



**Columbia Cascade Section**

**USPSA SAFETY MANUAL**

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## **Introduction**

Welcome to USPSA safety training. Our goal is to show you how to compete in USPSA matches safely and have fun shooting in competition. This training will consist of three (3) parts and when finished will allow you to compete at any USPSA match throughout the United States. The three parts are: completing the training manual, range commands and shooting a match safely. All three parts must be completed in order to get your safety card. USPSA safety training will cover safety practices and range procedures / courtesies that are used in USPSA shooting. This training does not cover shooting principles or concealed weapons criteria. You should find, however, that regularly shooting USPSA type matches will improve your ability to handle firearms safely under stressed conditions.

USPSA shooting is not intended to put you in real life situations or simulate any potential ways you may have to use a firearm. USPSA shooting tests your skills and abilities to shoot accurately with speed. Take your time during training and your first few matches, speed will come as you feel more comfortable and with time. The single biggest mistake that new shooters make is trying to go TOO FAST TOO SOON.

The letters IPSC, stand for “International Practical Shooting Confederation”. IPSC is the governing organization that covers our type of practical shooting worldwide. USPSA (United States Practical Shooting Association) is the governing organization that covers our type of practical shooting within the United States. Whenever possible we follow IPSC rules, unless superseded by USPSA rules. In addition to defining IPSC rules, USPSA also sets policy, procedures, markets our type of shooting, oversees the National Championships and keeps the records and statistics for everyone who becomes a member of USPSA. You do not have to be a member of USPSA to shoot in USPSA matches, but we recommend that you join. The advantages will be explained later in this manual. You do not have to be a member of Albany Rifle and Pistol Club or any other club in Oregon in order to shoot USPSA matches at any clubs. A list of regular club matches is listed towards the rear of this manual. We have included website addresses to acquire applications for USPSA and Albany Rifle and Pistol Club at the end of the manual.

This training manual is designed for you to study at your leisure. It **DOES NOT** replace the official **USPSA Rules and Regulations**; it is only a teaching tool. Read a section, answer the questions at the end of the section, check your answers at the end of the manual and then go on to the next section. There is a final test at the end of the manual that we will keep on record for you, which you must complete and turn in.

Now, Sit Down, Buckle Up and Hang On because you are going to feel the excitement that surrounds USPSA shooting.

**Questions from the previous page:**

Be sure to answer all the questions. If you are not sure about an answer, turn back one page and review, then answer the question. Check your answers on Page 22, if you missed the answer then correct your original answer. Be sure to write down any questions that you would like to ask the instructor.

1. What is the biggest mistake new shooters make?
2. What do the letters USPSA stand for?
3. Do you have to belong to Albany Rifle and Pistol Club or any club to shoot in an USPSA match?
4. What is the goal of this training program?
5. How many parts are included in this training program and what are they?

**Here is a list of commonly used words or phrases and what they mean.**

**180 LINE** – The imaginary line that extends right, left, up and down parallel with your arms and body, if you stick your arms straight out to your sides while facing downrange at the targets

**ARO** - Assistant Range Officer

**CATEGORY** – Special shooting groups i.e. ladies, juniors, and seniors

**CLASS** – Shooting level assigned by USPSA, based on Classifier stage scores

**CLASSIFIER** – Shooting stage used to measure a competitors shooting level

**COMSTOCK** – Method of scoring where no limits are placed on time or number of rounds fired.

**CREEPING** – Moving between the “Standby” command and the “Start” alarm

**DIVISION** – Shooting category defining the type of equipment being used

**DOWNRANGE** – Facing the targets

**DQ** - Match Disqualification

**DVC** - “Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas” in Latin, “Accuracy, Power, Speed” in English.

**FAULT LINES** – Foot barriers set up to show the limits of movement towards targets.

**FREESTYLE** – Your choice in how you hold the handgun and shoot

**HARD COVER** – Target coverings that are considered impenetrable by a full bullet diameter hit

**IN THE HOLE** – Two competitors down the list from the shooter, follows on deck competitor

**IPSC** - “International Practical Shooting Confederation”

**JUNIOR** – Category of a competitor who is under 18 years old.

**LIMITED** – Division describing type of firearm used in competition

**LIMITED 10** – Division describing type of firearm limited to 10 rounds in magazine

**MAGAZINE** – Clip holding extra rounds and inserted in handgun

**MATCH** – Shooting event consisting of 4 stages or more

**NO SHOOT** – Non shooting target that results in a penalty if hit

**ON DECK** – Next competitor to shoot after the shooter

**ON THE LINE** – The start position at a shooting stage

**OPEN**- Division describing type of firearm that can have major modifications

**POWER FACTOR** – The power level you are competing at

**PRODUCTION** – Division describing type of firearm that is double action and has holster and magazine pouch position requirements.

