



The Flyer

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Club Newsletter



Firing Line Fundamentals: A Quick Refresher for Every Shooter

A clear, universal baseline of safe behavior—because our sport stays fun only when it stays safe.

By Tom Sanford, Newsletter Editor
Contributor: Scott Sampson

Shooting sports have one of the strongest safety records in all of recreation—but only because we hold the line on fundamentals. Scott Sampson recently shared a concise refresher on firing-line etiquette that's worth echoing here for new and seasoned members alike.

"Shooting sports are enjoyable and historically very safe — but only when we uphold basic safety standards." — Scott Sampson

Bring It to the Line—Correctly

Case it and clear it. Transport your firearm to the line in a case and ensure it's unloaded. This simple step prevents casual muzzling and sets the tone for safe handling.

Uncasing Without Surprises

Orient the muzzle downrange—before you touch the gun. Rotate the case so the barrel is facing downrange, then open it. Otherwise, the instant you lay hands on the firearm you risk pointing it somewhere unsafe.

Actions Open, Ports Up

Open the action and remove magazines (if applicable) before placing the firearm on the bench. Lay it down with the ejection port facing up. Firearms should **never** be set down with a closed action or a magazine inserted—except in a bona fide emergency. If you have chamber flags, **use them.**

Cold Line Protocol



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Step back from the shooting points when the line goes cold and someone goes downrange. This provides a clear, visible boundary and helps RSOs confirm the line is truly safe.

No Handling on a Cold Line

When anyone is downrange, **do not handle firearms—at all**. Many ranges (ours included) prohibit **loading magazines or handling ammunition** during a cold line. Zero exceptions. If it's cold, hands off.

Why This Matters

Scott notes that a short video clip recently showed multiple shooters violating several of these basics—proof that complacency creeps in fast. It only takes one lapse to undo years of safe enjoyment. Staying vigilant with these fundamentals protects our members, our reputation, and our sport.

Quick Checklist (Post on Your Range Bag)

- Arrive at the bench with **cased, unloaded** firearm
- Turn case **downrange** before opening

- **Open action, remove mag, port up** on bench
- **Insert chamber flag** if available
- **Cold line?** Step back. **No handling** of guns, mags, or ammo
- Resume handling **only** when the line is called **hot**

Source & Attribution:

This article is adapted from guidance provided by *Scott Sampson* and prepared for publication by *Tom Sanford, Newsletter Editor*, Airfield Shooting Club. Edited for clarity and newsletter style while preserving the author's safety guidance.

Safety Notice: Gutter Damage at SRB/50 (Reported Oct 12, 2025)

What happened (reported Cory Allen on Oct 12, 2025):

While sighting-in **on** the 50-yard range, a steady stream of water was seen coming from the roof gutter. Inspection during a cold range revealed a projectile path through the **bot-**

tom of the gutter and the gutter guard, angled **leftward and outward**. The hole size appears consistent with a small-caliber round (e.g., .22–.223). No injuries reported.
Immediate Concerns:

- **Safety:** Unintended muzzle elevation/angle resulting in an off-target strike to overhead structure.
- **Facilities:** Gutter and guard require repair to prevent water damage to structure.

Follow-up Actions:

- **Footage review:** Check the office camera system for any captured activity; note that power at the 50-yard line is currently down and only one camera faces that direction, which may limit visibility.
- **Repair:** Plan to patch/replace damaged gutter sections and verify alignment/level to restore proper drainage.





- **Safety reminder:** Maintain muzzle alignment with the backstop; confirm sight-in height and target placement to avoid striking roof structures or baffles.

Maintenance Operations & Projects Update

In Progress

- **Power restoration (SRB/50):** For cameras, AED, and 4-H drink machine; receptacle replacement pending. Three new cameras purchased.
- **Range camera system:** Larger office monitor and mount donated/installed.
- **5-Stand power:** Eight solar chargers and four batteries purchased.
- **Trap house roof project:** Designing an electrically raised roof (trap side) for safer/easier loading.
- **SRB enhancements:** Designing steel-target frames; researching brass blockers and sunshades for SRB and 50-yd lanes.
- **Site security:** Assessing

stand-alone camera systems for skeet, trap, and future 5-Stand.

