

Shooting Safety Rules

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE

RULES HUNTERS CAN LIVE BY...

...TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SHOOTING SAFETY

“THE WRITTEN LAW IS WHAT WE CAN AND CANNOT DO... THE UNWRITTEN LAW IS WHAT WE SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT DO.”

BE CAREFUL, COURTEOUS, CONSIDERATE AND CAPABLE



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This is a Federally-assisted program.
W-104-S, Federal Aid, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Vision and Hearing Protection

1 Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Do not point a firearm or bow at anything you do not intend to shoot. Control the direction of the muzzle at all times. Never rest a muzzle on your toe or foot. Keep your finger out of the trigger guard until the instant you are ready to fire. Always keep the safety on until ready to fire; however, the safety should never be a substitute for safe firearm handling.

2 Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow. Every time you pick up a firearm, the first thing you do is control the muzzle and check to see if it is loaded. Be sure the chamber and magazine are empty and that the action is open until ready to be fired. If you do not understand how to determine if it is loaded, do **not** accept the firearm until someone has safely shown you that it is unloaded. Read your instruction manual carefully before you handle new firearms or bows.

3 Be sure of your target and what is in front of and beyond your target. Before you pull the trigger you must properly identify game animals. Until your target is fully visible and in good light, do not even raise your scope to see it. Use binoculars! Know what is in front of and behind your target. Determine that you have a safe backstop or background. Since you do not know what is on the other side, never take a shot at any animals on top of ridges or hillsides. Know how far bullets, arrows and pellets can travel. Never shoot at flat, hard surfaces, such as water, rocks or steel because of ricochets.

4 Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use. Leave actions open, and store sporting arms in cases when traveling to and from shooting areas. Take bolts out or break down shotguns if necessary. Know how your equipment operates. Store and transport firearms and ammunition separately and under lock and key. Store firearms and bows in cool, dry places. Use gun or trigger locks and guards when not in use.

5 Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition carefully. Avoid horseplay with firearms. Never climb a fence, tree or ladder with a loaded firearm or bow and arrows. Never jump a ditch or cross difficult terrain with a loaded firearm or nocked arrow. Never face or look down the barrel from the muzzle end. Be sure the only ammunition you carry correctly matches the gauge or caliber you are shooting. Always carry arrows in a protected cover or quiver. Learn the proper carries. Try to use the two-hand carry whenever possible because it affords you the best muzzle control. Always carry handguns with hammers over an empty chamber or cylinder. If you fall, be sure to disassemble the gun and check the barrel from the breech end for obstructions. Carry a field cleaning kit.

6 Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it. Your safe zone-of-fire is that area or direction in which you can safely fire a shot. It is “down range” at a shooting facility. In the field it is that mental image you draw in your mind with every step you take. Be sure you know where your companions are at all times. Never swing your gun or bow out of your safe zone-of-fire. Know the safe carries when there are persons to your sides, in front of or behind you. If in doubt, never take a shot. When hunting, wear **daylight fluorescent orange** so you can be seen from a distance or in heavy cover.

7 Control your emotions when it comes to safety. If you lose control of your emotions you may do something carelessly. If you have just shot a target or animal you probably will be excited. At that moment you may turn with a loaded firearm back towards your friends or you might run with a loaded firearm towards a downed animal with the gun safety off. You or someone else may be in danger once you lose control of your emotions. Show discipline. Rehearse in your mind what the safe actions will be. Do not allow your daydreams to replace good judgment. Show restraint and pass up shots which have the slightest chance of being unsafe.

8 Wear hearing and eye protection. While shooting at the range, you must wear hearing and eye protection at all times. Firearms are loud and can create noises which are damaging to a person’s hearing. It can be a gradual loss of hearing due to outbursts of noise over many years. The damage could also be immediate, especially if your ears are next to a muzzle blast. Vibrations from the blast are enough to create loss of hearing. Wear glasses to protect your eyes from escaping gases, burnt powder (especially in blackpowder shooting) and other debris.