**RO** - Range Officer

**SENIOR** – Category of a competitor who is 50 to 59 years of age

**SOFT COVER** – Target obstructions that can be shot through

**STAGES** – Individual course of fire

**STRONG HAND** – The trigger hand that you normally hold the pistol with

**SUPER SENIOR** – Category of a competitor who is 60 years or older

**SWEEPING** – Passing a portion of your body in front of the firearm muzzle

**UPRANGE** – Standing with your back to the targets

**USPSA** - “United States Practical Shooting Association”

**VIRGINIA COUNT** – Method of scoring where there are limits on the number of rounds shot

**WEAK HAND** – The non-trigger hand that you normally hold the pistol with

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6. What is an “RO”?
7. What does “Virginia Count” mean?
8. What is a “Magazine” in USPSA shooting?
9. When you are on the line, where are you?
10. What does “Comstock” mean?
11. When your back is to the targets, what direction are you facing?
12. What does “Freestyle” mean?
13. What is “Soft Cover”?
14. Does “DQ” mean Dairy Queen?            If not what does it mean?
15. What is a “Stage”?
16. What category are you when you are 60 years old?

## SAFETY

The most important goal of this training program is SAFETY. USPSA ranges are considered cold ranges, no handgun handling except at the line and the Safety Area. There are only two places that you can handle your handgun, at the line (when it is your time to shoot) and in the Safety Area. Handling your handgun anywhere except in the previously mentioned areas will result in a match DQ. We do not fool around when it comes to safety.

You can handle your ammunition anywhere on the range **EXCEPT** at the Safety Area. Stop and think about this, you can handle your handgun but not your ammo in the safety area. If ammunition is allowed in the Safety Area then the odds of an accident taking place would go up greatly. Safety Areas, at most ranges, are tables facing dirt berms and marked Safety Area. If you don't see one at the range you are competing at, **ASK**. Do not assume you know where the Safety Area is if it is not marked.

Answer these questions with a yes:

1. Can you load your magazines with ammo at your car?
2. Can you load your magazines with ammo when waiting to shoot?
3. Can you take your handgun out of its gun bag in the Safety Area?
4. Can you practice drawing your handgun in the Safety Area?
5. Can you show your buddy your handgun in the Safety Area?

You should never see any competitors walking around with a magazine in their handguns or hammers locked backed. If you do, mention it to the nearest Range Officer.

When it is your time to shoot, wait for the RO to give you the command to "Load and Make Ready". Handling your handgun before the RO gives you this command will result in a match DQ.

Let me give you another scenario, you are "On Deck" and testing out a shooting position, you turn around and hit your handgun on a prop and knock it out of your holster. What do you do? Raise your hand and get the RO's attention. The RO will clear the range and pick up your handgun for you. **DO NOT** pick up your handgun, it will result in a match DQ.

More safety issues will be covered later in this manual.

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17. What are the two places that you can handle your handgun on the range?
18. Where CAN'T you handle ammo?
19. What is the penalty for handling your handgun in the wrong place?
20. What is the single most important goal in this training program?
21. Your picking up some brass, you bend down and your handgun falls out on the ground, what do you do?

## EQUIPMENT

Now let us talk about what equipment you will need to compete in a USPSA competition. Safety again; you will need ear protection in the form of ear plugs, ear muffs, special electronic ears or any combination of all. Eye protection can be in the form of glasses, shooting glasses or safety glasses. Eye and ear protection is mandatory in USPSA competition and on most shooting ranges.

