gun in a safe direction means pointing the gun muzzle upward.
• On a firing range, gun muzzles should be pointed upward or downrange towards the
targets.
• When carrying a gun, the safest way to carry the gun is to point the muzzle upward with the
muzzle held above head level.

Safety Rule 2—Actions Open:
The second thing everyone who handles a gun must do immediately after they get the
muzzle pointed in a safe direction is to visually check the gun’s action and be sure it is open.
• The safety standard is that gun actions must always be kept open except when the gun is
on the firing line and dry firing or live firing has been authorized or when guns are in safe
storage.
• A CBI (Clear Barrel Indicator) is a brightly colored monofilament cord that is inserted in air
rifle barrels to demonstrate that the action is open and there is no pellet in the barrel.
• A gun with an open action cannot be fired. This means that keeping gun actions open
whenever they are on a range or other location is a primary means of assuring that they
cannot be unintentionally fired.

Safety Rule 3—Finger Off Trigger:
One of the best means of preventing the unintentional firing of shots is to keep the index
finger off of the trigger until the gun is actually being aimed at the target.
• Whenever handling or carrying a gun of any type, it is important to keep all fingers outside
of the trigger guard.
• The trigger guard on air rifles and other guns protects the trigger from being accidentally
released.
• After an air rifle is loaded on the firing line, the index finger should be held outside of the
trigger guard while the rifle is lifted and placed into the firing position. Only after beginning to
look through the sights and aim should the finger be moved into the trigger guard to contact
the trigger.
Actions on the Range

Safety Conditions:

Here are some terms that shooters will hear as part of the instructions they receive on the firing line.

Shooters need to know and understand these terms.

**Line is Hot.** When the Range Officer is ready to start a firing exercise and he determines that everyone on the range is in a safe and proper location, he will declare, “the line is hot.” No one can go or be forward of the firing line when the line is hot.

**Preparation Period.** After the Range Officer declares that the line is hot and informs shooters that they can handle their rifles, he will instruct them that they can begin their “preparation” or “preparation period” for the firing exercise that follows. When the Range Officer starts “preparation” this means that shooters can remove the CBIs from their rifles, get into their shooting positions, close their air rifle actions and dry fire if the air rifles may be dry-fired. Some air rifles may not be dry fired. Shooters may do aiming or holding exercises with rifles that cannot be dry fired. **No one may charge the rifle with gas or load a pellet in it during a preparation period.**

**Unloaded Rifle.** When a firing activity is completed or when the command STOP is given, the rifle must be unloaded. For an air rifle, “unloaded” means that the action is open, there is no pellet in the barrel and the CBI is inserted. The CBI, of course, is proof that there is no pellet in the barrel.

**Grounded Rifle.** Rifles must normally be “grounded” when they are brought to the firing line and they must be grounded again after a firing exercise is completed. To ground a rifle, the action must be opened, it must be placed on the floor or shooting mat and a CBI must be inserted. Once a rifle is grounded, a shooter must request permission from the Range Officer before it can again be handled for any purpose.

**Firing Line is Clear.** When all rifles are grounded on the firing line before or after firing, the Range Officer must check them to be sure they are unloaded with CBIs inserted. The Range Officer can then declare that the “line is clear.” This means all rifles are grounded and no one is permitted to handle the rifles. The line must be clear before anyone can be instructed to go forward and hang, change or retrieve targets.

Basic Range Commands:

There are four basic range commands that are used by the Range Officer to start and stop all live firing activities. Cadets must know exactly what these commands mean and be prepared to respond instantly to them.

**LOAD.** After the Range Officer has given the shooters on the firing line an opportunity to prepare for firing, he will give the command **LOAD.** This means that it is now OK to charge the air rifle with gas, OK to insert a pellet in the breech and OK to close the rifle action.

**START.** Soon after the command **LOAD** is given, the command **START** is given. This command means that it is now OK to begin firing. It also means that it is OK to continue firing
additional shots until the firing exercise is completed. It is not necessary to have a new command to \textit{LOAD} and \textit{START} for each shot. As soon as any firer completes firing all shots in a firing exercise, they must open the rifle action, insert a CBI and ground the rifle.

\textbf{STOP}. This command means that firing is no longer authorized. The command \textit{STOP} is given when firing is completed or is no longer authorized. Sometimes it must be given in an emergency. Whenever the command \textit{STOP} is given and you are still attempting to fire a shot, you must immediately stop trying to fire the shot by taking your finger off of the trigger. Then open the rifle action and follow additional instructions that the Range Officer may give.

