

SADPA New Shooter Orientation Program

Purpose

The New Shooter Orientation (NSO) Program is intended to be used as an introductory guide to IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Association) sport shooting for all persons participating in SADPA (South African Defensive Pistol Association) shooting matches and competitions. All SADPA members, regardless of whether they are experienced shooters, or new to the sport, are required to undergo the NSO Program at their local SADPA club in order to meet the requirements for IDPA shooters as recommended by IDPA Headquarters in the USA. The NSO Program is also designed to be the official SADPA safety program that all SADPA members are required to complete prior to participating in SADPA matches and competitions in order to meet the requirements for sport shooters as set out by the Central Firearms Registrar.

Course Framework

All SADPA affiliated clubs should conduct the NSO Program at least twice yearly (recommended to be held at the same time as the club holds its official classifier shoot for all of its members). The NSO Program should be conducted by a Safety Officer / Match Director or an experienced club member nominated by the club chairman.

After the completion of the NSO program, every SADPA member is to complete the published IDPA classifier shoot as a practical test, both as a shooter and thereafter as an assistant scorer, thereby satisfactorily demonstrating their comprehension of the material covered in this program.

Course material

The New Shooter Orientation Program is divided into the following sections:

1. Safety (general firearm safety rules, safe handling and use of firearms both on and off the shooting range, as well as general range safety).
2. Firearm dexterity on the shooting range as well as during a CoF (Course of Fire).
3. Range commands.
4. Range etiquette.
5. Scoring methods and procedures.

SECTION 1: SAFETY

1.1 Four Laws of Firearm Safety.

- **ALWAYS KEEP YOUR FIREARM POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION**
Whenever handling a firearm, the shooter **must at all times ensure that the muzzle of the weapon is pointed in a safe direction, away from themselves and all other people.** While handling a firearm on the shooting range, the muzzle of the weapon should **always** be in the direction of the backstop.

- **ALWAYS KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER, UNTILL YOU ARE READY TO FIRE**
Always make a conscious effort to ensure that your finger is out of the trigger guard whenever you are handling any firearm, especially when drawing the firearm out of a holster, re-holstering the firearm, loading and unloading the firearm, or moving while holding the firearm. **The shooter's finger should only be in the trigger guard once he/she has a sight picture of the intended target and is about to fire.** At no other time is the shooter permitted to have his/her finger inside the trigger guard or on the trigger itself.
- **ALWAYS TREAT ALL FIREARMS AS IF THEY ARE LOADED**
If the shooter treats all firearms as if they were loaded, safe firearm handling skills will become automatic, thereby reducing the risk of injury to the shooter and everyone else in the vicinity.
- **ALWAYS KNOW YOUR TARGET AND WHAT IS BEYOND IT**
The shooter should at all times be certain that he/she has identified his/her target, and that it is safe to fire at the intended target without the bullets travelling over the backstop or impacting in an area that could cause the bullets to ricochet and/or deflect and cause injury to the shooter or anybody else in the vicinity. **Before firing any shots, the shooter must know where his/her bullets will come to rest.**

1.2 Safe Handling and Use of Firearms While on the Shooting Range.

- **Always** adhere to the four laws of firearm safety as listed above.
- **Always** keep your finger off the trigger at all times except while in the process of actually engaging targets.
- **Always** be conscious of your muzzle direction.
- **Always** exhibit safe firearm handling skills.
- **Always** obey the instructions of the Safety Officer, never carry out an action unless specifically instructed to do so by the supervising Safety Officer.
- Absolutely no handling of firearms on the range except under the direction of a Safety Officer.
- Should it be necessary to handle a firearm off the shooting line, then this must be done in the designated safe area provided.
- It is always the shooters responsibility to know the loaded condition of his/her firearm at all times.
- Never hand a loaded firearm to anyone. Should a shooter wish to handle his/her firearm while not under the direction of a Safety Officer, hand his/her firearm to someone else, or receive a firearm from someone else, all shooters are to follow the following procedures:

Semi-automatic pistol:

1. While in a designated safe area and while observing the first three safety rules as stated above in section 1.1, always unload the firearm first by removing the magazine from the magazine well of the firearm to ensure that there is no magazine in the firearm.