Upcoming

- **Trap & Skeet upkeep:** Replace trap house roof; paint/seal high & low houses, including roof cleaning/repaint.
- **Environmental compliance:** Research and plan for range lead-level testing.

- **5-Stand build-out:** Move from planning to staged execution.

- **Work party:** Schedule for ballistic wall repairs.

If you witnessed the gutter incident or have relevant information, please contact range leadership so we can complete the safety review and repairs promptly.

What is a Cold Range, and what does it mean?

Great question. A “cold range” means firearms stay **unloaded and not handled** except at the firing line (or other specifically designated safe area) and only when the range is declared **HOT**

by a Range Safety Officer (RSO).

Here’s what that typically means in practice:

- **Arriving / moving around the property:** Firearms are **unloaded**, with the **action open** and a **chamber flag** inserted if practical, and **cased or holstered**. No handling guns in parking lots, or behind the firing line.

- **At the bench or firing point (range COLD):** Actions open, chamber flags in, magazines out, guns pointed safely down range and placed on the bench or rifle rack, and **no one touches any firearm** while people are down-range. This means ammo/magazines too, unless otherwise instructed!

- **When the line goes HOT:** Only then may you **unbag/unjacket, shoulder/holster, and load**—and only at the firing line or in a designated safe-handling bay. Keep muzzle downrange and finger off the trigger until sights are on target.

- **Cease fire / going COLD:** Immediately **unload, show clear, lock the action open, insert chamber flag, remove mags, holster or bench your weapon** and **step back** from the bench. No gun handling until the line is HOT again.



- **Matches & training:** Handling is confined to the line or a marked **SAFE TABLE** (no ammo at the safe table), per the discipline's rules and the RSO's commands.
- **Concealed carry / open carry:** On a cold range, personal carry must remain holstered and untouched. Always follow the RSO commands and ASC policy.
- **Why clubs do this:** It makes the "downrange = people; up-range = guns" rule crystal clear, preventing mix-ups during target changes and reducing negligent handling behind the line.

If you're at Airfield Shooting Club, always defer to the **posted ASC Range Rules** and the RSO on duty for the exact procedure at each range (SRB, 25/50/100, skeet/trap, archery).

Letter from the Editor

The Quiet Engine of ASC: Your Volunteer Hours at Work

By Tom Sanford, Newsletter Editor

Every time I pull into the Airfield Shooting Club, I'm reminded that nothing here runs on auto-

pilot. From the mowed berms to the freshly painted steel, from safe, well-run matches to a clean sign-in shed and updated rules—this place runs on people. Your people. Our people. Volunteers.

We talk a lot about marksmanship, safety, and sportsmanship. Today I want to talk about the fourth pillar that makes the first three possible: donated time. The hours you give—often early, often late, often unnoticed—are the quiet engine that keeps ASC reliable, safe, and welcoming.

What Counts (More Than You Think)

When folks hear "volunteer hours," they picture work parties and weed-eaters. That matters, but the scope is larger:

- **Administrative & Governance:** board meetings, policy reviews, budgeting, website and email upkeep, newsletter editing, membership processing.
- **Range Operations:** Range Safety Officer coverage during scheduled events, opening/closing ranges, replenishing first-aid/AED supplies, range inspections.
- **Matches & Events:** course setup and teardown, registration and scoring, directing and RSO'ing pin shoots, rimfire, shot-

gun, and archery events.

- **Training & Outreach:** new-member orientations, safety briefings, basic skills classes, youth days, and public-facing information booths.
- **Facilities & Maintenance:** berm repair, target stands, painting and steel maintenance, cameras and power projects, signage, drainage, and cleanup.

If you've ever asked, "Does this count?"—the answer is almost always yes. If the club benefits, it counts.

Why It Matters

- **Safety:** Extra RSO coverage at busy events is the difference between near-misses and non-events. Your presence reduces risk.
- **Readiness:** Proactive maintenance saves money, avoids downtime, and keeps the ranges open when people show up to shoot.
- **Community:** Every orientation, class, or match you support is an invitation to a new member to belong, learn, and return.
- **Credibility:** Well-documented hours and consistent upkeep strengthen our standing with partners, insurers, and the broader shooting community.



