



# The Flyer

Official Newsletter of the  
Airfield Shooting Club

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## Airfield Shooting Club

at the Airfield 4H Center ~ Wakefield, Virginia

P.O. Box 250, Wakefield, VA 23888



### Winter Shooting News



#### Season's Greetings from the Airfield Shooting Club!

As 2024 comes to a close, we want to take a moment to wish all our members a joyous holiday season filled with warmth, laughter, and cherished memories. We are deeply grateful for each of you and the incredible community we've built together.

As we look forward to 2025, we wish you a year of safety, prosperity, and fulfilling experiences on and off the range. May your aim be true, your spirit be high, and your adventures be many.

Stay safe, enjoy the holidays, and here's to a fantastic 2025!

Warm wishes, The Airfield Shooting Club

#### Airfield Shooting Club: A Year of Growth, Impact, and Community

As the year comes to a close, the Airfield Shooting Club celebrates a successful and impactful season marked by growth, collaboration, and camaraderie. This year, the club has expanded its membership and deepened its relationship with the 4H Center, reinforcing its commitment to fostering safe and responsible shooting sports.

#### Strengthening Community Through the 4H Center

One of the year's standout achievements has been the club's partnership with the 4H Center. Through joint initiatives, educational programs, and hosting events, the Airfield Shooting Club has provided young shooters and their families with valuable opportunities to learn about marksmanship, firearm safety, and outdoor ethics. This partnership has played a pivotal role in nurturing the next

generation of shooting sports enthusiasts while giving back to the community.

#### Membership Growth

The club is thriving, with membership numbers reaching new heights. The growth is a testament to the welcoming and inclusive environment of the Airfield Shooting Club. New members have brought diverse skills and perspectives, enriching the club's culture and ensuring its vibrant future. Regular shooting events, friendly competitions, and training sessions have attracted enthusiasts of all skill levels, from beginners to seasoned marksmen.

#### A Place for Friends and Family

More than just a shooting range, the Airfield Shooting Club has become a gathering place where friends and families connect. Weekends at the range are filled with laughter, learning, and shared experiences that strengthen bonds and create lasting memories. Whether you're honing your marksmanship skills or simply enjoying the company of fellow members, the club offers a welcoming and supportive environment for all. Looking Ahead

As we reflect on the past year's achievements, we are inspired to continue building on this momentum. The Airfield Shooting Club remains dedicated to promoting safe and responsible shooting sports, expanding its community outreach, and providing a space where members can pursue their passions in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere.

Thank you to our members, partners, and the 4H Center for making this year extraordinary. Here's to another year of success, impact, and fellowship!

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## Range Safety

### Range Safety: The Cornerstone of Responsible Shooting

Safety is the top priority at any shooting range, whether you're a seasoned marksman or a first-time shooter. A safe environment not only ensures a great experience for all participants but also builds a culture of trust and professionalism. Here are some key safety tips to remember every time you're on the range:

**Muzzle Control** Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Never aim your firearm at anything you don't intend to shoot, and always be aware of where your barrel is pointing.

**Finger Off the Trigger Until Ready to Shoot** One of the most fundamental rules: keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you are prepared to fire. This minimizes the risk of accidental discharge.

**Know Your Target and Beyond** Before you pull the trigger, be sure you know what you're shooting at and what's behind it. Make sure the area around and behind the target is clear, and never shoot at hard surfaces or water.

**Hearing and Eye Protection** Both hearing and eye protection are non-negotiable on the range. Always wear appropriate protection to shield yourself from the loud noise of gunfire and potential debris from ricochets or cartridge ejections.

**Proper Handling of Firearms** When not in use, firearms should be unloaded, with actions open and safeties on. Only load your firearm at the firing line, and once you're finished, clear your firearm immediately.



### Range Safety and Respect: A Guide to Creating a Safe and Positive Shooting Environment

Range safety is paramount, and respecting fellow shooters, visitors, and spectators is crucial for maintaining a welcoming environment. Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned shooter, adhering to range rules, following Range Safety Officer (RSO) commands, and practicing best safety protocols makes the experience enjoyable and secure for everyone. This article covers essential tips for range safety, the importance of following commands, and how to show respect to those around you.

#### 1. Follow Range Rules

Every range has specific rules, and while they may vary, they're all designed to ensure a safe environment. Familiarize yourself with the rules before you begin shooting, and remember that rules aren't just recommendations—they're mandatory guidelines.

- **Review the Range Rules:** Whether posted at the entrance, on the range website, or given verbally by staff, knowing and following these rules is your responsibility.
- **Ask Questions:** If you're unsure about any rules, ask the Range Safety Officer or staff for clarification. It's better to ask upfront than to guess.

**Respect Restricted Areas:** Stay within designated areas and avoid restricted zones unless authorized. This includes adhering to lanes or bays and respecting other areas assigned to different shooting disciplines.

#### 2. Listen to the Range Safety Officer (RSO)

The RSO is in charge of the range and is responsible for everyone's safety. Following their commands is not only respectful but essential for a safe environment.

- **Understand the Commands:** Common RSO commands include "Cease Fire," "Clear," and "Range Hot." Make sure you know what each command means, and be prepared to respond immediately.
  - **"Cease Fire":** Stop shooting immediately, unload, and lay down the firearm. This command may be given for various reasons, from an emergency to a needed adjustment.



## Range Safety—Continued

- **“Range Clear” or “Cold”:** No shooting is allowed. Firearms must be unloaded, and shooters should step back from the firing line.
- **“Range Hot”:** The range is ready for shooting, and shooters may commence firing.
- **Obey Quickly and Respectfully:** Respond to commands immediately and without hesitation. RSOs are trained to assess situations for safety and will often issue commands to prevent accidents. Show respect by being attentive and cooperating fully.

**Report Safety Concerns:** If you notice a potential hazard, inform the RSO discreetly. They are there to address any safety issues and ensure a secure environment for everyone.

### 3. Basic Range Safety Practices

Safety protocols on the range are the foundation for preventing accidents. Practicing these habits consistently will help you become a reliable and responsible shooter.