2. Perform a chamber inspection by retracting the slide and looking into the chamber to ensure that there is no cartridge in the chamber.
3. Once satisfied that there is no ammunition whatsoever in the firearm, ensure that the muzzle of the firearm is pointed at the ground with the opening to the empty magazine well pointed towards the person that the shooter intends handing the firearm over to.
4. Upon receiving a semi-automatic pistol from another person, all shooters must always perform a magazine well inspection as well as a chamber inspection to ensure that the firearm that they have just received is unloaded.

Revolvers:

1. While in a designated safe area and while observing the first three safety rules as stated above in section 1.1, always unload the firearm first by opening the cylinder and removing all cartridges from the chambers of the cylinder.
2. Once satisfied that there is no ammunition whatsoever in the firearm, ensure that the muzzle of the firearm is pointed at the ground with the cylinder in the open position, bottom of the grip towards the person that the shooter intends handing the firearm over to.
3. Upon receiving a revolver from another person, all shooters must always perform an inspection of the open cylinder to ensure that the chambers of the cylinder are empty.

SECTION 2: FIREARM DEXTERITY ON THE SHOOTING RANGE AS WELL AS DURING A COURSE OF FIRE (CoF).

(The following procedures are to be demonstrated by the nominated person responsible for presenting the NSO Program, all shooters partaking in the program are to have an opportunity to repeat the following procedures under supervision.)

- Loading and unloading of the firearm on the shooting line.
- Drawing the firearm from the holster and re-holstering the firearm.
- Gripping the firearm freestyle.
- Gripping the firearm strong handed.
- Gripping the firearm weak handed.
- Correct sight alignment.
- Correct trigger control.
- Reloading (note and explain relevant IDPA rules governing the various types of reloads);
 - Slide lock
 - Reload with retention
 - Tactical reload
- Moving with a drawn weapon.
- Shooting stances.
- Different shooting positions
 - Shooting from high cover (note relevant IDPA rules governing use of cover)

- Shooting from low cover (note relevant IDPA rules governing use of cover)
- Kneeling
- Drawing the firearm while seated in a chair
- Prone
- Clearing malfunctions
 - Tap, rack & assess
 - Double feed
 - Squib load

SECTION 3: RANGE COMMANDS AND PROCEDURES.

3.1. Range Commands.

The following are the range commands that the Safety Officer will issue to the shooter while on the range:

- Shooter on the line
- Load and make ready
- Shooter ready?
- Stand by
 - (start signal is activated)
 - (shooter has completed firing)
- Unload and show clear
- Slide down (semi-auto) / cylinder closed (revolver)
- Hammer down (semi-auto)
- Holster
- Range is safe

3.2. Range Command Procedure.

The following are the actions that the shooter will perform upon the issuing of the various range commands by the Safety Officer. **No action is to be carried out by the shooter until the safety officer has issued the relevant command.** Should the shooter proceed with an action before the relevant command has been given by the safety officer, a procedural penalty will be awarded to the shooter or the shooter will be disqualified from the entire match depending on the severity of the infringement.

- **SHOOTER ON THE LINE**
The next shooter to undertake the course of fire (CoF) is to approach the designated start point for the CoF and await further instructions from the Safety officer. This is also an indication to all persons on the range that the range is now closed and that all persons other than the shooter, safety officer and score keeper must immediately move to the designated spectator area up-range of the designated muzzle safe points.