The Commitment (and the Opportunity)

ASC asks members to contribute volunteer time each year—at **least six hours**—because a little from many beats a lot from a few. If you've already hit your minimum: thank you, sincerely. If you're still looking to plug in, there's room for every schedule and skill set:

- **Short on time?** Arrive 30 minutes early to help set up a match or stay 20 minutes to help clean up. It adds up.
- **Prefer behind-the-scenes work?** Help with updates, editing, or light admin tasks.
- **Hands-on?** Join a work party, repair target frames, paint steel, or help with range upkeep.
- **People-oriented?** Volunteer as an event RSO, help with sign-in, or assist with new-member orientation.
- **Tech-inclined?** Assist with cameras, power restoration projects, or basic IT/website housekeeping.

How to Make Your Hours Count on Paper

Recording hours is just as important as giving them—it helps us plan budgets, schedule manpower, and recognize contributors. Please remember to log

your time after each task or event. If you're unsure where or how to record, ask your match director, the RSO on duty, or a board member and we'll point you to the right place. If you led an effort, submit a quick recap (task, date, volunteers, approximate hours). Clear records help the club—and help us say thank you publicly.

Recognition: A Culture, Not a Contest

ASC's volunteer culture isn't about tallying trophies. It's about steady, dependable stewardship. Still, we want to celebrate wins. In upcoming newsletters, we'll highlight projects completed, shout out teams that made them happen, and share "before/after" snapshots that show the impact of your time. If you spot great work—tell us. A quick note to the newsletter or board helps us recognize the right folks.

Where We Need Help Right Now

- **Event RSOs & Setup Crews:** Pin shoots, rimfire, shotgun, and archery events always benefit from extra hands.
- **Facilities Touch-ups:** Target stand fixes, light painting, and routine range housekeeping.
- **Orientation & Training Sup-**

port: Assisting with sign-in, safety briefings, and range walks.

(If you have specialized skills—electrical, carpentry, networking/IT—let us know. Those skills multiply impact.)

A Final Ask

If you love this club—and I know you do—pick one small way to serve this month. Bring your gloves, your clipboard, your laptop, or just your smile and willingness. Log your time. Encourage a friend to join you. The hours you give are returned in safer ranges, smoother events, and a stronger community.

Thank you for being the quiet engine of ASC. See you on the range—and on the volunteer roster.

Tom Sanford

Newsletter Editor, Airfield Shooting Club

New 5-Stand Range Opening Soon at ASC's Shotgun Field!

We're excited to announce that Airfield Shooting Club is almost completed construction of our new **5-Stand shooting range** on



the shotgun field. This long-anticipated facility marks a major upgrade for our shotgun program. A hearty congratulations and thank-you go to **Wes and Brenda Norton, John Lester**, who served as lead project managers and coordinated much of the design, construction, and volunteer efforts.

varied challenge: targets may come from traps simulating bird flights, rabbits, overheads, chandelles, incoming or outgoing targets, and combinations thereof.

Because each stand has its own “menu” of target combinations, 5-Stand provides a compact but richly varied shooting experience. It’s an excellent comple-

With the new 5-Stand range now in place, here’s how club members and competitors may put it to good use:

- **Practice & Training** — Members can use the 5-Stand for regular practice, sharpening skills in clay target discipline, transitions, and pair shooting. The smaller footprint of a 5-Stand course

What is 5-Stand (and how it works)

For those unfamiliar, 5-Stand is a shotgun discipline somewhat akin to sporting clays. Shooters

rotate through **five stations** or “stands,” and at each station they engage a menu of **five clay targets** (a mix of singles and pairs).

The target presentations change from stand to stand, offering a

ment to skeet, trap, and full sporting clay courses.

How ASC members and competitors can use it

makes it accessible and less time-consuming than a full sporting clays layout.

- **Club Events & Leagues** — We plan to schedule internal club matches and league shoots on the 5-Stand, giving members





a new competitive outlet that fits nicely into our existing shotgun program.

- **Hosted Competitions / Open Matches** — The range is designed to host formal competitions under recognized 5-Stand rules. Competitors from other clubs may be invited for open matches, which would help raise Airfield's profile in the regional shotgun community.

- **Instruction & Clinics** — The controlled layout of the 5-Stand makes it ideal for structured instruction, beginner clinics, and guided practice sessions, allowing instructors to set up progressive target presentations and monitor shooter progress.