- **Always Point Firearms Downrange:** Ensure your muzzle is always pointed in a safe direction—downrange—whether you’re handling, loading, or unloading the firearm.
- **Keep Your Finger Off the Trigger Until Ready to Shoot:** This minimizes the risk of accidental discharge. Your finger should remain outside the trigger guard until you’re fully aimed and prepared to fire.
- **Wear Eye and Ear Protection:** Hearing protection is essential to guard against hearing loss from gunfire, while eye protection shields against debris or ejected casings. Wearing both is a fundamental requirement on any range.
- **Know Your Firearm’s Condition:** Always assume every firearm is loaded until you verify otherwise. Confirm your firearm’s condition before handling it and after any break or interruption.

**Check Your Surroundings:** Before shooting, take a quick look at the area around you. Be aware of any people, particularly those new to the range, who may not be familiar with safety protocols.

### 4. Respecting Fellow Shooters and Spectators

A respectful attitude on the range goes a long way in creat-

ing a positive experience for everyone. Treating other shooters, visitors, and spectators with consideration promotes a community of support and safety.

- **Mind Your Space:** Ranges can be crowded, so be mindful of personal space when setting up equipment. Keep your gear organized to avoid cluttering the firing line.
- **Don’t Distract Shooters:** Avoid unnecessary conversation or sudden movements around active shooters. Distracting someone who is lining up a shot or practicing can be dangerous.
- **Offer Assistance Kindly:** If someone seems confused or inexperienced, offer help politely. However, never touch another person’s firearm without permission, and remember to allow the RSO to address any safety issues.

**Respect the Pace of Others:** Some shooters may take their time aiming and preparing, while others prefer a faster pace. Give others the space and respect to practice their own way, as long as they’re following range rules.

### 5. Courtesy to Visitors and Spectators

Many ranges welcome non-shooting visitors or spectators, including family members, friends, or those interested in learning more about shooting sports. Showing courtesy and ensuring their safety is just as important as respecting fellow shooters.

- **Explain Range Rules and Safety Measures:** If you bring visitors to the range, brief them on the basics of range safety and etiquette. It’s important they understand key commands and safe areas, even if they’re not handling firearms.
- **Keep Visitors at a Safe Distance:** Ensure that spectators stay in designated areas away from the firing line. This prevents accidental exposure to gunfire noise and keeps them clear of any potential hazards.

**Invite Questions Respectfully:** Spectators, especially those unfamiliar with shooting, may have questions. Answer patiently and encourage them to learn more about safe firearm handling.

### 6. Final Safety Checks

Before you leave the range, conduct a final safety check. This includes ensuring your firearm is unloaded, storing it safely, and cleaning up any spent casings or trash around your station.



## Range Safety—Continued

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Before you leave the range, conduct a final safety check. This includes ensuring your firearm is unloaded, storing it safely, and cleaning up any spent casings or trash around your station.

- **Unload Firearms and Engage Safeties:** Ensure that all firearms are unloaded and safeties on before leaving the range area.
- **Clean Your Area:** Clear away spent casings, empty boxes, and any other items from your firing station.
- Leave the area in good condition for the next person.

**Thank the RSO:** A simple “thank you” to the RSO for their efforts in maintaining range safety is a respectful gesture that shows appreciation for their crucial role.

### Conclusion

Following range rules, listening to the Range Safety Officer, and treating fellow shooters and visitors with respect create a safe and positive environment. Prioritizing safety and consideration for others helps everyone enjoy their time on the range. When we all do our part, the range becomes not only a place to develop shooting skills but also a welcoming space for community, respect, and shared learning.

## The Gift of Shooting Equipment This Holiday Season: Ensuring Safe and Confident Use of New Gear

The holiday season is here, and for shooting enthusiasts, it’s a perfect time to give or receive new shooting equipment or firearms. Whether it’s a new rifle, shotgun, pistol, or essential accessories like optics or ear protection, receiving new gear can enhance your shooting experience. However, as exciting as it is to unwrap new shooting equipment, it’s equally important to approach it with respect, safety, and a commitment to proper handling. Here’s a guide to help you or your loved ones become familiar with new shooting equipment and firearms, ensuring confidence and safety when heading to the range.

### 1. Prioritize Familiarity with Your New Gear

It’s natural to want to take your new equipment straight to the range, but first, take time to become thoroughly familiar with it. This applies to all types of shooting gear—firearms, optics, holsters, slings, and even cleaning kits. The more familiar you are with your equipment, the safer and more efficient you’ll be when handling it.

**Inspect the Equipment:** Take a close look at each part of your new firearm or accessory. For firearms, examine the safety features, magazine release, bolt, sights, and other critical components. For accessories, such as optics, understand the adjustments and mounting points.

**Understand Basic Operation:** If you received a new firearm, make sure you know how to safely load, unload, chamber-check, and engage the safety. Familiarity with these steps builds muscle memory and prevents accidental handling errors.

### 2. Read and Understand the Operator’s Manual

Every piece of shooting equipment or firearm comes with an operator’s manual from the manufacturer. This is your guide to learning everything you need to know about safe and effective use, maintenance, and troubleshooting.

**Learn About Safety Mechanisms:** Firearms and equipment have unique safety features, and they can differ even between models from the same manufacturer. Understanding these mechanisms—such as thumb safeties, grip safeties, decockers, or trigger safeties—ensures that you’re handling your new equipment properly.



AR-15 Rifle Christmas Ornament Ceramic Ornam...  
Ad by Etsy seller





## Range Safety—Continued

**Understand Ammo Compatibility:** For firearms, it's critical to understand what ammunition types are compatible. The manual will specify the correct caliber and types of rounds. Using the wrong ammunition can cause malfunctions or even damage the firearm.

**Study Maintenance and Care Instructions:** Many people overlook this part of the manual, but proper cleaning and maintenance are crucial to prolonging the life of your equipment and ensuring reliable performance. Learning the recommended cleaning schedule, disassembly steps, and lubrication points will help keep your new gear in top shape.

### 3. Conduct Dry-Fire and Handling Practice at Home

Before you take your new firearm or gear to the range, practice handling it safely at home in a controlled, unloaded environment. This step is invaluable for building confidence and becoming comfortable with your equipment.

**Dry Fire Practice:** With an unloaded firearm, practice safely dry-firing to familiarize yourself with the trigger pull, sight alignment, and follow-through. Dry fire practice helps you get comfortable with the feel of the firearm and improve trigger discipline.

**Magazine Changes and Reloads:** Practice loading and unloading magazines, swapping them out, and running through different scenarios. This helps you develop the muscle memory needed for efficient reloads and safe handling at the range.