\textbf{UNLOAD}. The command \textit{STOP} is normally followed by the command \textit{UNLOAD}. When all firers have finished, \textit{STOP-UNLOAD} means that firing is finished and the Range Officer is going to check for all rifles to be grounded with CBIs inserted. If a shooter still has a loaded rifle when a \textit{STOP} command is given, he/she must immediately raise their hand and tell the Range Officer they have a “loaded rifle.” The Range Officer will then instruct them as to how the rifle should be unloaded.

\textbf{Dry Firing}:

Dry firing is an important part of the firer’s preparation and practice because it permits the shooter to rehearse the shot before actual shots are fired. Not all air rifles are capable of being dry fired, however. If an air rifle cannot be dry fired, it is still possible to rehearse shots by aiming while holding it in position and pressing the trigger to the rear to simulate firing (aiming or holding exercises).

Note especially that dry firing is not permitted anywhere on a range except when rifles are on the firing line and the Range Officer authorizes or instructs shooters to handle their rifles and begin preparation for firing. To dry fire air rifles follow these instructions:

- **Daisy M853/M753**: Open the bolt and then close it WITHOUT loading a pellet or charging the cocking lever (pumping) the rifle. The trigger is now cocked and can be dry fired.

- **Daisy XS40 Valiant**: Raise the bolt handle and pull it all the way to the rear until it clicks. WITHOUT loading a pellet or pushing the bolt forward, the trigger may now be manipulated without discharging air. The bolt will move forward when the trigger is released.

- **Daisy M888/Daisy M887**: These rifles cannot be dry fired as they will discharge CO2 gas whenever the trigger is released.

- **All Other Air Rifles**: Specific instructions for dry firing of precision air rifles are given in the owner manuals. Additional information is needed to determine the dry fire ability of the Crossman Model CH2009 series rifles.

\textbf{IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO DISCHARGE COMPRESSED AIR OR CO2 DURING DRY FIRING AS IT VIOLATES SAFETY AND COMPETITION RULES.}
Safe Loading Procedure:
The safe loading procedure described here is designed to assure the highest level of safety throughout the process of charging the air rifle’s gas system and loading a pellet in preparation for firing.

1. Open Action
2. Charge Air
3. Insert Pellet
4. Close Action
5. Place rifle in position and fire shot

While loading the air rifle consider these things:

1. Always be aware of where the muzzle is pointing during the entire loading process. Be sure to keep it pointed downrange.
2. Always start with an open action and an unloaded air rifle. Never load a pellet first and then charge the rifle with air.
3. Even if the air rifle being used has a safety, the safety should not be used during the loading process. On a target range, the safety is the open bolt. As long as the bolt is open during the loading process, the rifle cannot be unintentionally fired.
4. Facilitate the loading process by placing the pellet container in a convenient location so that during loading it is not necessary to reach a long distance to pick up another pellet.
5. When loading the Daisy M853 or other Daisy air rifles, be sure to place the pellet in the loading port (shown in illustration) and not in the bolt slot (this will cause the rifle to malfunction).

Range Safety Procedures—Malfunctions:
A malfunction occurs when a gun fails to fire. If you are in a firing exercise and the air rifle you are using malfunctions, follow the steps described here.

1. Keep your rifle muzzle pointed downrange. Remain in position with the muzzle pointed downrange and do not attempt to come off the firing line with your rifle.
2. Raise your hand so the Range Officer can see it.
3. Wait for the Range Office to come to you. He/she will inspect the rifle and may ask questions about what happened. The Range Officer will give you instructions to try to fire the shot again or may take the rifle from you to clear it so it can be removed from the firing line.
4. Range procedures require that whenever a rifle malfunctions, it must be unloaded, that is, the pellet must be removed from the barrel, before the rifle can be taken from the line. The Range Officer may use a cleaning rod or dowel rod to remove the pellet from a malfunctioning rifle.
Range Safety Procedures—Firing Completed:

Normally the Range Officer will instruct you regarding how many shots you are to fire in a range activity. When you finish firing the prescribed number of shots, follow these procedures to make your rifle safe and show the Range Officer that you are finished.

1. Immediately open your air rifle action after you fire your last shot.
2. Then place your rifle down on the floor, shooting mat or bench.
3. After the rifle is placed down, insert the CBI in it. Use a cloth or rag to wipe off the CBI before placing it in the barrel. This will assure that no dirt or grit gets into the barrel from the CBI.
4. Follow instructions. The Range Officer will tell you whether you should step back from your firing point or remain on the firing point by your grounded rifle.
5. When all firers are finished and have grounded their rifles, the firing line should appear something like all rifles are lying on individual mats, with CBIs inserted and with muzzles lying ahead of the firing line.