- **Flexibility / Integration with Other Shotgun Disciplines** — Since ASC already supports skeet and trap ranges, this 5-Stand facility adds more variety to our shotgun offerings. It gives members a well-rounded shotgun experience all in one location.

H Center or special events).

- The club already runs various competitions and shooting programs (e.g., skeet matches, training classes, etc.), so the 5-Stand fits naturally into that ecosystem.

- The club's mission emphasizes safety and shooting education, making new facilities like this especially valuable.

We look forward to seeing members testing out the new 5-Stand range, refining their skills, and competing in upcoming events. If you'd like to help with course layout, scheduling, or instruction, please reach out. Let's make this new facility a vibrant part of Airfield's shotgun culture.

Slow Is Smooth, Smooth Is Fast

Operational & Club Context

- ASC's ranges (including shotgun, skeet, and trap) operate **sunrise to sunset** for members (except when reserved for the 4-

A fictional short story by Tom Sanford.

On the third stage of Saturday's match, the wind flirted with the flags and the timer beeped like it always does—impartial, unsentimental. Two shooters stood out.

First was Tyler, a talented speedster with fast hands and a hero's heart. At the buzzer he threw himself into motion—rifle up, safety off, stock barely settled. His first shot broke as the reticle was still surfing past center. The next two chased the wobble. He yanked a reload, caught the mag on the magwell, corrected, then over-corrected, burned more time, and finished with a half-good run and two penalties. "I was flying," he said, breathing hard. The timer disagreed.

Then came Ana. She looked slow—almost lazy—until you watched closely. At the beep, nothing jerked. Her rifle came up on a single rail of motion, cheek met comb, shoulder met stock, sight settled, breath parked, press...crack. The reticle hardly moved. Transition. Same cadence. Her reload was a single, unbroken gesture: drop, reach, seat, roll back on target. No chase, no flinch, no fight. When she finished, the RO laughed: "It looks slow until you see the time." It was the top run of the squad.

That is the entire truth hiding in the old saying: "slow is smooth, and smooth is fast." It's not about moving in slow motion. It's about removing friction—extra steps, wasted muscle, mental noise—so every action feeds the next without interrup-



tion. Smoothness compresses time because you aren't paying the hidden taxes: re-acquiring a sight you overshot, fixing a grip you fumbled, reloading you jammed into the magwell, or thinking your way out of panic you created.

How to Turn Smooth Into Fast (and Beat People Who "Rush")

1) Start the stage before the beep.

Walk the path. Decide exactly where your feet land, where your muzzle goes between targets, where your eyes lead. One plan, not three. Fast shooters look decisive because they already solved the puzzle.

2) Build a repeatable shot cycle.

Grip → mount → settle the sight → stop the breath → steady press → call the shot → reset. Say it in your head. When stress climbs, cadence saves you from guessing.

3) Track the reticle, not the clock.

You can't out-run bad sight pictures. Only break shots you can call. If you can't describe where the reticle was when it broke, you're not shooting—you're gambling.

4) Transitions are where time hides.

Drive your eyes first, then the gun. Move on a rail, not a zig-zag. Let the gun arrive into the target with decelerating control, not a slam-and-yank.

5) Make reloads one motion.

Don't be "fast" at five mini-steps; be smooth at one continuous step. Index the mag the same way every time, seat with purpose, and rebuild the sight as the mag locks—no dead air.

6) Breathe like you mean it.

A shallow breath is a shaky sight. Inhale on movement, settle at contact, exhale into the press. Smooth breath equals smooth trigger.

7) Clean reps > messy speed.

Under a par time in practice, only count reps where every element is correct. Sloppy "make time at any cost" reps teach your body to be sloppy under pressure.

8) Finish the shot you're on.

The match is never won on the next target. Anxiety lives in the future. Performance lives at the center of the current reticle.

Drills That Build Smooth Speed

- **One-Shot Standards:** From

ready, break one perfect shot on a 1–2 MOA target at match distance. Start with a comfortable par (e.g., 2.0s) and only ratchet down when you can call 10/10. The goal is zero wasted motion to first shot.

- **Exit–Entry Transitions:** Two targets, wide spacing. Break on A, eyes to B, gun follows on a rail, break as the sight decelerates into the center. Count how many times you "chase" versus "arrive."

