



COWBOY FAST DRAW ASSOCIATION

Basic Safety Training & Youth Training Programs

March 30th, 2014

Basic Safety Training

CFDA recommends that The Basic Safety Training Course should be part of all new shooter education and training. This information is not only for youth shooters, but should be part of everyone's basic firearm education and continuing education that we should all dedicate ourselves to on basic firearm safety and gun handling skills.

The Standard NRA Safety Rules

The following basic rules are the basis for CFDA Safety Rules, which are located in the Gunslinger's Guidelines. These are general firearms safety rules that should be followed, at a minimum, at all times whenever handling any firearm.

1. ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.

This is the primary rule of gun safety. A safe direction means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to go off it would not cause injury or damage. The key to this rule is to control where the muzzle or front end of the barrel is pointed at all times. Common sense dictates the safest direction, depending on different circumstances.

2. ALWAYS keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

When holding a gun, rest your finger on the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. Until you are actually ready to fire, do not touch the trigger.

3. ALWAYS keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

Whenever you pick up a gun, immediately engage the safety device if possible, and, if the gun has a magazine, remove it before opening the action and looking into the chamber(s) which should be clear of ammunition. If you do not know how to open the action or inspect the chamber(s), leave the gun alone and get help from someone who does.

B. Additional Rules for Adults and Children

1. Always assume a gun is loaded, even when you just checked it.
2. If you find a gun do not touch it. Immediately tell an adult.
3. At a Cowboy Fast Draw shoot all guns must be kept in a gun box or bag or holstered, except on the firing line while under the direction of the Range Master, Gun Cleaning area, Dry-Firing Area, or while taking the gun from the gun box or bag and placing it in the holster or visa versa (while keeping the barrel pointed in a safe direction, usually straight down).
4. Always wear glasses (Mandatory) and ear plugs (Mandatory for anyone under 18) in the shooting area.

3. **Knowing the Shooting Range and Shooting Line Procedures**

All participants must be familiar with the proper terminology and operations of a Cowboy Fast Draw shooting range.

- A. Shooting Range - is an established area that is either permanently or temporarily constructed to conduct safe Cowboy Fast Draw shooting activities.
- B. Backstop - is a safe barrier that has been constructed out of plywood, archery netting, ballistic nylon, or any other material that is capable of containing wax bullet ammunition.
- C. Firing Line - is the line which shooters stand behind to shoot at the targets.
- D. Down Range - is anything that is in front of the firing line.
- E. Up Range - is anything that is behind the firing line.
- D. Hand Judge - is the person standing or sitting behind the shooter to help them load their guns and explain what you are supposed to do. If you have a question ask them for help.
- E. Range Master - is the person that give commands and tells you when to load your gun, holster your gun, stand easy, and unload and show clear. They also make sure that someone is there to help you. They also tell the Announcer when the Line is Ready.
- F. Dry-Fire Area - is a special area that usually has a sign on it where you can practice drawing your gun while facing the backstop that is provided. It is the only place that you can do this.
- G. Gun Cleaning Area - is where you can clean your gun between rounds.

4. **Standard Range Commands**

- A. Load and Make Ready - do not remove your gun from your holster and begin to load without the Range Master saying this command.
- B. "Line is Ready" - The Range Master sees that everyone is ready.
- C. "Shooter on the Line, Shooter Set" - be ready, the light is about to come on.
- D. "Unload and Show Clear" - unload your gun and show the Hand Judge that the cylinders are empty, make sure you keep your muzzle pointed down range.
- E. "Gun Clear, Hammer Down, and Holster." - means that the Hand Judge has seen that your gun is empty and is telling you to let the hammer down and put it in your holster.
- E. "Stand Easy" - means freeze and stand still or you might disturb the shooters next to you if they are still shooting.
- F. "Guns in Holster" - means make sure your gun isn't cocked and put it in your holster.
- G. "Down Range" - means someone is about to go down range or it is o.k. for you to go down range and fix the grease on the targets if it is your turn.
- H. "Hands Off Guns" - means that someone is down range and to keep your hands off your gun even though it is holstered.