- **LOAD AND MAKE READY**

The shooter will draw his/her firearm (**finger off the trigger and muzzle pointed down range at the backstop**) and proceed to seat a loaded magazine into the magazine well of the firearm. A round is to be chambered by cycling the slide of the firearm. The manual safety lever is to then be engaged (ESP, CDP) or the hammer is to be dropped in a controlled manner (SSP). Revolver shooters will open the cylinder of the revolver and insert ammunition into the chambers of the cylinder, after which the cylinder will be closed. After the shooter is satisfied that the firearm is loaded and ready for use, he/she will holster the firearm (**Note: during the entire load and make ready process, the shooter will at all times keep their finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard!**)

Note:

Maximum start capacity for SSP and ESP divisions is 10 rounds in the magazine and one round chambered in the firearm unless stated otherwise in the briefing of the course of fire.

Maximum start capacity for CDP division is 8 rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber (if the shooter is using 7 round magazines, then he/she will start with seven rounds in the magazine and one round in the chamber) unless stated otherwise in the briefing of the course of fire.

Revolver shooters will start with a fully loaded cylinder unless stated otherwise in the briefing of the course of fire.

- **SHOOTER READY?**

The shooter should now be in the required start position with his/her firearm loaded and holstered. The shooter may acknowledge that he/she is ready to commence with the course of fire. If the shooter does not acknowledge that he/she is ready, the safety officer will presume the shooter to be ready, and will issue the standby command. **If at this point the shooter discovers that they are not ready, or do not have all their equipment to complete the course of fire, they will advise the safety officer accordingly. This will result in the shooter forfeiting their position in the shooting squad, and will result in them becoming the last shooter in the squad for that particular course of fire.**

- **STAND BY**

After the Safety officer has issued the “stand by” command to the shooter, the shooter shall not make any movement towards the firearm whatsoever until the start signal is activated. If the shooter moves before the start signal, a procedural penalty will be awarded to the shooter. After the issuing of the stand by command, the start signal will sound no longer than five seconds later.

START SIGNAL IS ACTIVATED

Upon hearing the start signal, the shooter will draw his/her firearm (**finger off the trigger**) and commence shooting the course of fire.

THE SHOOTER HAS COMPLETED FIRING THE COURSE OF FIRE

When the shooter has completed shooting the course of fire, he/she is to remain stationary with the firearm pointed down range at the backstop and his/her **finger off the trigger**. If the shooter is not in an upright standing position upon completion of the course of fire (for example kneeling), he/she is to wait for the safety officer to issue the “stand up” command, whereupon the shooter will stand up, **all the while keeping his/her finger off the trigger and the firearm pointed down range at the**

backstop. At no time is the shooter to pick up any discarded magazines, speed loaders or ammunition. These actions are only to be performed once the safety officer has declared that the range is safe.

- **UNLOAD AND SHOW CLEAR**

Semi-automatic pistol:

While keeping his/her finger off the trigger and the muzzle of the firearm pointed down range at the backstop at all times during the unloading of his/her firearm, the shooter will eject the magazine from the firearm and place it into a pocket or magazine pouch. The shooter will then lock the slide of the firearm open thereby ejecting the chambered cartridge out of the chamber of the firearm. The shooter is to make no attempt to retain or catch the ejected cartridge – let it drop to the ground or into the safety officers hand. The shooter will then wait for the safety officer to inspect the chamber and magazine well of the firearm.

Revolver:

While keeping his/her finger off the trigger and the muzzle of the firearm pointed down range at the backstop at all times during the unloading of his/her firearm, the shooter will open the cylinder and eject all spent cases and/or ammunition from the chambers of the cylinder, letting them drop to the ground or depositing them into a pocket. The shooter will then wait for the safety officer to inspect the chambers of the cylinder.

- **SLIDE DOWN** (semi-automatic pistol)/ **CYLINDER CLOSED** (revolver)

The shooter will release the slide all the way to its closed position, while keeping his/her finger off the trigger and the muzzle pointed down range at the backstop. Revolver shooters will gently close the cylinder of the revolver.

- **HAMMER DOWN** (semi-automatic pistol)

The shooter will continue pointing the muzzle of the firearm down range at the backstop while pulling the trigger to drop the hammer/striker of the firearm. This is done as final confirmation that there is no ammunition in the firearm. This command will not be issued to revolver shooters.