- **Reload Flow:** 10 clean reloads with a full rebuild of the sight each time. If the mag kisses the magwell wrong, reset and start over. Smoothness or it doesn't count.

- **Call-and-Confirm:** Fire, call the shot in detail (e.g., "slightly right-high, 1/3 ring"), then confirm. This forces visual honesty and stops panic pacing.

A Mental Model for Match Day

Think of performance like shifting gears. Stage briefings and movement are **third gear**—brisk but controlled. Sight settling is **second gear**—deliberate. Trigger press is **first gear**—calm, inevitable. People who "go fast" try to leave the transmission in third



everywhere; it sounds exciting right up until it grinds.

Ana didn't beat Tyler because she moved slower. She beat him because *nothing* she did had to be undone. No re-aiming shots she stole, no fixing a grip she fumbled, no thinking her way out of a mistake cascade. Her smoothness removed the friction, and without friction, the clock has nothing to feed on.

That's why "slow is smooth, smooth is fast" isn't a slogan—it's a system. Strip away the extra. Make one plan. Build one cadence. Trust one sight picture. You won't just look calm; you'll be faster than the people who try to be. I should know as I am not slow shooting, but try to shoot fast and wind up the slowest in the group.

A Range for Shooters: Airfield Shooting Club's 20 years of Safety-First, Wallet-Friendly Formula

Wakefield's Airfield Shooting

Club (ASC) is the kind of place where a first-time shooter and a seasoned competitor can practice side by side under watchful eyes, clear rules, and a calm cadence that keeps everyone safe. The club's mix of ranges is unusually balanced for its size: 50-foot and 50-yard lines for precision work, a 100-meter rifle range, and a Short-Range Berm (SRB) for close-in pistol and carbine drills—plus a full shotgun field with skeet, trap, and newly added 5-Stand. That breadth is documented across ASC's rules and recent announcements, including a timely reminder clarifying that buckshot is prohibited on the shotgun fields, which underscores the club's attention to safe shot fall and neighborly stewardship.

Safety is not a slogan at ASC; it's a living practice. The club's published rules emphasize unloaded firearms until you're on a hot line, muzzle discipline, and deference to Range Safety Officers—standards communicated repeatedly via rulebooks and newsletters. That "teach and verify" culture shows up in simple touches: mandatory safety briefings before matches and posts that translate policy into plain language.

On the shotgun side, ASC has leaned into education and progression. From introductory "Shotgun Fundamentals" classes to planned advanced sessions, the instruction pipeline helps newer shooters become confident on skeet, trap, and 5-Stand with-

out overwhelming them. The message is consistent: start with the basics, understand how the fields work, and then build skill with coaching.

Shooters will also recognize the club's volunteer culture. Work parties and 4-H collaborations literally carved out 3-D archery lanes in recent seasons, folding youth into the life of the range and giving members a broader menu of outdoor activities. That kind of hands-on improvement—benches, shotgun holders, cleared lanes—adds value without adding cost, and it keeps the range feeling like a community project rather than a faceless facility.

The affordability angle—what "value" looks like here

It's easy to talk about affordability in vague terms; ASC puts numbers on it. Entry into a club Bowling Pin match is **\$5 for members and \$10 for the general public**, with each additional relay just \$2. The same \$5/\$10 structure appears on other posted match notices, reinforcing that a Shooter can participate without turning a weekend shoot into a major item. For many newcomers, that low per-event cost is the most important "first step" barrier to clear.

To understand value, it helps to compare what's public across the region. Rivanna Rifle & Pistol Club (Charlottesville) publishes transparent figures: **\$100 appli-**



cation + \$12 fob, annual dues at **\$140 or \$70** depending on level, and a **\$350** buyout option in lieu of four service hours. Those are solid numbers—clear and Shooter-budget friendly by any standard—and they set a bar for transparency that many clubs, including ASC, could emulate with a one-page fee sheet.

At the larger-complex end, Fairfax Rod & Gun Club's site lists **\$1,800** (associate) or **\$3,600** (active) one-time membership fees with **\$600** annual dues—understandable given its scale, facilities count, and demand, but a different financial tier than many shooters are seeking for a first club. Arlington–Fairfax IWLA sits between those poles with clearly posted numbers: **\$190 initiation** and **\$211 individual / \$310.50 Shooter** annual dues, alongside a **6-service-hour** requirement tied to range badge privileges.