USPSA has special requirements for holsters. Here are some of the most important:

1. Holster must cover the trigger
2. The belt carrying the holster and all allied equipment shall be at waist level. Either the belt or the inner belt or both must be permanently fixed at the waist or fixed with a minimum of three belt loops. Female competitors may be permitted to wear belts carrying their holster and other equipment at the hip level.
3. Tie down rigs, shoulder holsters or a holster with the heel of the butt of the pistol below the top of the belt is prohibited.
4. A holster, with the muzzle of the handgun pointing farther than 1 meter from the competitor's feet while standing relaxed is prohibited.

Other holster requirements are listed in the latest edition of the USPSA Rule Book.

Handguns are divided into 5 different Divisions based on the type of gun, modifications and position of the holster. Here is a list and description of each division.

1. Revolver – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, maximum weight of 2 ounces above factory weight, no external modifications (porting, compensators, optical sights). Replacement sights, replacement grips, replacement cylinder releases, internal modifications to improve function and reliability are allowed. Minimum **major** power factor is 165 and minimum **minor** power factor is 125. Power factors will be discussed in the section on Targets, Scoring and Power Factors.
2. Production – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, maximum barrel length of 5", minor power factor of 125 minimum only, double action, holster and allied equipment must be worn behind the center of hip bone. Action work to enhance reliability and replacement sights are allowed. Maximum 10 rounds in magazine.
3. Limited 10 – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, minimum major power factor is 165 and minimum minor power factor is 125. Internal modifications to improve accuracy, reliability and function are allowed, external modifications such as weights, or devices to control or reduce recoil are specifically not allowed. Maximum of 10 rounds loaded in magazine. No ports, optics or compensators are allowed.
4. Limited – Minimum 9mm, production gun only, minimum major power factor is 165 and minimum minor power factor is 125. Internal modifications to improve

accuracy, reliability and function are allowed, external modifications such as weights, or devices to control or reduce recoil are specifically not allowed. Maximum magazine length is 140mm.

5. Open - Minimum major power factor is 165 and minimum minor power factor is 125. Maximum magazine length is 170mm. Optics, ports, compensators, external modifications are allowed. These are “all out” race guns.

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22. What is the round limit loaded in Limited 10 handgun magazines?

23. Can optics be used on Open guns?

24. Is Ear and Eye protection required in shooting an USPSA match?

25. Where is the holster worn when shooting Production Class?

26. Can a competitor modify a limited handgun?

27. Can recoil reducers be used on limited handguns?

28. Production handguns can be single action, True or False?

## TARGETS, SCORING AND POWER FACTOR

Here is where the fun begins, the bottom line, the measuring stick, the place where the bullet meets the target. Remember DVC (Accuracy, Power, Speed)? USPSA has put together a unique way of measuring a competitor's shooting ability through measuring accuracy, power and speed. Let's talk about accuracy first.

The standard USPSA targets used in competition are USPSA paper, Steel Pepper Popper, US (small) Steel Pepper Popper and 8" Round Steel Plate. The most common target used, in stages, is the standard USPSA paper target. It is divided into 4 scoring areas, A, B, C, and D zones by very fine cuts in the target. We will show you a sample target during your live fire practice portion of this training. A bullet hole breaking a line, between scoring zones, always gets the higher score. Example; a bullet hole in the "C" zone that breaks the "A-C" line is counted as an "A" hit. An "A" hit is always worth 5 points; B, C or D hits are worth different values depending on what Power Factor you are shooting. Take a look at the scoring chart below, and then we will talk about Power Factors.

<b>Hit</b>	<b>Value (Major)</b>	<b>Value (Minor)</b>
A	5	5
B	4	3
C	4	3
D	2	1
Steel	5*	5*

\*Almost always scored 5 points, but can be worth 10

USPSA has put in the Power Factor formula to equalize the scoring between larger and smaller firearms. It stands for reason that a 45 caliber handgun will recoil more and take longer to bring the sights back on target than a 9mm handgun or a normally loaded 40 caliber handgun. Thus, USPSA put into place a Power Factor formula to even up the competition. Here is the formula: Bullet Weight times Bullet Speed divided by 1000. If the Power Factor falls in the area of 125 to 164, then that handgun is considered to be MINOR (for scoring purposes). If the Power Factor falls in the area of 165 or higher, then the handgun is considered to be MAJOR (for scoring purposes). If the Power Factor is under 125 then the handgun cannot be used in competition. Here is an example: a 45 caliber handgun is shooting a 200grain bullet at 850 feet per second. Using the formula (200 X 850 divided by 1000) the Power Factor is 170 and considered MAJOR. 9mm, 38's, 40's in Limited, Limited 10, Production and Revolver are normally considered MINOR. 45's, 10mm and 40's (that are pushed hotter with additional powder) are normally considered MAJOR. Most regular matches do not have a Chronograph set up to check Power Factors and we take the competitor's word for Power Factor. Matches above the regular monthly level will normally check Power Factor. When you sign up at the beginning of a match you will be asked what Power Factor you're shooting. The computer will automatically score your hits according to Major or Minor.