- **HOLSTER**

The shooter will safely holster the firearm (finger off the trigger) taking care not to muzzle sweep himself/herself, the safety officer, score keeper or any other person.

- **RANGE IS SAFE**

After the range officer has declared that the range is safe, the shooter may then move off the line and pick up any discarded magazines, ammunition or spent cartridge cases. This command also acts as a signal to the other competitors waiting in the designated safe area behind the muzzle safe points to come forward and assist with the patching of targets and helping the shooter to collect his/her spent cartridge cases.

3.3. Additional Range Commands.

The following is a list of range commands supplemental to those listed above. These commands may be issued by a safety officer to a shooter during a course of fire;

- **FINGER!** (unsafe firearm handling)
The shooter has his/her trigger finger either on the trigger or in the trigger guard of the firearm. The shooter must immediately remove their finger from the trigger and out of the trigger guard. Repeated “FINGER” calls will result in the shooter being disqualified from the entire match.
- **MUZZLE!** (unsafe or potentially unsafe muzzle direction)
The shooter’s muzzle is about to be, or is already pointed in an unsafe direction, e.g. if the shooter’s muzzle is approaching an indicated muzzle safe point. The shooter must immediately correct this, and ensure that the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction. A shooter will be disqualified from the entire match if he/she has repeated “MUZZLE” calls during a match. A shooter will also be disqualified should the muzzle of their firearm point beyond a marked muzzle safe point on any shooting range.
- **STOP!**
The shooter is to stop shooting and/or moving immediately. The shooter will remove their finger from the trigger and out of the trigger guard while keeping the firearm pointed down range at the backstop.
- **COVER!**
The safety officer has determined that the shooter is not making proper use of the available cover. The shooter is to immediately correct this. If the shooter fires another shot before correcting the cover call, he/she will receive a procedural penalty. The shooter must ensure that 100% of their legs and at least 50% of their torso is behind cover when engaging targets from behind high cover or from behind barricades. When engaging targets from low cover, the shooter must kneel with at least one knee on the ground and have 100% of his/her legs behind cover, 50% of the shooters torso must be behind the low cover.
Note: All reloads must be carried out behind cover, and must be completed before the shooter leaves cover. After reloading their firearm, a shooter may move from cover **ONLY** when a fresh magazine is **fully seated** in the firearm, and the **slide is completely forward with a round in the chamber of the firearm**, or in the case of a revolver, when the revolver cylinder is fully loaded and closed.

SECTION 4: RANGE ETTIQUETTE.

The following is a list of “common” guidelines concerning etiquette on the shooting range:

- All competitors in the shooting detail must please ensure that they are present for the stage or course of fire briefing, as the safety officer will not be expected to repeat the stage briefing or part thereof, for any persons that were not present during the stage briefing.
- When a shooter steps up to the shooting line, all spectators and fellow competitors are to refrain from talking, moving about and creating any disturbances that may distract the shooter on the line, until such time as the shooter has completed the course of fire and the safety officer has declared the range safe.
- Fellow competitors in the shooting detail are not to move towards the firing line or any targets until the safety officer has declared the range safe.
- Fellow competitors in the shooting detail are to assist in the patching of targets once the safety officer, score keeper and the shooter have completed the scoring procedure.

- Fellow competitors in the shooting detail are to assist the shooter in the retrieval of the shooter's spent cartridge cases.
- When a shooter steps up to the shooting line, he/she is to ensure that they have all the necessary equipment and ammunition required in order to complete the course of fire, without having to retrieve any additional equipment.

Note: Should a shooter not be ready to commence the course of fire once he/she is on the shooting line, as a result of not having all their required equipment, the shooter will forfeit his/her position in the shooting squad, and will slot in at the rear of the shooting detail, while the next shooter in line will step up to the shooting line. This procedure will be followed in order to ensure the expedient flow of shooters through the course of fire.

SECTION 5: SCORING METHODS AND PROCEDURES.