For comparison on the “membership-only” model with public lanes, Black Creek Gun Club near Richmond posts **\$350 annual membership**, a **\$100 Shooter guest fee**, and **\$30/day** guest passes with time limits. Again, not apples-to-apples with ASC's member-run culture, but useful context for household budgets weighing different access models.

Why Shooters choose ASC

Three themes emerge from the paperwork and posts. First, **pre-**

dictable, safety-first operations: ASC's rules are current and specific, and even commonplace reminders—like “buckshot is prohibited on skeet/trap/5-Stand”—appear promptly in plain language. Parents appreciate that.

Second, low-friction on-ramps to participate: modest, well-publicized match fees get people shooting, learning the norms, and building skill without a big financial commitment. That matters when a Shooter is bringing



two or three shooters to a line. **Third, community and youth focus:** partnerships with the 4-H Center and volunteer crews have added archery options and kept facilities improving. When young shooters can move from classroom to safe, structured practice—and when mom or dad can jump into a beginner-friendly match the same morning—you've got the makings of a Shooter favorite.

Editor's note: All details cited above are taken from official

club websites and ASC's own rules, newsletters, and event page accessed on October 1, 2025.

Call for Member Contributions: Your Stories, Photos, and Notes Power Our Newsletter

Short version: we want *your* match recaps, range projects, tips, photos, and community highlights. If you've shot it, built it, taught it, fixed it, or learned it at ASC—share it.

What we're looking for

- **Event & match recaps:** bowling pins, rimfire, skeet/trap/5-stand, archery, orientations, youth days, work parties.



- **How-to & tips:** gear setup, wind reading, safe gun handling habits, target setting, ammo testing, zeroing basics.
- **Member spotlights:** introduce a new member, thank a volunteer/RSO, recognize an instructor or match director.
- **Facilities & stewardship:** drainage fixes, target stand builds, berm maintenance, range etiquette reminders.
- **Community & outreach:** 4-H support, hunter education, local partnerships, service projects.
- **Photos:** match action, before/after projects, safe training moments, wildlife around the club, “day at the range.”

Easy ways to contribute

- **Quick note (100–200 words):** a paragraph with one photo and a caption.
- **Article (300–600 words):** a recap with who/what/when/where/why, two to four photos.
- **Photo essay (6–10 images):** short captions that tell the story.
- **“Pro tip” box (50–120 words):** one specific skill or safety reminder members can use immediately.

Submission details

- **Where to send:** [EMAIL –

e.g., news-letter@AirfieldShootingClub.org]

- **Photos:** .jpg or .png (originals preferred; minimum 2000 px on the long side)
- **Captions/IDs:** Include names (as approved), event/date, range (SRB/25/50/100, Skeet/Trap/5-Stand, Archery), and photographer credit.

Photo & privacy guidelines (please read)

- **Safety first:** All photos must reflect safe gun handling and ASC’s *cold range* policy—actions open, muzzles pointed in a safe direction, flags where appropriate, and no fingers on triggers unless actively firing.
- **Consent:** Get permission from anyone pictured. **Minors** require parent/guardian permission.
- **No sensitive info:** Avoid visible serial numbers, gate codes, or private member data.
- **Angles matter:** Keep muzzle direction clear and safe; avoid images that could be misinterpreted.

Editorial standards (so your piece sails through)

- **Be factual and specific:**

names (spelled correctly), scores/times (if applicable), dates, and locations.

- **Keep it positive and constructive:** celebrate wins, share lessons learned.
- **Credit volunteers:** RSO coverage, setup crews, scorekeepers, cooks—name them if they’re comfortable.
- **Clean copy:** short paragraphs, clear subheads, and checked spelling help us publish faster.
- **We may edit for length/clarity** while preserving your voice and intent.

Why your contribution matters

Member-written content makes the newsletter *your* newsletter. It helps new shooters learn safely, recognizes the volunteers who keep the club running, and documents the projects that improve our ranges. Most of all, it strengthens the ASC community.

Questions or want an editor’s quick review before you submit? Send a draft—we’re happy to help polish it. See you (and your stories) on the range!



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