Here is the Third part of DVC. Speed is measured by a timer that measures your shots out to the hundredth of a second. When the RO pushes the start button and the buzzer sounds, you begin shooting; the timer measures every shot taken including the last shot. The last shot measured is your total time for that stage. Now we add another USPSA measuring tool called the HIT FACTOR. The hit factor is a formula put in place to even out the faster competitors versus the more accurate competitors. Here is the formula: Total Points Scored (minus penalties) divided by Time = Hit Factor. All competitors are ranked, by Hit Factor, on each stage fired. Stage points are given by this ranking and Match totals are figured by adding up these stage points. Take a look at this example:

Shooter #1 scores 100 points (total hits) in 10 seconds, their Hit Factor (using the above formula) is a 10.

Shooter #2 scores 90 points (total hits) in 9 seconds, their Hit Factor (using the above formula) is a 10.

This sounds good, but in reality you will see experienced competitors who both shoot good and do it fast. This is a sport and people do practice to be the best they can be at shooting USPSA.

If you noticed in the above paragraph that (minus penalties) was put in the formula, so what are the penalties? The Stage Description will tell you how many rounds score on paper and if steel has to be knocked down to score. It is your responsibility to read and understand the course description. If you have questions ask the RO before you shoot. If the Course Description states that the best two hits on paper score, then you have to put two hits on paper otherwise there is a penalty for each round missed. Here is a list of penalties and their values:

Miss -10 points

No Shoot Hit -10 points

Failure to engage a non-disappearing target -10 points

Extra shot (Virginia Count or Timed Fire) -10 points

Extra hit (Virginia Count or Timed Fire) -10 points

Failure to follow course description (called a procedural) -10 points or Match DQ

Please remember that you can never score below a zero on any one stage and it does not affect your scores on another stage. We will explain Virginia Count, Timed Fire and Procedurals later in the manual. A miss does not score a penalty on disappearing targets. Here is an example of scoring where penalties apply. Most paper targets require at least 2 hits on paper. Many times you will see a No-Shoot target partially covering a regular target; this tightens up the scoring area on the regular target. If you shoot twice and put one round in the good target (A zone hit) and one round in the No-Shoot, here is your score on that target array. 5 points for the good hit, -10 points for the miss and -10 for hitting the No-Shoot. Ask your instructor to explain partial hits on No-Shoots that partially cover regular targets.

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29. A hit in the A zone is worth how many points?
30. If a hit is on the line between the A and C zone, what score do you get?
31. If you are shooting a 200 grain bullet at 800 feet per second, what is your power factor and are you shooting Major or Minor?
32. When you knock down a steel target, what score do you get (normally)?
33. What is the formula for Hit Factor?
34. What is the penalty for a miss on a non-disappearing target?
35. What is the penalty for hitting a No-Shoot target?
36. How do you know how many rounds score on paper on a particular stage?
37. Who do you ask if you don't understand the course description?
38. If you fail to follow the course procedures, do you lose scoring points?
39. Does the fastest shooter win the stage?

## **STAGES**

Stages or courses of fire are designed to challenge the competitor and not give advantage or disadvantage to physical differences in people. Stages should be neither too easy nor too hard, but fun to shoot. Stages should be 8 round neutral, which means that targets are arranged in arrays that require 8 rounds or less to be fired and then there is some movement (time to reload) before the next array of targets. Each stage has a written course description and it is the shooters responsibility to understand that course of fire before they shoot. Any questions should be directed to the RO. The major parts of a course description are; Starting Position, Scoring Section, Stage Procedure and Stage layout.

The Starting Position makes sure that all competitors start the same way and at times this can be challenging.