5.1. Scoring Methods.

All IDPA scoring methods are worked on a time based principal. All "points down" are converted to time and this time is added to the raw or actual time that it took for the shooter to complete the course of fire. Every "point down" is the equivalent of one half second (0,5 sec) that is added to the shooters raw time.

There are two types of scoring methods used in IDPA shooting matches:

- **Vickers Scoring**

The shooter may fire as many shots at the required target as he/she wishes (the shooter may "fill in" more than the required shots on target), however, only the number of shots required on the target as per the course of fire will be counted for score.

- **Limited Vickers Scoring**

The shooter may only fire the specified number of shots per target as instructed in the course of fire briefing. Additional shots on target will result in the shooter being awarded one procedural penalty, and one of their highest scoring shots will be patched per additional shot fired, prior to the scoring of the target.

5.2. Target engagement.

There are generally two ways in which to engage targets in IDPA shooting matches:

- **Tactical Priority**

This type of target engagement requires that the shooter prioritise, engage and neutralise targets in order of the threat that the targets pose to the shooter (for example, the first target that the shooter sees when peering out from around cover – commonly known as "slicing the pie"). If more than one target is visible to the shooter at the same time, the shooter will prioritise the threat that the various targets pose to the shooter, and engage the target that poses the most immediate threat to the shooter (usually the closest target), before engaging and neutralising the remaining targets, closest to furthest (if targets are within two metres of each other, then the shooter may engage the targets in any order, provided that each target is engaged with at least two shots before the next target is engaged – unless stated differently in the CoF briefing).

- **Tactical Sequence**

This method of target engagement requires that all targets be engaged with one shot first, before any follow-up shots are made. Only once all the targets have been engaged with one shot each, may the shooter then re-engage the targets with additional follow-up shots.

5.3. **Penalties and associated terminology.**

The following is a list penalties and their associated terminology that are used in IDPA shooting matches:

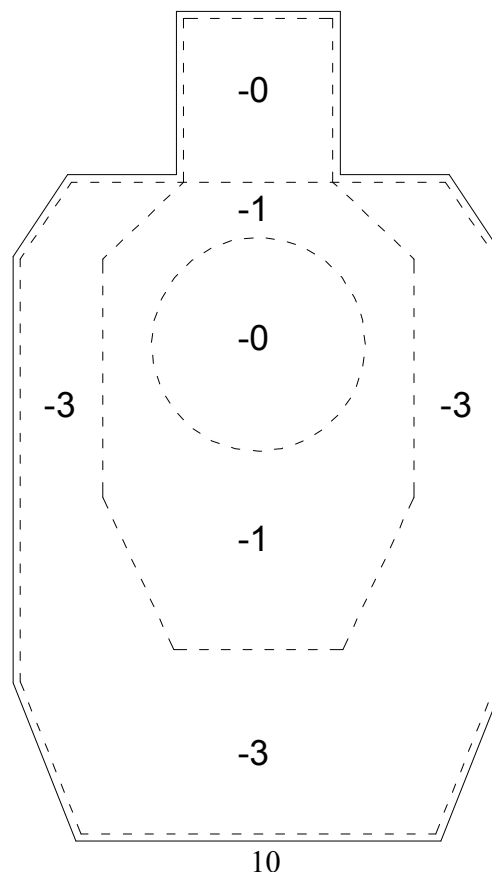
- **PE** (Procedural Penalty – 3 seconds per infraction added to shooter’s raw stage time)
A PE is awarded to the shooter if the shooter does not follow the procedures as set forth in the course of fire description, or when the shooter breaks a competition rule.
- **HNT** (Hit on Non-Threat target – additional 5 seconds added to the shooter’s raw stage time)
IDPA Non-Threat targets are recognised by two open hands being painted on the target. If the shooter shoots a Non-Threat target, a HNT will be awarded to the shooter. Should the shooter have more than one shot on the same Non-Threat target, only a single five second penalty will be awarded to the shooter. Should the shot or shots that struck the non-threat target also strike a threat target either in front of, or behind the non-threat target, the shooter will be awarded the shots scored on the threat target. Should a shooter’s shot strike a threat target, but continue on to also strike a Non-Threat target situated behind the threat target, the shooter will be awarded the shot on the threat target, but will also incur a HNT penalty for striking the Non-Threat target behind the threat target. In IDPA, the rule of all “shoot through shots” applies.
- **FTN** (Failure To Neutralise - additional 5 seconds added to the shooter’s raw stage time)
This penalty applies to any target that does not have at least one shot in the minus 1 point down zone. Not applicable to targets scored using the Limited Vickers scoring method or disappearing targets.
- **DQ** (Disqualification)
Results from unsafe firearm handling, dropping of a loaded firearm, unspportsmanlike conduct, unfair actions, or the use of illegal equipment. Shooter will be instructed to pack away his/her firearm and will not be allowed to continue with the match in any division.
- **FTDR** (Failure To Do Right – 20 seconds added to total score)
Is awarded to the shooter for any attempt by the shooter to circumvent or compromise the spirit or rationale of any stage or course of fire by the use of inappropriate devices, equipment or techniques.
- **DNF** (Did Not Finish)
A competitor who chooses not to shoot a stage will be given no score and a DNF for the entire match.