9 Don’t drink alcohol or take drugs before or while handling firearms or bow and arrows. Alcohol and drugs impair normal physical and mental body functions and must **not** be used before or while handling firearms or archery equipment. These substances affect emotions, making it easier to lose control.

10 Be aware of additional circumstances which require added caution or safety awareness. Just because something isn’t listed under these “ten commandments of shooting safety” doesn’t mean you can ignore it if it is dangerous. There may be rules such as in muzzleloading or archery or posted at a shooting range which should also be followed. Also, practice reloading safety by following and reading all specific instructions. Practice all commandments of shooting safety. Ensure a safe future for you, others and the shooting sports!

***Accompanied means:** By a person who is at least 17, who is licensed to hunt in Texas, who has passed hunter education or is exempt (born before Sept. 2, 1971), and you must be within normal voice control. Proof of certification or *deferred* is required to be on your person while hunting. **Note:** Certification is not required to purchase a hunting license.

Bowhunter Education: Certification is required on certain areas of Texas (Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, Pottsboro; Camp Bullis, San Antonio and Schreiner Park, Kerrville). **Note:** Bowhunter education does not substitute for Hunter Education certification. Hunter Education is a movement to improve sport hunting. The main goal of hunter education is to produce **SAFE, RESPONSIBLE, KNOWLEDGEABLE and INVOLVED** hunters. Courses give beginning hunters a place to start, denying them the temptation to learn by “trial-and-error.” Hunter education refreshes veteran hunters and provides them with a tool to pass on proper information and values of hunting. The course is more than just a lesson in these “Ten Commandments of Shooting Safety.” Although these rules are still the primary reason for hunter education and safety, courses cover a variety of topics including wildlife conservation, management, hunting ethics and responsibilities, preparation, modern and primitive firearms, archery, survival, first aid, hunting techniques and, of course, hunting safety. **THE TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES YOU TO FOLLOW THESE RULES TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY!**

Hunter Education in Texas Training

Every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Training Course. Minimum age of certification is 9 years and cost is \$15.

If you were born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, and you are:

- under 9 years of age, you must be accompanied;
- age 9 through 16, you must successfully complete a hunter education course, or be accompanied;
- age 17 and over, you must successfully complete a hunter education course; or purchase a “Hunter Education Deferral” and you must be accompanied*.

New: Hunter Education Deferral (cost: \$10) – Allows a person 17 years of age or older who has not completed a hunter education program to defer completion for up to one year. A deferral may only be obtained once and is only valid until the end of the current license year. A person who has been convicted or has received deferred adjudication for violation of the mandatory hunter education requirement is prohibited from applying for a deferral. Take the course by Aug. 31 of the current license year and receive a \$5 discount.