The Scoring Section indicates the Type of Scoring, round count, points available, number and types of targets, scored hits, how the stage starts and ends; and possible penalties or procedurals. There are three types of stages, Comstock, Virginia Count and Timed Fire. The most common type is Comstock, which means that you can shoot as many rounds as you want to accomplish hitting all the targets. The time it takes from the starting buzzer to the last shot fired is the Total Time.

Virginia Count means that you have to shoot the exact round count (as stated in the course description) and there are penalties for extra shots and extra hits on targets. The time it takes from the starting buzzer to the last shot fired is the Total Time.

Timed Fire is exactly what it sounds like. You have a fixed amount of time to engage as many targets as the course description states. There are penalties for extra rounds fired and extra hits during the course of fire plus penalties for going overtime on the stop buzzer.

The Stage Procedure tells you what to do in the stage and how to complete it. If there are special procedures to follow, like mandatory reloads, this is where you will find them. Read it carefully because failure to follow these instructions can lead to –10-point procedural penalties. In some cases, special penalties are described in this section.

The approximate layout of the stage is shown in the Stage Layout Section. Due to one-dimensional drawings, these drawings only indicate approximately how the stage is designed.

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40. What are the three types of stages?
41. Are you limited to the number of rounds fired in a Comstock Stage?
42. Whose responsibility is it to understand the course description?
43. What happens if you fire a round after the buzzer has sounded ending a Timed Fire stage?
44. What type of stage is a Virginia Stage?
45. What section on the course description tells you how many rounds count on paper targets?

## CLASSIFIER STAGES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

Within most matches there is one stage called the Classifier. It comes from the USPSA National Classification Book and has to be set up according to the instructions in the book, exactly. All clubs across the United States use Classifier Stages, out of this book, and USPSA keeps on file the scores of each USPSA competitor for each Classifier Stage. All scores are compared to the competitor who shot the highest hit factor and each USPSA member, who shoots that same stage, is given a percentile figure based on how their hit factor compares to the best. When you join USPSA and shoot at least 4 classifiers you will be given a card with a classification level on it. Here are the levels and their percentages:

Unclassified – not enough classifiers in.

D - 2 to 40%

C - 40 to 59.9%

B - 60 to 74.9%

A - 75 to 84.9%

Master - 85 to 94.9%

Grand Master - 95 to %100

New members who do not have enough classifier stages in and non-members are unclassified shooters. After you receive your first classification, each classifier score that is sent in to USPSA moves your average either up or down. You can never go down in classification once you obtain a higher level, even if your average percentage drops. Example: once you become a “C” class shooter and your average drops to 39%, you still stay a “C” class shooter, however, if your average goes up to 60% then you move up to a “B” class shooter. Why do we have these Classifications? This allows competitors with similar shooting abilities to compete against each other. Example: “B” Class Limited Shooters compete against all other “B” Class Limited Shooters. This is the same for every Division and every Class.

Once you have your initial classification and continue to shoot classifiers USPSA will look at the average of the highest six of the 8 most recent percentages after every classifier stage. As you score better with the Classifiers, the lower scores will drop out and your average will move up.

USPSA Classified Competitors can go anywhere in the United States and compete against shooters in their own class. The Classification system is not perfect, but it is surprisingly accurate in estimating a shooters skill level.

All Classifier Stage scores must be sent to USPSA; however, scores that are above a shooters average by more than 15% are not counted. Scores that are more than 5% below the bottom of the member’s class bracket are not counted. This keeps the average from jumping up and down too fast and gives a more accurate average percentage.

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46. Why do USPSA competitors shoot Classifier Stages?
47. Can an USPSA competitor be classified if they don't belong to USPSA?
48. How many Classifier Stages do you need to shoot to be classified?
49. What is the highest Classified Position a competitor can reach?
50. Once you become a "C" class shooter can you go down to a "D" class shooter?
51. If you have a 70% Classifier average, what class are you?
52. After your initial classification, how often does USPSA look at your averages?

## STAGE COMMANDS

The Range Officer is the Match official in charge of competitor action on a stage. This official ensures that competitors comply with the stage instructions and handles their firearm safely. The Range Officer stations himself/herself in close proximity to the competitor to observe correct procedure and issues the range commands and oversees safe competitor behavior. Now it is your turn to shoot, you step up to the line and wait for the Range Officer's commands. Here is what you should hear.