**Accessory Testing:** If you've received new accessories, such as optics or slings, make sure they're mounted and adjusted correctly. Testing optics for a proper zero and adjusting them to fit your needs will save you time and frustration when you're at the range.

### 4. Ask Questions and Seek Guidance

If you're unfamiliar with certain aspects of your new gear, don't hesitate to ask questions. Talk to experienced shooters, firearms instructors, or staff at your local gun shop or range for advice on how to safely use and care for your equipment.

**Take a Class or Workshop:** Many ranges offer introductory classes on firearms handling and safety. These are especially useful for learning about your specific firearm or equipment. An instructor can provide hands-on guidance and address questions you may not have thought of.

**Join a Shooting Group or Community:** Connecting with fellow enthusiasts can be a valuable resource for tips, insights, and best practices. Many shooting groups have members who enjoy sharing knowledge about different firearms and equipment, and they're often happy to help newcomers.

### 5. Set Aside Time for Proper Range Testing

When you're ready to bring your new equipment to the range, dedicate specific time to adjust and test it. This will help you understand how it performs in real conditions, allowing you to make adjustments as needed.

**Start Slow and Assess:** Begin with basic target shooting to assess how the new firearm or accessory performs. If you're sighting in a new scope or optic, take your time to adjust it for accuracy. For new holsters, practice draws at a comfortable pace until you feel confident.

**Record and Adjust:** Keep a small notebook with you to jot down observations about accuracy, recoil, or any malfunctions. This will help you identify areas for improvement and remind you of adjustments you made, especially when testing a new optic or accessory.

**Respect Range Safety Protocols:** Remember that with any new equipment, there's a learning curve, so follow all range safety rules and stay mindful of those around you. The range is a controlled environment where you can focus on safe handling practices without distractions.

### 6. Gift Responsibly and with Safety in Mind

If you're planning to give shooting equipment or a firearm as a gift, it's essential to approach it responsibly.

**Understand Local Laws:** Make sure you're aware of any legal requirements for transferring or gifting firearms. In some areas, firearm transfers may require background checks or specific documentation, so familiarize yourself with local regulations.

**Provide Safety Resources:** If you're gifting a firearm to a new shooter, consider including a basic safety guide or even signing them up for a training class to help them learn safe handling skills.

**Include Safety Equipment:** Adding items like eye and ear protection, a cleaning kit, or a sturdy case makes a thoughtful addition to a shooting gift, encouraging safe and responsible practices.

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### Range Safety—Continued

#### Conclusion

Giving or receiving new shooting equipment is an exciting part of the holiday season, but it also comes with the responsibility of learning how to use it safely and effectively. Taking the time to read the manual, practice handling and dry-fire drills, and seeking guidance ensures that you'll be comfortable and confident with your new gear at the range. Whether you're giving or receiving, the commitment to safety, knowledge, and respect for firearms and shooting equipment makes the experience enjoyable for everyone.



Photo from Buds Gun Shop



“All I want for Christmas is an Official Red Ryder Carbine-Action Two-Hundred-Shot Range Model Air Rifle.” -Ralphie Parker from A Christmas Story (1983).

A Christmas Story author Jean Shepard decided that a modified M1938 B Daisy Red Ryder BB gun would be the ultimate present for Ralphie Parker under the tree. Wrapped in classic cellophane, the lever-action repeater had the stylized signature of comic strip and radio hero Red Ryder. The reverse held a sundial and com

pass, required accoutrements for any backyard safari adventure. Capable of holding hundreds of BBs in its magazine, the Red Ryder was an American classic that helped teach many youngsters how to shoot.

The above photo and storyline can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1293325314059779&id=119940478064941&set=a.1086214791437500>



## The Monthly Rimfire Challenge: Precision, Speed, and Fun

Rimfire shooting has recently gained incredible popularity, providing a great way to practice shooting skills while keeping costs low. The .22 LR cartridge is commonly used for these events because it's inexpensive and has low recoil, making it ideal for beginners and veterans.

The Rimfire Challenge occurs monthly on the third Sunday of every month at the Airfield Shooting Club, weather permitting. Different challenges are promoted each month and are designed to introduce members and guests to various shooting platforms. Testing precision, accuracy, speed and improving marksmanship and basic fundamentals in a friendly yet somewhat unofficial competitive environment. Shooters compete on a number of different paper or steel targets at varying distances, including both handgun and rifle categories. It's a great event for those looking to sharpen their skills, meet other members or just come out for some great friendship.

## The Necessity of Lot Testing for .22LR Ammunition

In competitive shooting, particularly with rimfire rifles, accuracy and consistency are paramount. One of the key ways serious shooters ensure optimal performance from their .22 Long Rifle (LR) ammunition is through a process called *lot testing*. Lot testing refers to evaluating multiple batches, or "lots," of ammunition to find the one that performs best with a specific rifle. While time-consuming and often expensive, this practice is seen as essential for those seeking the highest levels of precision. Below, we will explore why lot testing is crucial, its benefits, and the significant differences between lot numbers in manufacturing.

### Why Lot Testing is Necessary

**1. Inherent Variability in Rimfire Ammunition:** Unlike centerfire ammunition, where shooters often handload their rounds to ensure the highest level of consistency, rimfire ammunition cannot be reloaded due to the fixed nature of the primer in the rim of the casing. As a result, shooters must rely on factory-produced ammunition, which can vary significantly between lots due to differences in the manufacturing process. This makes lot testing essential for identifying batches that perform best with a given rifle.

**2. The Importance of Precision in Rimfire Competition:** Competitive rimfire disciplines, such as benchrest,

silhouette shooting, and precision rimfire matches, require sub-MOA accuracy at long distances. Small variations in ammunition can cause noticeable differences in group sizes, especially at distances beyond 50 yards. For example, a small difference in the velocity of a .22LR round can lead to a shift in point of impact, making it critical to find a lot that delivers consistent velocity and performance.

**Barrel Sensitivity to Ammunition:** Each rifle barrel has unique harmonic properties and may "prefer" certain loads over others. This is particularly true for rimfire rifles, where even minor differences in ammunition can significantly impact accuracy. Lot testing allows shooters to identify the specific batch of ammunition that best matches the characteristics of their barrel, leading to tighter groups and more predictable results.