5.4. Target scoring zones.

As previously mentioned, all scoring in IDPA is worked on a time basis. All “points down” are converted to additional time that is added to the shooter’s raw time. For a shot to be scored, the bullet hole in the target has to be within one of the marked scoring areas of the target. Shots touching the perforated demarcation line of a scoring zone on a target (excluding radial tears radiating outwards from the bullet hole), will count for the lowest points down scoring zone. The scoring zones on a typical IDPA target are as follows:

- **Zero points down (0)** – no additional time added to raw stage time.
Occurs when the shooter’s shot is within or touching the perforated demarcation line the ‘head’ area, or the ‘centre body mass’ ring of the target.
- **Minus one point down (-1)** – 0,5 seconds added to raw stage time.
Occurs when the shooter’s shot is outside the ‘centre body mass’ ring in the minus 1 point down zone of the target, or touching the perforated demarcation line between the minus 1 point down zone and the minus 3 points down zone of the target.
- **Minus three points down (-3)** – 1,5 seconds added to raw stage time.
Occurs when the shooter’s shot is within the minus 3 points down zone of the target, or touching the perforated demarcation line between the minus 3 points down zone and outer edge of the target.
- **Minus five points down (-5)** – 2,5 seconds added to raw stage time as a result of the shooter missing the target completely (shot not touching the perforated demarcation line surrounding the minus three scoring zone of the target).

Below is a diagram indicating the different scoring zones of a typical IDPA target.



Steel Targets (sample of steel target plate & “pepper popper” to be available)
Steel targets are required to be “knocked down” Any steel targets that are left standing at the end of a course of fire will be scored as a missed target (-5 points down). A failure to neutralise penalty will also be awarded for each steel target left standing, resulting in seven and a half seconds per steel target left standing being added to the shooter’s overall score.

Hard Cover (sample of target with painted “hard cover” area to be available)
Any shot resulting in a full diameter hole in the “hard cover” area (area of the target that is painted black) of a “hard cover” target, will be considered as having missed the target (whether the target is a threat or a Non- Threat target). There is no additional penalty for hitting “hard cover”, other than the shot being scored as a miss.

Soft Cover (sample of target with painted “soft cover” area to be available)
Shots that pass through the “soft cover” area (area of the target that is painted white) of a “soft cover” target, will count for score without any penalty being incurred (with the exception being a Non – Threat target that has a “soft cover” zone painted on it).

CONCLUSION

It is the firm belief of the SADPA ExCo that the NSO Program will level the playing fields for all SADPA competitors (in accordance with IDPA Principle #2), as well as ensure that we do all in our power to make our sport safe for both first time shooters and experienced shooters alike. The NSO Program will also give both our new shooters, as well as our experienced shooters the necessary framework within which to observe and conduct themselves on all SADPA shooting ranges.

We wish you all safe and enjoyable shooting!