1. **“Range is Hot”** Optional Command
2. **“Load and Make Ready”** The competitor will face down range and prepare the firearm in accordance with the stage description. The competitor will then assume the required ready position. At this point, the Range Officer shall proceed. If you have any questions about the stage, ask the Range Officer before you prepare your handgun, this is also the time to take a sight picture with an unloaded firearm. Good protocol is to ask the RO if you can take a sight picture.
3. **“Are You Ready?”** You have several options at this point. First, if there is a lack of any negative response, the RO will assume you are Ready. Second, you can say ready or nod your head up and down. Third, you must shout “Not Ready” if you're not ready to go.
4. **“Standby”** This command will be followed by the start signal within 1-4 seconds. If you move after the “Standby” command and before the start signal you could be assessed a procedural penalty for “Creeping”.
5. **“Start Signal”** The audible or visual signal to begin the course of fire.
6. **“Stop”** This command may be issued by officiating officers at any time during the course of fire. The competitor shall immediately cease firing, stand still and wait for further instructions from the Range Officer.
7. **“If You Are Finished, Unload and Show Clear”** When the Range Officer issues this command and the competitor has finished the course of fire, the competitor shall lower his/her handgun, drop the magazine, unload the chamber and hold the handgun open for inspection.
8. **“If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster”** This command is given after the Range Officer is satisfied that the handgun is unloaded and safe for further action. At some clubs competitors have the option to bag their handgun, instead of holstering, upon this command. Some matches require competitors to come to the line with their handgun holstered. If that is the case then you must bag and un-bag at a Safety Area.
9. **“Range is Clear”** Competitor, Range Officials or other squad members will not move forward until they hear this command.

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53. Can you move after the “Standby” command and before the start buzzer?
  
54. When you come to the line, as the next shooter, what are the six commands you will hear during the course of fire?
  
55. What do you do when you hear the “Stop” command?
  
56. When is it okay to move forward on the range, after a competitor finishes the stage?
  
57. What do you do if the RO asks “Are You Ready” and you are not?
  
58. Why do you think the RO shouts, “Range is Hot”?

## SAFETY AND DISQUALIFICATIONS

Disqualifications (DQ's) take place when competitors break major safety rules. When, yes, I mean when you are DQ'd please understand that most USPSA competitors have been DQ'd at one time or another and try to handle it gracefully. A DQ means a competitor is disqualified from the entire match not just the stage they are shooting on. Here is a brief list of reasons for disqualification:

1. **Accidental Discharge** – Any shot fired outside the confines of the backstop or side berms or which strikes the ground within 3 meters of the competitor or any other direction deemed unsafe by the host organization and specified in the stage briefing.
2. **Unsafe Gun Handling** – Any discharge prior to commencement or while loading, reloading, unloading or during remedial action in the case of a malfunction.
  - a. Any discharge during movement except while engaging targets.
  - b. In the event of a discharge following the Range Officer's declaration "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster".
3. **Breaking the 180** - If at any time during the course of fire, a competitor allows the muzzle to point rearwards, that is further than 90 degrees from the median intercept of the backstop, whether the firearm is loaded or not. Ask for a demonstration.
4. Handling a handgun at anytime except when in a designated Safety Area or on the Firing Line under the supervision of a Range Officer.
5. If at any time **during the course of fire, or while loading or unloading**, a competitor drops his/her handgun or causes it to fall, loaded or not.
6. Allowing the muzzle of a loaded handgun to point at any part of the competitor's body during a course of fire (sweeping).
7. Failure to keep the finger outside the trigger guard while loading or unloading, moving or clearing a malfunction.
8. Holstering a loaded handgun with the safety not applied or hammer cocked on a revolver.

The list above covers major safety violations, there are others listed in section 10 of the latest edition of the USPSA Rule Book. There are two additional reasons for disqualification not directly related to Safety. These are for "Unsportsmanlike Conduct" and "Using Prohibited Substances".

If you have an equipment failure while shooting a stage, you are not disqualified. The stage will be scored and you will be allowed to compete in the balance of the stages in the match. You will not get to re-shoot the stage that your equipment broke on.