### Additional Benefits of Lot Testing for Competitive Shooters

**1. Optimized Group Size:** By testing multiple lots of the same brand and type of ammunition, a shooter can find the batch that produces the smallest group sizes. This optimization is critical for shooters who compete in disciplines where fractions of an inch can mean the difference between winning and losing.

**2. Reduced Vertical Spread:** In competitive shooting, especially at long distances, vertical stringing can be a common issue. This is often caused by variations in the velocity of the ammunition. Lot testing helps identify ammunition that produces more consistent velocities, thus reducing vertical spread and improving overall accuracy.

**3. Improved Confidence and Consistency:** Confidence is a major factor in shooting performance. When a shooter knows that their ammunition has been carefully selected through lot testing, they can focus more on their technique and less on worrying about inconsistencies in their gear. This mental edge can lead to better performance under pressure, especially in high-stakes competitions.

**Maximizing the Performance of High-End Rifles:** Competitive shooters often invest in high-end precision rifles that are capable of exceptional accuracy. However, even the best rifle will not perform to its full potential if paired with sub-par ammunition. Lot testing ensures that the ammunition is of the same caliber as the rifle, allowing the shooter to get the most out of their equipment.





### Differences Between Lot Numbers in the Manufacturing Process

1 Each lot of .22LR ammunition is produced in a distinct batch, with slight variations in the manufacturing process leading to differences in performance between lots. These differences can arise from various stages of production, and understanding them can shed light on why lot testing is necessary.

#### 1. Powder Variability:

One of the primary reasons for variation between lot numbers is differences in the powder charge. Even though manufacturers have strict quality control measures in place, there can be minor differences in the amount or type of powder used in each batch. These variations affect the velocity of the ammunition, which in turn affects accuracy, especially at longer ranges.



2. **Bullet Weight and Shape:** Slight variations in bullet weight and shape can also occur between lots. These variations, while often too small to detect without precise measurements, can impact the aerodynamics of the bullet, leading to differences in flight path and point of impact.

3. **Case Dimensions and Crimping:** The dimensions of the brass casing and the crimping process that secures the bullet to the case can vary slightly between batches. Differences in crimping pressure can affect the consistency of the powder burn, leading to variations in velocity. Additionally, small changes in case thickness or dimensions can affect how the round interacts with the chamber and barrel, leading to differences in accuracy.

4. **Primer Composition and Sensitivity:** The rim of

a .22LR cartridge contains the primer, which ignites the powder when struck by the firing pin. Variations in the composition of the primer compound, as well as the thickness of the rim, can result in differences in ignition reliability and consistency. A lot with more consistent primer ignition will typically produce more reliable and accurate results.

**Environmental Factors During Production:** Even environmental factors during the manufacturing process, such as

temperature and humidity in the factory, can affect the characteristics of a batch of ammunition. These factors can influence how the powder behaves during the loading process or how the bullet is formed, leading to slight variations between lots.

#### Conclusion

For competitive shooters who rely on .22LR ammunition, lot testing is not just a luxury—it is a necessity. The inherent variability in rimfire ammunition, combined with the sensitivity of high-precision rifles to specific loads, means that finding the right batch of ammunition can be the key to unlocking peak performance. Lot testing allows shooters to optimize their group sizes, reduce vertical spread, and gain confidence in their equipment. While the differences between lot numbers may seem minor, they can have a significant impact on a shooter's results, especially in high-level competition. For anyone serious about precision shooting, the time and effort invested in lot testing can yield substantial benefits in both consistency and accuracy.





### Airfield Shooting Club Match Director Recognition

Too often, as shooters, we arrive at a match, pay our fees, enjoy the event, and head home until the next match, without fully appreciating the effort that goes into making it all happen. Unless you've served as a match director, it's hard to grasp the dedication and hard work that goes on behind the scenes. Match Directors spend countless hours coordinating with the shooting facility, handling range maintenance, managing registration, designing courses of fire, setting up and tearing down, and submitting scores—all to provide us with a place to shoot and compete.

I encourage everyone to take a moment to recognize and thank your match directors whenever possible. Volunteering to help set up, tear down, or assist with general range maintenance is a great way to show your appreciation and support. Your efforts go a long way in helping them and keeping our shooting events running smoothly.

### Contacting Match Directors

Bowling Pin matches: Steven Gordon  
> [pinmatch@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:pinmatch@airfieldshootingclub.org)

Service Rifle matches: tbd  
> [servicerifle@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:servicerifle@airfieldshootingclub.org)

Defensive Pistol matches: Taylor Strickland  
> [idpa@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:idpa@airfieldshootingclub.org)

Rimfire Challenge Matches: Tom Sanford  
> [rifire@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:rifire@airfieldshootingclub.org)

Shotgun Competitions: Jon Lester  
> [shotguncompetition@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:shotguncompetition@airfieldshootingclub.org)

Swamp Shooters: Dale Mullin  
> [swampshooters@airfieldshootingclub.org](mailto:swampshooters@airfieldshootingclub.org)

### Does a Silencer Make a Difference About Accuracy In Rifle Or Pistol Shooting

Yes, a silencer (or suppressor) can positively impact accuracy in rifle and pistol shooting for a few reasons:

**Reduced Recoil and Muzzle Rise:** Suppressors reduce felt recoil and muzzle rise, allowing quicker follow-up shots and helping shooters stay on target.

**Stabilized Gas Release:** The suppressor reduces the rapid expansion of gases as the bullet exits the barrel. This smoother release can improve consistency in bullet trajectory, resulting in more consistent shots.

**Decreased Sound and Muzzle Blast:** The reduced noise and muzzle blast help minimize flinching, improving accuracy, particularly for shooters who might be sensitive to the noise.

**Increased Barrel Length (Slightly):** While it doesn't extend the rifled part of the barrel, adding a suppressor effectively lengthens the barrel, which can slightly improve bullet stability.

While these factors can help, it's important to ensure the suppressor is properly aligned with the bore, as misalignment can negatively affect accuracy and potentially cause bullet strikes inside the suppressor.



Photo from <https://www.silencershop.com/dead-air-sandman-1.html>





## Title: Selecting the Right Shotgun for Trap and Skeet: A Guide for Competitors

Trap and skeet shooting are both dynamic sports that demand accuracy, consistency, and control. One of the most crucial elements of success in these clay shooting sports is choosing the right shotgun. The ideal shotgun for trap and skeet is a blend of form and function, designed to fit the shooter's style while supporting the demands of the game. This guide will walk you through the various types of shotguns commonly used in trap and skeet, their unique advantages, and the essential criteria to consider when selecting a shotgun for local competitions.