5. **Nomenclature**

All shooters, including youth shooters, must be taught the proper nomenclature of the .45 Colt Single Action revolver (Six-gun). Proper terminology and function of all parts of the gun should be demonstrated as follows:

- 1. Muzzle - the end of the barrel from which the bullet exits. Should always be pointed in a safe direction whenever it is out of the holster.
- 2. Frame - the main part of the gun that all exterior parts of the gun are attached to.
- 3. Hammer - the hammer is used to cock the revolver for firing.
- 4. Trigger - the trigger is used to activate the hammer causing the revolver to be fired.
- 5. Cylinder - the rotating portion of the revolver in which holds the cartridges.
- 6. Loading Gate - located on the right side of the revolver's frame, is opened to allow loading and unloading of the cartridges.
- 7. Ejector Rod - located under the barrel. This rod is used to push the cartridge cases out of the cylinders through the opened loading gate.

8. Cylinder Retaining Pin - the cylinder rotates on the cylinder-retaining pin and holds the cylinder in place while shooting. It must be removed in order for the cylinder to be removed from the frame.
9. Grip Frame - the rear portion of the revolver that is held in the hand to control the revolver.
10. Sights – the notches on the top of the frame and the blade on the front of the barrel which is used to aim the gun.

6. Loading and Unloading

All shooters should be familiar with efficient and safe methods of loading and unloading the six-guns. Youth Shooters and Ladies usually have small hands and extra care must be taken to make sure that they always have control of the firearm. It is especially advised to have a pouch on their belt to deposit empties into since they may not have big enough hands to hold all of the ejected casings and still handle the firearm safely.

Only five rounds can be loaded and the hammer must be down on an empty chamber to start a round. Practice loading and unloading the .45 Colt Single Action revolver using unprimed or spent casings for safety purposes until you can become proficient in this skill.

Pull back the hammer to the half-cock position of the revolver which makes the cylinder spin, unless it is a Ruger where only opening the loading gate is required.

While the six-gun is in cylinder-spin position ALWAYS check ALL chambers to verify that they are empty. This is a great habit to get into!

From experienced shooters or coaches, learn the various positions of how to hold onto the gun while loading and unloading. Make sure that the holding positions are comfortable and suited to their hand size, and allows them to maintain positive control of the gun while keeping the muzzle safely down range.

Learn how to spin check a gun to check for high primers and then line up an empty cylinder under the hammer in the most efficient method for the type of six-gun that you are using.

Practice the safest method of de-cocking the revolver after loading. To safely de-cock a revolver carefully hold sure-handed pressure on the hammer and depress the trigger. Then, allow the hammer to ease forward and rest on the frame, before releasing trigger. For unfamiliar or dropped firearms, place your thumb between the hammer and the frame before picking up or beginning the de-cocking procedure.

7. Basic Fundamentals of Shooting a Single Action Revolver

Although in Cowboy Fast Draw most competitors do not aim the revolver using the sights, it is important to teach our younger shooters the basic fundamentals of shooting and learn how to shoot accurately.

A. Grip

Hold the gun with both hands, if right handed use the right hand to grip the pistol and the left hand to brace the pistol. When using this gripping method for single action revolver the left hand can be positioned in a way that allows the left hand to cock the hammer on the revolver. The grip should be firm to assist in controlling recoil if shooting live ammunition.

1. In Cowboy Fast Draw youth shooters or adults may start with their right hand firmly gripping the gun while it is resting in the holster.
2. The left hand must be held in front and out to the left of the body so that it does not come between the shooter's body and the target.
3. Upon seeing the start light the shooter may draw the gun and while doing so bring the left hand to the gun and cock the hammer with the left thumb.
4. When the gun is pointed at the target the trigger is pressed and the shot is fired. The left hand should remain in contact with the gun through the firing process.

B. Stance & Balance

Stance and balance is essential to learn in order to provide a solid shooting platform whether performing traditional shooting or Cowboy Fast Draw. This is accomplished through practice.

C. Sight Alignment

To align the sights you must look through the rear sight, which is part of the revolver's frame, and align the front sight with the rear. With practice you will find that your eyes should be focused on the front site, while keeping the rear sights lined up with it.