Range Safety Procedures—Loaded Rifle After STOP-UNLOAD:

Occasionally a situation will arise where a firer still has a loaded rifle after the command STOP-UNLOAD has been given. If this happens to you, follow these procedures.

1. Never attempt to fire a shot after the STOP command is given.
2. Remain in position and keep your muzzle pointed downrange.
3. Raise your hand so the Range Officer can see it. Announce "Loaded Rifle" so that the Range Officer can hear you.
4. Wait for the Range Officer to come to you. The Range Officer will give you instructions for firing the rifle to unload it. Normally, he/she will either tell you to fire the rifle into an open area in the backstop or instruct you to fire the rifle into a PDC (Pellet Discharge Container).
5. After you discharge the rifle, open the action, place the rifle on the floor, mat or bench and insert a CBI.

Achieving a Perfect Safety Record:

With a goal of achieving a perfect safety record of no gun-related accidents, there are a few additional considerations that must be kept in mind by instructors and cadets.

Self-Discipline and Focus. Achieving a perfect safety record is not possible unless everyone, Range Officers and shooters, continue to focus their attention on safe gun handling. It takes strong personal discipline to do this, but with discipline and focus, the safety of all shooting sports participants can be assured. The most important component of rifle safety is the person holding the rifle.
Everyone is a Safety Officer. This is an important concept for everyone who handles guns. It means that whenever you are present when someone else is doing something unsafe, you have a responsibility to act. If you see someone pointing a gun at another person or handling a gun with a closed action, you should step in to make that person aware of the unsafe act and how to correct it. In addition, when you are on a range and you see a safety emergency such as someone walking into the downrange area of a range, you can and must command STOP. Don't wait for the Range Officer to see it or for someone else to command STOP.

The Goal—No Gun Accidents!

Personal Safety and Hygiene:

Pellet Handling. Lead is a toxic substance that must be handled with care, but so far no one has been able to make air rifle pellets from a non-lead substance that have sufficient accuracy for precision target shooting. Fortunately, several medical tests on air rifle shooters have proven that when shooters take the necessary precautions while firing air rifles, they do not face any health risks from this limited exposure to lead. These precautions include eating no food on the range, not having open beverage containers on the range and washing your hands immediately after every range activity. Hands should preferably be washed in cold water.

Safety Glasses. NJROTC cadets are required to wear safety glasses while firing air rifles. Some ranges also require this. The National Three-Position Air Rifle Council, AJROTC and MCJROTC make wearing safety glasses optional. The risk is extremely minimal, but since there is a remote possibility of having a pellet fragment bounce back, consideration should be given to using eye protection. If safety glasses are used, be sure to select quality glasses that do not distort the sight picture and target while aiming. Prescription glasses are adequate as eye protection; anyone who wears eyeglasses for distant vision should wear them while shooting.

Hearing Protection. Air rifles do not generate sufficient sound to cause hearing loss and using hearing protection is optional.

Personal Clothing. Cadets should have a tight-fitting sweatshirt or long-sleeved work shirt to wear while firing. A glove for the hand that supports the rifle should be used if the unit does not have regular shooting gloves.
Pre-Match Safety Brief

Keep your rifles pointed in a safe direction--THAT IS:

- Pointed up or down range toward the targets if you are on the firing line.
- Pointed up with the muzzle above head level if you are behind or not on the firing line.

Keep your rifle action open except when you are firing or dry firing. The action must be opened and the rifle unloaded when you finish each position and before putting the rifle down.

(Note: There is one exception – if there are any competitors with spring-air rifles that cannot be opened without cocking the rifle. These rifles must be left uncocked and unloaded. Check these rifles by having the shooter point it at the target area and pull the trigger.)

Do not load your rifles until the command “LOAD” or “START” is given.

Do not fire a shot until the command “START” is given.

Keep your fingers off the triggers until you are in your shooting position and are ready to fire a shot.

When the command “STOP” or “UNLOAD” is given, all shooting must stop immediately. The rifle must be made safe by opening the action and placed on the firing point with the muzzle pointing down range toward the targets. If the command “STOP” is given and your rifle is loaded you must raise your hand immediately and wait for instructions from the range officer.

Do not handle your rifles if there is anyone downrange.

Do not remove your rifle from the firing line until a range officer has checked the rifle to insure that it is safe, the action is open and the rifle is unloaded.

This pre-match safety briefing is authorized for use prior to the start of Richwoods High School competitions.