### 1. Types of Shotguns for Trap and Skeet

Each type of shotgun offers its own set of advantages for trap and skeet shooting. Here's a look at the most popular choices:

#### Over-and-Under (O/U) Shotguns

- **Description:** Over-and-under shotguns are designed with two barrels stacked vertically, allowing for two shots without needing to reload.
- **Advantages:** They are prized for their balance, minimal recoil, and reliability. The design also makes it easy to switch between barrels with different chokes, giving flexibility in shot patterns, especially valuable in skeet where targets move in varied directions.

**Ideal For:** Both trap and skeet shooters, especially those looking for precision and versatility in shot pattern options.

#### Semi-Automatic Shotguns

- **Description:** Semi-automatic shotguns are designed to fire a single round with each trigger pull and automatically load the next shell from the magazine.
- **Advantages:** They typically have less recoil than O/U shotguns, which can be beneficial during long practice sessions. Semi-automatics are lighter, making them easier to maneuver, which can be an advantage in quick-target skeet shooting.

**Ideal For:** Skeet shooters and trap shooters who prioritize recoil reduction and ease of use.

#### Pump-Action Shotguns

- **Description:** Pump-action shotguns require the shooter to manually cycle the action between each shot.
- **Advantages:** These shotguns are highly reliable, cost-effective, and offer a smooth shooting experience. However, the need to pump between shots can make them slower in a fast-paced skeet environment.

**Ideal For:** Trap shooters, especially beginners or those on a budget, as the slower action doesn't pose as much of a disadvantage in trap as it does in skeet.

#### Single-Barrel Shotguns

- **Description:** These shotguns are designed with one barrel, which means they can only fire one shot before needing to reload.
- **Advantages:** Lightweight and often the most affordable, single-barrel shotguns are simple and reliable. They're ideal for beginners or trap shooters focusing on single-target practice.

**Ideal For:** Beginner trap shooters, especially those focusing on cost-effective shooting.

### 2. Criteria for Selecting a Shotgun for Trap and Skeet

Once you're familiar with the different types of shotguns available, consider the following criteria to help you select a shotgun that best suits your needs:

#### 1. Fit and Comfort

A well-fitted shotgun is essential for accuracy and consistency. Make sure the shotgun's length of pull (distance from the trigger to the butt of the gun) and stock dimensions suit your body. Consider visiting a reputable gun shop or working with a gunsmith to adjust the fit.

#### 2. Weight and Balance

Shotguns with a heavier barrel can provide steadier aim, which is advantageous in trap shooting, where stability is key. For skeet, where targets require quick movements, a lighter shotgun may be preferable. Balance plays a role in ease of handling and helps reduce fatigue during extended shooting sessions.

#### 3. Recoil Management

Recoil can affect your comfort and accuracy over time, especially during lengthy practice or competition rounds. If recoil is a concern, consider semi-automatics, which generally have less recoil than O/U shotguns due to their gas-operated mechanisms.



**Title: Selecting the Right Shotgun for Trap and Skeet: A Guide for Competitors**

**4. Barrel Length and Choke Options**

Trap shooters often prefer longer barrels (30 to 34 inches) to provide a more precise aim at distant targets, while skeet shooters may benefit from shorter barrels (26 to 28 inches) for improved maneuverability. Chokes control shot spread and are especially useful for tailoring performance based on the distance of targets. Look for shotguns that offer interchangeable chokes if versatility is a priority.

**5. Budget**

Shotgun prices vary widely, with high-end O/U shotguns often costing significantly more than pump-actions or semi-automatics. Setting a budget early on can help narrow down your options. Remember that an entry-level shotgun with a good fit can perform just as well in practice as a premium model.

**Conclusion**

The perfect shotgun for trap and skeet is one that feels comfortable, balances well in your hands, and meets your shooting preferences. Whether you're drawn to the precision of an over-and-under, the recoil control of a semi-automatic, or the reliability of a pump-action, understanding the unique features and benefits of each shotgun type is key. By focusing on fit, balance, recoil management, and your budget, you can select a shotgun that will elevate your performance and enjoyment on the range.



Almost every Monday a handful of folks come out every week to tear up the clay pigeons at the shot gun range. Come on out to find out just what everyone is up too. I am sure that the folks would love to have you come out and you might even pick up a tip or two. The photo above was the gang shooting on Veterans day this past month. Photo taken by Brenda Norton.

**Here are ten reasons why improper trigger control could cause a shooter to miss the bullseye:**

1. Jerking the trigger: Instead of applying smooth, consistent pressure, the shooter suddenly pulls the trigger, causing the rifle to move off target.
2. Slapping the trigger: Hitting the trigger with a fast, forceful motion rather than squeezing it gently can lead to misalignment at the moment of firing.
3. Anticipating recoil: The shooter might tense up or flinch in anticipation of the recoil, causing the rifle to shift before the shot breaks.
4. Not following through: Lifting the finger off the trigger too quickly after the shot can result in the shooter losing control of the rifle's alignment.
5. Over-gripping the trigger finger: Applying too much pressure with the entire finger, not just the pad, can cause unnecessary movement of the rifle.
6. Trigger finger placement: If the trigger finger is too far forward or back on the trigger, the force applied may pull the rifle to one side, off target.
7. Inconsistent pressure: Failing to apply steady, continuous pressure as the trigger breaks may result in slight movements that affect aim.
8. Improper hand positioning: A poor grip on the stock or pistol grip can cause the whole hand to shift as the shooter pulls the trigger, moving the rifle.
9. Rushed trigger pull: Pulling the trigger too quickly before proper sight alignment is achieved can cause the shot to stray.
10. Lack of trigger reset awareness: Releasing the trigger too soon without properly resetting it can disrupt the shooting process and affect accuracy on follow-up shots.

Improving trigger control involves practice, patience, and ensuring consistency in the process of firing each shot.