1. While looking through the rear sight and focusing on the front sight and align both sites so that the tops of them are even, while aiming them at the target and also while keeping the front sight centered in the notch of the rear site; this is called a sight picture.
2. It is important to maintain the sight picture through the trigger pull so when the revolver discharges it is pointed properly at the target. Instructors should demonstrate this.
3. In Cowboy Fast Draw the skill of point shooting is acquired with practice and is a very effective aiming technique within 7 yards.

D. Trigger control

To shoot accurately, trigger control is a must. Both with traditional shooting and Cowboy Fast Draw.

1. Traditional Shooting - while maintaining the sight picture, squeeze the trigger smoothly and evenly until the hammer falls, then follow through the entire shot while holding the gun steady.
2. In Cowboy Fast Draw trigger control is more of a matter of the timing of pressing the trigger rather than squeezing which is common in any form of speed shooting. Follow through is still important as it keeps the muzzle pointing at the target for a greater time while the hammer is falling and the bullet is traveling through the barrel towards the target.

Youth Training Program

Youth shooters are the future of any shooting sport. CFDA recognizes the need to properly train and teach our younger shooters the fundamentals of safe gun handling. Our youngsters who become involved in the shooting sports learn discipline and respect for their fellow competitors like in no other form of sport. Learning good sportsmanship at a young age leads to a fair, balanced and successful life.

A Youth Shooter is defined as any participant under the age of 18. Our first mission is always safe gun handling and learning the safe and proper use of firearms.

A Youth Shooter's parent or legal guardian must be present in the general shooting area (not required on the firing line) at all times when the youth is competing in a CFDA recognized event, monthly match, practices, sanctioned titled matches, etc.

A Youth shooter must be 8 years of age to draw a pistol from a holster. Younger ages may fire the pistols and raise them from the low-ready position. There are no formal competitive categories for youths firing from the low-ready position, but this can be an introductory level in which gives a youth an opportunity to learn basic gun handling and safety skills as shown below.

Categories and Levels of Training

Youths are split among two major divisions:

1. Junior Category Boy & Girls ages 16-17, plus Level 4 Youth compete with adults in Men's and Women's Divisions.
2. Youth Division containing a minimum of two categories Billy the Kid (Boys) and Annie Oakley (Girls) ages 8-15. (Youth Level 1 - 3)

Important: Youths Levels 1 - 3 will be issued a training level completion card by their CFDA Affiliated Club, which is signed by the Youth Shooter, the Instructing Range Officer or U.S. Marshal, and the youth's

parent or legal guardian. Youth Level 4 Cards must be approved and will be issued by CFDA. These cards allows our youth shooters to enter competitions for the learning levels that they have completed and are recognized by all CFDA Affiliated Clubs. The Youth's parent agrees that they accept full responsibility and liability by permitting their child to compete in CFDA competitions and events.

THE FOUR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF YOUTH TRAINING

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YOUTH LEVEL 1

Level 1 is referred to as "Tenderfoot" - This is the beginning of the CFDA basic firearm and gun handling safety training. Children of any age can be introduced to the shooting sports in this way; but it is not a mandatory level. Depending on the maturity of the child the parent can decide to place them directly into Level 2. Youths under the age of 8 years old may not draw a firearm from a holster. In the Tenderfoot Level they may wear a holster for safe carrying of the six-gun.

On and off the firing line it is more important to teach the youth safe methods of how to check a firearm to see if it is loaded, how to hand a gun safely to another person, what to do if they find a gun (Don't Touch it and Tell an Adult), muzzle control, loading and unloading techniques, basics of firing a six-gun, and be educated on the destructive capability of any firearm. Lasers systems can also be helpful for firearm education and introductory competition training.

YOUTH LEVEL 2

Level 2 Youth is referred to as "Youth Two-Hand" - This level teaches all of the items learned in Level 1 "Tenderfoot". This level shows training in shooting standard CFDA wax bullets, but the youth must use two hands to fire the six-gun. The hammer can not be cocked until the six-gun is pointed safely downrange at least 45 degrees from the ground. The hammer must be cocked with the thumb of the opposite hand. Before being signed off to receive a Level 2 Card the youth must demonstrate knowledge and proficiency in all the items in Level 1. They must also show that they have learned some general knowledge of firearms, including the nomenclature of a six-gun. They must also demonstrate proper two-hand cocking and firing, proper de-cocking, and are required to shoot a 6" group of wax bullets (3 shots) at 15'.