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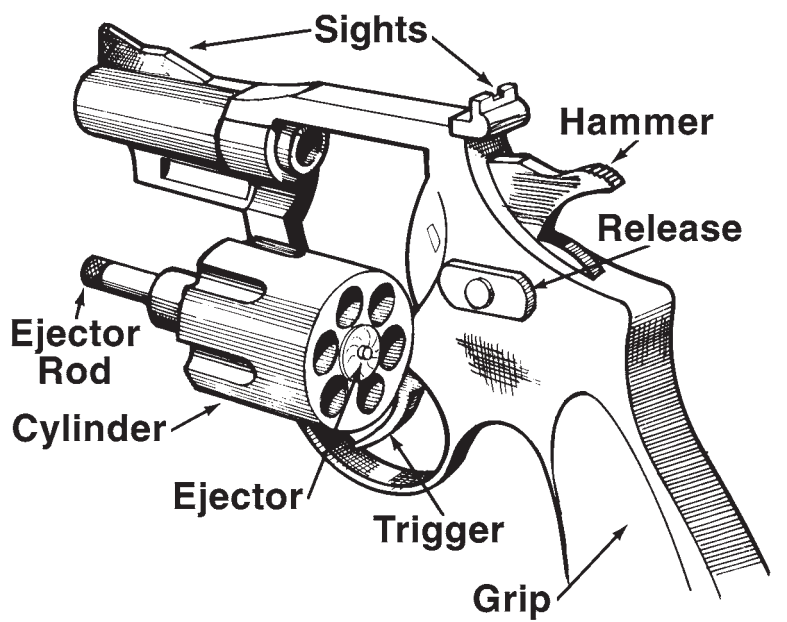
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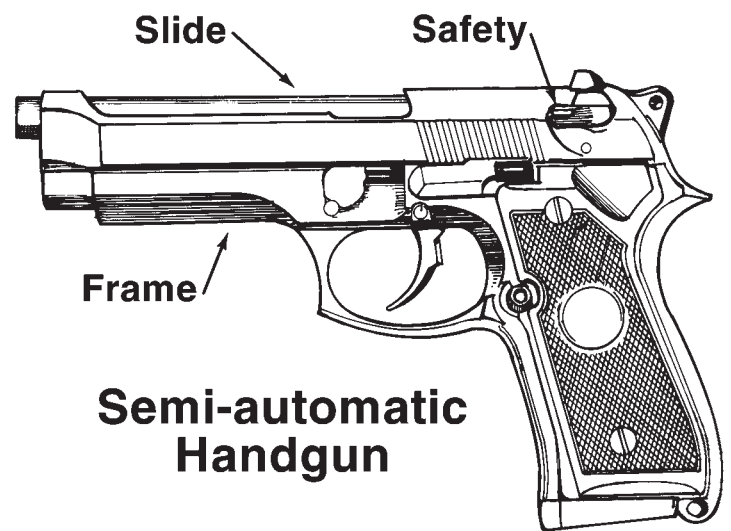
For Information About Courses in Your Area:
Please consult the TPWD Hunter Education section at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/> or call toll-free (800)92-1112 (menu 6) or call (512) 389-4999.

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SHOOTING SAFETY

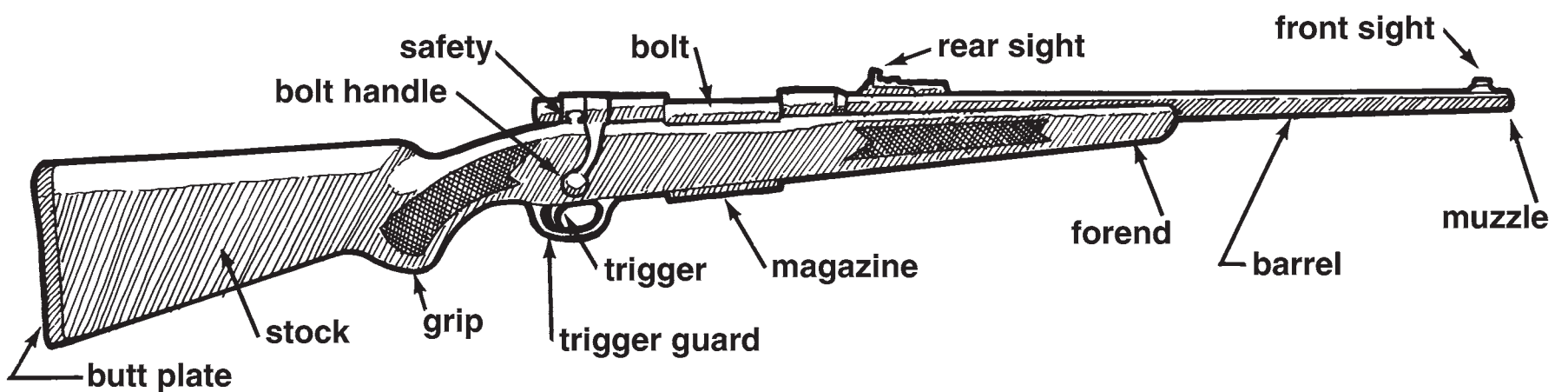
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- 4** Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
- 5** Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition carefully.
- 6** Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
- 7** Control your emotions when it comes to safety.
- 8** Wear hearing and eye protection.
- 9** Don't drink alcohol or take drugs before or while handling firearms or bow and arrows.
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Revolving-action (Double-action)



Parts of a Bolt-action Rifle



Parts of a Pump-action Shotgun