## Arrow Fletching Improves Arrow Flight

Arrow fletching is crucial in archery as it greatly affects the arrow's stability, accuracy, and overall performance in flight. Fletching consists of the feathers or vanes attached to the back end of an arrow, typically arranged in a three- or four-fletch pattern. Here's how fletching impacts shooting and why it's essential for every archer to understand its importance:

### 1. Stabilization and Accuracy

- **Fletching stabilizes the arrow** by creating drag and guiding it in a straight path. This helps the arrow resist any deviations in flight that could occur due to air turbulence, crosswinds, or minor release inconsistencies. Proper fletching helps the arrow rotate (spin) slightly, which improves its stability, much like rifling in a barrel does for a bullet.

The added stability minimizes "wobble," improving accuracy and consistency, especially over long distances.

### 2. Types of Fletching and Their Effects

- **Feathers:** Traditional feather fletching is lightweight and provides excellent stabilization, making it a preferred choice for traditional archery and shorter distances. However, feathers can be less durable, especially in wet conditions.

**Plastic Vanes:** Plastic vanes are more commonly used in modern archery. They are durable, weather-resistant, and come in different shapes and sizes to suit different types of shooting, from target archery to bowhunting. Vanes also create a tighter seal with arrow shafts, reducing noise and increasing durability.



### 3. Fletching Configurations

- **Straight Fletch:** Fletching is aligned straight along the arrow shaft, minimizing drag and producing a flatter trajectory. This configuration is standard for short-range target shooting but provides less stability than offset or helical fletching.

- **Offset Fletch:** Offset fletching angles slightly to one side, creating a slight spin in flight. This improves stability without adding drag, making it a good option for longer distances.

**Helical Fletch:** Helical fletching wraps around the shaft in a spiral pattern, creating the most spin and stability but with increased drag. It's popular for hunting as it stabilizes broadhead-tipped arrows and enhances penetration by keeping the arrow straight on impact.

### 4. Broadheads vs. Field Points

Broadheads (for hunting) are more sensitive to aerodynamic instability than field points. Arrows with broadheads require more excellent stability to fly accurately, so helical or offset fletching is often preferred. Broadhead-tipped arrows may "plan" or veer off course without sufficient fletching.

### 5. Noise Reduction

Properly configured fletching can reduce the noise arrows make in flight, which is especially useful for hunting. Quieter arrows are less likely to spook the game before the arrow reaches the target.

### 6. Customization and Optimization

Arrow fletching can be customized for specific shooting styles, distances, and archery disciplines. By adjusting fletching type, size, and configuration, archers can fine-tune their arrows for optimal performance.

### Conclusion

Arrow fletching is essential for consistent, accurate, and stable shooting. It provides the balance and correction needed for precise shots, especially at longer distances or with broadheads. Investing time in choosing the right fletching configuration based on your bow setup, shooting goals, and environment can significantly impact your performance as an archer.



**Title: Mastering Pistol Drills: Ready Positions and Techniques for Improved Timing and Sight Acquisition**

Whether you're a competitive shooter, law enforcement professional, or a civilian aiming to sharpen self-defense skills, mastering various pistol-ready positions can improve your timing, sight acquisition, and shooting accuracy. Practicing drills from the low, mid, high, and close-ready positions and from the holster helps you react smoothly and efficiently in real-world scenarios. Here's a guide to these essential pistol drills and tips on integrating them into your training routine.

**1. Drills from the Low Ready Position**

**Low Ready Position:** In this stance, the pistol is pointed downward at a 45-degree angle, with the sights slightly below eye level. This position is often used when you're assessing a situation but do not yet need to aim directly at a target.

**Drill: Low Ready to Target**

- **Setup:** Stand with your pistol at the low-ready position, pointing at the ground before you.
- **Execution:** On a timer or signal, raise the pistol to eye level, acquire the sights on the target, and take a shot.
- **Focus:** Smooth, consistent movement from low to high without "overshooting" the target or misaligning your sights.

**Goal:** Improve reaction time and accuracy by transitioning quickly and smoothly into your shooting position. Aim for clean sight alignment in 1–1.5 seconds.

**2. Drills from the Mid Ready Position**

**Mid Ready Position:** The pistol is held close to the body at chest level, often with both hands on the grip, keeping the firearm pointed downward. This position can be useful for situations requiring quick movement or a defensive posture.

**Drill: Mid Ready to Target**

- **Setup:** Stand with the pistol held mid-ready, barrel angled slightly downward at your chest level.
- **Execution:** On a signal, push the pistol forward, align your sights on the target, and take a shot.
- **Focus:** Practice a smooth "push" forward without moving your head to meet the sights; let your arms bring the sights directly in front of your eyes.

**Goal:** Develop speed and precision from the mid-ready stance, aiming for 1–1.5 seconds to draw, align sights, and

fire accurately.

**3. Drills from the High Ready Position**

**High Ready Position:** The pistol is held high, close to the body, and angled slightly upward. This is common in close-quarters scenarios where a downward angle would be unsafe, and it's often used to keep the pistol ready without fully extending it.

**Drill: High Ready to Target**

- **Setup:** Hold the pistol at high ready, close to your body with the muzzle slightly elevated.
- **Execution:** On a cue, extend the pistol forward, align the sights, and fire.
- **Focus:** Smooth extension of your arms while keeping eyes on the target and allowing the sights to align naturally.

**Goal:** Build confidence and consistency in moving from high-ready to target engagement in 1–1.5 seconds.

**4. Drills from Close Ready Position**

**Close Ready Position:** The pistol is held close to the chest with the muzzle pointed forward. This position minimizes the risk of having your firearm grabbed by an assailant, making it ideal for defensive situations in close quarters.

**Drill: Close Ready to Target**

- **Setup:** Hold the pistol at chest level with your arms bent, keeping the muzzle pointed forward.
- **Execution:** On a timer, extend the arms forward, acquire the sight picture, and fire.
- **Focus:** Smooth extension without overextending or misaligning sights. Ensure your muzzle remains on target as you push out.

**Goal:** Fast, controlled extension with quick sight acquisition. Aim for less than 1 second from close ready to an accurate shot.

**5. Drills from the Holster**

**Drawing from the Holster:** Drawing from the holster is an essential skill for anyone carrying a concealed or open carry firearm. It requires practice to avoid fumbling and to ensure a smooth transition from draw to target acquisition.