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59. When it is your turn to shoot a stage at what point do you load your handgun?
60. If your handgun breaks during a stage, can you fix it and re-shoot the stage?
61. Can a competitor be DQ'd for unsportsmanlike conduct?
62. Where is your trigger finger during reloading your handgun?
63. If you're shooting a course of fire and you reach in front of your handgun to open a door, what is that called? And what is the result?
64. What can happen if you pick up your handgun at your car?
65. What happens if your handgun fires after the "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster" command?

## PROTOCOL AND COURTSIES

Now after absorbing all the information about safety, targets and equipment, here is the bottom line, match day. Let's walk through a typical USPSA match day. Please remember that each club runs things a little different, so be flexible. Match time starts at 9 am, but try to be there between 8am and 8:30am to help set up, sign in and have a chance to review the stages ahead of time. When you help set up there are two things that happen, first, your showing your fellow competitors that you are someone who wants to take part in this sport. You get out of USPSA shooting what you put into it. Second, it gives you some extra insight about stage design and how to shoot a particular stage.

When you sign up, if you are a new competitor at that club, the stats person will ask you Name, Address, Phone, Division, Class, Power Factor, Special Category. Most matches cost around \$15 (Juniors pay less). Some clubs require you to fill out a match registration form, which you give to the stats person. After you register and collect your score sheets, you need to put your name on the squad list. Some clubs do not allow self squading and they will assign you to a squad. This gives you the opportunity to shoot with new people. Most clubs try to stay with squad requests; however there are times when people must be moved around to balance squads out. Note: not all clubs allow special squading, so be sure to ask about it. If you have spare time before 9am, take some time to look at the different stages.

At 9am, the match director will call everyone together for announcements and the start of the walk through. During the walk through, each stage will be explained and questions answered. A normal match has 5 or 6 stages and somewhere between 100 to 130 round count. Squading will be announced, along with the stage that your squad starts on, after the walk through.

When you get to your first stage someone will ask you for your score sheet, for that stage. Your name and competitor number should be on every score sheet. Score sheets will be mixed up and one lucky competitor's score sheet is drawn for the first shooter. The shooting order is read with the shooter first, the second shooter (ON DECK PERSON), the third shooter (IN THE HOLE PERSON) and then down the list. The SHOOTER, ON DECK AND IN THE HOLE SHOOTER will be read each time a shooter completes the stage. New competitors will never have to go first, so you get a chance to watch someone else shoot the stage first. If you are the shooter, on deck or in the hole person it is your responsibility to get ready to shoot the stage. All other competitors should be taping targets, setting steel or picking up empty brass. Remember DO NOT move forward into the stage area until you hear the "RANGE CLEAR" command. If your taping targets, watch the way the RO scores so you don't tape a target that hasn't been scored. When squads work together to get everything done, the day moves quite fast.

If you are the "On Deck" or "In the Hole" person and the shooter has completed the stage, the RO has shouted "Range Clear"; you can step forward into the stage and see what it looks like. Remember: the "On Deck" person is the next shooter and has the

priority to check out the stage first. It is permissible to pretend you are shooting the stage and practice which way you will move, BUT NEVER HANDLE your gun or use a prop to simulate your gun. Now, it is your turn to shoot. The adrenalin is pumping, not to mention your heart, shut everything else out and listen to the RO; he/she will walk you through everything. Don't worry about going fast; speed will come later after you learn the right way to shoot in USPSA competition. Okay, you've shot the stage, now breath listen to the RO. When you hear "Range Clear", walk along with the RO and ARO while they are scoring your targets. Do not touch a target, you could loose the score on any target touched, but look at your hits. If you don't agree with the RO about your hits, ASK. RO's do make mistakes in scoring. The ARO will present your score sheet to you, for approval and your initials, if you agree with it. The score sheet will only show total hits by zone, time and any penalties or procedurals. When you initial the score sheet you are stating that you agree with the score, it is then final.