Youth Two-Hand (Level 2) are then able to compete in Billy the Kid and Annie Oakley Categories of the Youth Division, with a two-handed draw.

YOUTH LEVEL 3

Level 3 is referred to as "Youth One-Hand". The Youth Shooter must be a minimum of 12 years of age and have completed Level 2 Training. They must demonstrate the skill, confidence and proficiency of drawing and firing the six-gun with a One-Hand Draw.

Youth One-Hand (Level 3) are then able to compete in Billy the Kid and Annie Oakley Categories in the Youth Division, with a one-handed draw.

Note: It is the host's option of having an additional Sub-Category of Billy the Kid or Annie Oakley for Youth One-Hand. If there is no additional category then one-handed and two-handed youth shooters will compete in the same categories. All Youth Categories will shoot in the same division and if there is an Overall Youth Shootoff they will all shoot together no matter level, age or gender.

YOUTH LEVEL 4

Level 4 is referred to as "Advanced Youth". The Youth Shooter must be a minimum of 12 and have completed and demonstrate proficiency in all previous levels of youth training. They also must be a skilled competitor and understand all shooting line procedures. They must demonstrate sportsmanship and enough maturity to compete in the Adult Division. Before being issued a Level 4 Youth Card they must complete the following requirements:

- A. The Youth writes a letter to CFDA Management for permission to enter the Junior Category, containing the following:
 1. What it means to the youth to compete in CFDA competition.
 2. Why they wish to compete in the Junior Category in the adult's divisions.
 3. Explanation of what good sportsmanship means to them.
- B. A recommendation of a U.S. Marshal or CFDA Affiliated Club Officer.
- C. A letter from a parent or guardian acknowledging their support of their child competing in Junior Category.

Additional Rules That Apply to Youth Shooters:

1. Must always wear hearing protection.
2. Must always have a deflector shield on the bottom of their holster.
3. Level 1, 2, and 3 Youth Shooters may not Hand Judge at Titled Championships.
4. Level 1, 2, and 3 Youth Shooters may always have assistance and coaching on the firing line by their parent, guardian or someone that their parent or guardian appointed. Their coach may also be their Hand Judge to cut down on firing line personnel, except at CFDA Titled Championships.
5. May not leave the contest area or shooter's area with a handgun even if it is holstered.

COMPLETING THE YOUTH TRAINING PROGRAM

The knowledge in this program can be learned and passed on to the Youth Shooter by the parent, guardian or a CFDA member who they have appointed. They should make themselves familiar with the course and educate their child until they have a total understanding of each level of the course in which the child wishes to participate.

After the appropriate education is completed, then they may ask any CFDA U.S. Marshal or CFDA Affiliated Club Officer (Officer) to witness the level of education that has been achieved. The CFDA Affiliated Club Representative will then issue a Level 1 - 3 Youth Card.

For Level 4 Youth, the Level Youth Candidate will then send a letter requesting a Level 4 Youth Card to CFDA Management in writing or by email, which must be also signed by their parent or legal guardian. The name of the approving CFDA Affiliated Club Officer must also be included, but their signature is not required, as long as the parent or guardian signs the request. The letter of request must contain the items listed under the Level 4 Section. Until a card is issued a copy of an approval letter from CFDA will be sufficient for any CFDA event.

There is no standard test. The Officer who is administrating the examination should do a verbal inquiry to the point they are satisfied that the youth is familiar with the required material depending on the Youth Level they are applying for. The youth should be required to shoot the 6" group, explain the firearm and basic range procedures. They should also be asked some of the basic safety rules and special rules that apply to Youth Shooters as well.

Upon passing this examination the Officer should give a verbal approval of the passing grade and make suggestions on things the youth should keep working on, then issue the appropriate Level Youth Card. For Level 4, it's up to the parent or guardian, to assist the youth to prepare a letter that is signed by the parent with the name of the Approving Officer indicated. While a signature is not required of the Officer it is recommended. Submit this letter to the CFDA office for processing the appropriate Youth Card. See Level 4 Youth for additional requirements if necessary. Until a Level 4 Card is issued a copy of the Approval Letter or email will be sufficient at any CFDA event.

Safety First, Fun Second, and Competition Third!!!