Continued on page 14



**Title: Mastering Pistol Drills: Ready Positions and Techniques for Improved Timing and Sight Acquisition**

**Drill: Holster Draw and Fire**

- **Setup:** Stand with your firearm holstered. Start with hands in various positions (e.g., at your sides, in front, or simulating a daily activity) to practice realistic scenarios.
- **Execution:** On a timer, move your hand to the pistol, perform a smooth draw, and fire at the target.
- **Focus:** Work on breaking down each step—establishing grip, drawing cleanly from the holster, aligning sights, and firing. Practice “staging” the hand, grip, draw, and press to ensure consistency.

**Goal:** Aim to reach an accurate shot on target in 1.5–2 seconds, with the goal of reducing this time through repetition and muscle memory.

**Timing and Sight Acquisition Tips**

- **Use a Shot Timer:** Timers can add stress and help measure progress, motivating you to make faster, more efficient movements. Set goals based on personal baselines, gradually lowering your time.
- **“Sight Picture, Then Trigger”:** Don’t rush the trigger pull. The first goal is always sight acquisition; speed will follow with practice. Make sure your sights are on target before pressing the trigger.



- **Dry Fire Practice:** Dry firing without live rounds allows you to practice each drill safely and build muscle memory. Visualize each step, focusing on hand placement, grip, draw speed, and sight alignment.

**Focus on Consistency:** Smooth and consistent movements

will make you faster over time. Don’t rush to get to the fastest time right away—start with a deliberate, clean motion, and speed will naturally improve as your movements become second nature.

**Incorporate Variability**

Practice each drill from different starting stances and with varied hand placements to simulate real-life scenarios. By switching up the starting positions or combining movements (e.g., moving from mid-ready to high-ready), you’ll learn to respond naturally in a wide range of situations.

**Conclusion**

Mastering pistol drills from various ready positions—low, mid, high, close, and holstered—can significantly enhance your timing, sight acquisition, and overall shooting confidence. Regular practice with these drills builds muscle memory, speeds up reaction time, and improves accuracy. Whether for sport, personal defense, or professional use, investing time in these drills will lead to better performance in any high-stakes environment.

Since the content I provided is based on common practices and general knowledge within the shooting community, there weren't specific sources cited directly for this article. However, if you're looking for authoritative sources to cite or expand your understanding of pistol drills, timing, and sight acquisition, here are some widely respected references in the field:

1. **"Principles of Personal Defense" by Jeff Cooper**—Jeff Cooper is a foundational figure in defensive shooting, and his works discuss ready positions and mindsets, which are core to practical pistol drills.
2. **"Dryfire Reloaded" by Ben Stoeger** – Stoeger’s work is invaluable for competitive shooters. His drills emphasize precision, sight alignment, and timing, particularly useful for USPSA and IDPA.
3. **US Army Field Manual FM 3-23.35 "Combat Training with Pistols and Revolvers"**—This manual offers insights into military training techniques, including ready positions, holster drills, and timing, applicable to law enforcement and civilian defense.

**NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program and Training** – The NRA provides structured training and drills that focus on pistol accuracy, timing, and sight picture acquisition, foundational for all skill levels.

These resources are widely used in civilian and professional training and provide detailed drills and techniques for improving pistol handling and shooting skills.





## Zeroing A Rifle is Different for Competition, Hunting, and Extreme Long-Range Shooting:

Zeroing a rifle is the process of aligning the point of aim (where the shooter is aiming) with the point of impact (where the bullet actually hits) at a specified distance. While the fundamental concept of zeroing remains the same across different shooting applications, the methods, distances, and considerations vary depending on the purpose—whether it's for competition, hunting, or extreme long-range shooting. Here's a look at the differences in zeroing a rifle for these three purposes:

### 1. Zeroing for Competition

In competitive shooting, especially disciplines like benchrest, precision rifle, and F-Class, accuracy and precision are paramount. The goal is to achieve the smallest possible group size on target, often at predefined distances. Therefore, the zeroing process in competition shooting is highly meticulous, with an emphasis on consistent and repeatable accuracy.

- **Distance:** Competitors typically zero at the exact distance of the match, such as 100, 300, or 1,000 yards, depending on the competition format. For example, in benchrest shooting, competitors may zero precisely at 100 yards, while in F-Class, they may zero at 600 or 1,000 yards.
- **Environmental Considerations:** Competitive shooters often take atmospheric conditions into account, such as wind, temperature, and humidity, as these can affect bullet trajectory. Many competitors use ballistic calculators or apps to adjust for these variables, ensuring the point of impact remains consistent.
- **Fine Adjustments and Verification:** Competition zeroing is an iterative process involving multiple test shots to ensure the rifle is hitting exactly where the shooter aims. Often, shooters will zero their rifle in the same conditions and location as the competition. Some disciplines, such as PRS (Precision Rifle Series), require shooters to engage targets at multiple distances, so competitors may adjust their scope or use a "holdover" zero, aiming at a central distance and adjusting on the fly for other distances.

**Equipment:** In competitions, high-quality scopes with reliable, repeatable adjustments are crucial. Many competitors use scopes with adjustable turrets and parallax adjustments, allowing them to make precise elevation and windage changes to match specific distances and conditions.

### 2. Zeroing for Hunting

Zeroing for hunting requires a more versatile approach because hunters need a practical setup that allows for ethical shots across varying distances. In hunting, the goal is typically a "point-blank zero" that minimizes the need for complex adjustments in the field and allows for an effective shot placement within a certain range.

- **Distance:** Hunters often use a zero distance that provides the greatest versatility in common hunting scenarios. A common practice for big game hunting is to zero at 100 to 200 yards, though some hunters prefer a 200-yard zero to maximize their point-blank range. For example, with a 200-yard zero, a high-powered rifle may keep the bullet within a few inches above or below the line of sight out to 250 yards, reducing the need for holdover adjustments.
- **Trajectory Considerations:** Hunters use a "maximum point-blank range" (MPBR) approach, where they zero at a distance that keeps the bullet within a lethal kill zone (often a 6- to 8-inch circle) from the muzzle to a maximum distance. This way, the bullet trajectory stays relatively flat within this range, so the hunter does not need to make complex calculations in the field.
- **Environmental and Ethical Considerations:** Hunters may have less time to prepare for a shot compared to competition shooters, so they zero for practical, ethical shooting distances rather than extreme precision. Adjustments for wind or minor elevation changes are typically done by estimating or using ballistic reticles, rather than making turret adjustments.

**Equipment:** Many hunting scopes have simpler reticles or ballistic reticles with hash marks to accommodate holdovers rather than requiring turret adjustments. Hunters often choose lower-magnification optics to account for the shorter distances and faster target acquisition needs typically encountered in hunting scenarios.

### 3. Zeroing for Extreme Long-Range Shooting

Extreme long-range (ELR) shooting pushes the boundaries of distance, often involving targets at 1,000 yards and beyond. In this type of shooting, precision in zeroing is absolutely critical due to the large drop in bullet trajectory and the significant impact of environmental factors over these extended ranges.



### Zeroing A Rifle is Different for Competition, Hunting, and Extreme Long-Range Shooting:

- Distance:** ELR shooters typically zero at a shorter distance, such as 100 yards, because adjusting the scope for extreme distances requires extensive use of elevation adjustments and ballistic calculations. This 100-yard zero serves as a starting point, and the shooter then dials in for longer ranges based on precise ballistic data.

- Environmental and Ballistic Calculations:** Because bullet drop and wind drift are extreme at long distances, ELR shooters rely heavily on ballistic calculators to factor in wind, temperature, barometric pressure, altitude, and even the Earth's rotation (Coriolis effect) at extreme distances. Windage and elevation adjustments are made in precise increments, often down to tenths of a mil or quarter-MOA adjustments.



- Multiple Zeroing Sessions:** ELR shooting requires the most meticulous zeroing process. Shooters frequently confirm their zero at the shooting range and test it across different environmental conditions. They may also zero with specific ammunition loads and powder temperatures, as these factors can significantly influence the bullet trajectory at extreme ranges.

**Equipment:** ELR shooters use scopes with high magnification, large adjustment ranges (in MOA or mils), and sometimes even external bubble levels to ensure perfect alignment. Precision scopes with a high number of adjustable elevation and windage clicks are essential, as well as ballistic reticles with extensive holdover options. ELR shooters may also use "canted" scope mounts (20 to 40 MOA or more) to provide additional elevation adjustment range.

#### Summary

Each zeroing approach serves a specific purpose and reflects the unique demands of competition, hunting, and extreme long-range shooting. The process varies significantly depending on the desired outcome, but ultimately, careful zeroing maximizes the shooter's effectiveness in their chosen field.

| Shooting Type                   | Zero Distance  | Key Considerations                                      | Equipment Characteristics                                |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Competition</b>              | Match-specific (e.g., 100, 300, 1000 yards)                  | Extreme accuracy and repeatability                      | High-quality scopes with turrets for adjustments         |
| <b>Hunting</b>                  | Practical range (e.g., 100-200 yards)                        | Maximum Point-Blank Range for Ethical Shot Placement    | Scopes with ballistic reticles, fewer turret adjustments |
| <b>Extreme Long-Range (ELR)</b> | Shorter zero (e.g., 100 yards) with adjustments for distance | Extensive ballistic calculations, environmental factors | High-magnification, adjustable scopes, canted mounts     |



### Cold Bore Shot and Hunting

In hunting, the cold bore shot is usually the first—and often only—shot a hunter takes at an animal. This shot needs to be as accurate as possible since there might not be an opportunity for follow-up shots, especially in conditions where the animal could quickly move out of range or sight. Hunters rely on this first shot to be precise for ethical reasons, as a poor shot can result in a wounded animal that may escape.



- **Cold Bore vs. Fouled Bore:** In hunting, rifles are often stored and transported unloaded, meaning the first shot will almost always come from a cold, clean, or slightly fouled bore. The cold bore shot can hit slightly differently than shots taken from a warmed-up or fouled barrel, depending on factors like barrel material, cleanliness, and temperature.

**Environmental Conditions:** Hunters are also more likely to encounter cold bore effects in unpredictable environmental conditions—such as early morning cold temperatures, humidity changes, and variable winds. These factors, combined with a cold bore, can shift the point of impact enough to affect accuracy, especially at longer distances. For this reason, many hunters practice with cold bore shots to understand how their rifle performs under these conditions.

#### Cold Bore Shot and Competitive Shooting

In competitive shooting, the cold bore shot is important, but its impact is often less critical than in hunting for a few reasons:

- **Multiple Shots Available:** Competitive shooters generally have the opportunity to fire multiple shots in a session. Even if the first shot lands slightly off due to the cold bore, they can make adjustments and compensate as the barrel warms up. In disciplines like benchrest or precision rifle shooting, shooters are often working with short intervals

between shots, allowing them to "settle" their zero early on in the competition.

- **Preparation and Testing:** Competitive shooters usually have the opportunity to test and understand their cold bore shot performance through extensive range time, often documenting any shift and accounting for it in their pre-match preparation. Many even perform detailed "cold bore logs," tracking how the first shot behaves in various conditions, and can then adjust their first shot aim accordingly.

**More Controlled Environment:** Many competitions are held in relatively controlled environments or shooting ranges where conditions are more predictable compared to the field. This means that competitive shooters may encounter fewer variables that can amplify the impact of a cold bore shift.

#### Key Differences in Impact

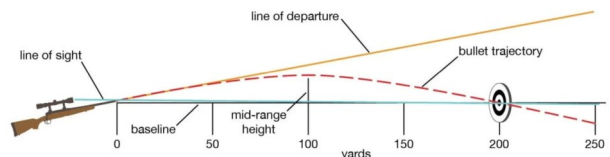
- **Accuracy Needs:** For hunters, the cold bore shot is critical because it may be the only shot. In competition, the cold bore shot is important but doesn't typically determine the outcome, as adjustments can be made with subsequent shots.
- **Environmental Exposure:** Hunters deal with varying and sometimes extreme conditions, which can exacerbate cold bore effects. Competitive shooters are often in more predictable settings and can more easily plan around cold bore variations.

**Ethics and Outcome:** For hunters, a cold bore shift that results in a misplaced shot can lead to an unethical kill or wounded animal. In competition, a cold bore shot that lands slightly off only affects score but can often be corrected in following shots.

#### Conclusion

In summary, the cold bore shot generally has a greater impact on hunting than competitive shooting due to the "first-shot critical" nature of hunting and the unpredictable environmental factors hunters may face. Competitive shooters can often adjust quickly and make up for a cold bore shift with subsequent shots, while hunters rely on the accuracy of that first shot to ensure an ethical and effective kill.

Elements of a trajectory



<https://www.remington.com/big-green-blog/how-to-zero-your-rifle-scope.html>