Sometimes there are problems with targets and stage props during a course of fire. The RO will stop the competitor and tell them they have to re-shoot the stage. The competitor has the option to re-shoot it right away or move down the shooting list. My recommendation is to move as far down the list as you can. This gives you a chance to get your magazines loaded and get your head straight. Here is a list of re-shoot reasons: target failure, taped targets, interruption during the course of fire for a reason beyond the competitor's control (something coming in the stage area), bumping into the RO (you have to ask for the re-shoot in this case) or if you are stopped by the RO because they think there is a problem with your handgun or ammo and there isn't (Squib load). During a squib load situation (Low power round going off), the RO will stop the competitor to make sure the bullet has cleared the gun barrel. If there is no bullet in the barrel then the competitor gets a re-shoot. If there is a bullet in the barrel the targets are scored, including misses and penalties for failure to engage targets, and no re-shoot is permitted.

After all stages have been shot, everyone starts tearing down and putting away the stage props. Awards will not be presented until the range is cleaned up. Some clubs hire the tearing down of stages after the match. Most of the time awards are presented to all Divisions and Classes; however this is up to each club. Remember: **HAVE FUN!**

## **ANSWERS TO THE SAFETY MANUAL QUESTIONS**

### **QUESTION #**

1. Going too fast
2. United States Practical Shooting Association
3. No
4. How to compete in USPSA matches safely and have fun shooting in competition
5. 3, complete the safety manual, range commands and shooting a match safely
6. Range Officer
7. Method of scoring where there are limits on the number of rounds shot
8. Clip holding extra rounds and insert in the handgun
9. The start position at a shooting stage
10. Method of scoring where no limits are placed on time or number of rounds fired
11. Up range
12. Your choice in how you hold the handgun and shoot
13. Target obstructions that can be shot through
14. No, match disqualification
15. Individual course of fire
16. Super Senior
17. At the line and in the Safety Area
18. In the Safety Area
19. Match DQ
20. Safety
21. Get an RO's attention, do not pick up your handgun
22. 10 rounds
23. Yes
24. Yes
25. Behind the center of the hip bone
26. Yes
27. No
28. False
29. 5
30. A zone hit worth 5 points
31. 160, minor
32. 5 points
33. Total Points divided by Total Time
34. -10 points
35. -10 points
36. It is stated in the stage description
37. RO
38. Yes, -10 points per procedural
39. No, it could be the slower more accurate shooter, it depends on Hit Factor
40. Comstock, Virginia Count, Timed Fire

41. NO
42. The competitor
43. You get a penalty
44. Exact Round Count
45. Scoring Section
46. To establish their shooting level
47. NO
48. 4
49. Grand Master
50. NO
51. "B" Class
52. After every classifier stage
53. NO or there is a penalty for "Creeping"
54. "Load and Make Ready", "Are You Ready", "Standby", "If You are Finished  
Unload and Show Clear", "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster", "Range is Clear"
55. Stop and wait for further commands from the RO
56. When you hear the "Range is Clear" command
57. Shout "Not Ready"
58. To make sure everyone knows that a stage of fire is commencing
59. When the RO shouts "Load and Make Ready"
60. No
61. Yes
62. Out of the trigger guard
63. Sweeping, Match DQ
64. Match DQ
65. Match DQ

**HERE IS YOUR FINAL TEST AND THIS ONE WILL BE TURNED IN AND KEPT ON FILE.**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print Your Name)

- 1. What can happen if you handle your handgun at your car?**
- 2. What do you do when you hear the “Stop” command?**
- 3. Why do USPSA competitors shoot classifier stages?**
- 4. What are the three types of stages?**
- 5. What is the penalty for a miss on a non-disappearing target?**
- 6. A hit in the “A” zone is worth how many points?**
- 7. Is Ear and Eye protection required in shooting an USPSA match?**
- 8. Where CAN’T you handle ammo?**
- 9. What does DQ mean?**
- 10. What is an RO?**
- 11. What is the biggest mistake new shooters make?**
- 12. At what point do you load your handgun?**
- 13. When is it okay to move forward on the range, after a competitor finishes the stage?**
- 14. Whose responsibility is it to understand the course of fire?**
- 15. What is the penalty for hitting a “No-Shoot” target?**
- 16. What are the two places you can handle your handgun?**
- 17. What does “Comstock” mean?**
- 18. What is the goal of this training program?**
- 19. Where is your trigger finger during reloading your handgun?**
- 20. Does the fastest competitor win the stage?**

## **HERE IS THE SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MONTHLY MATCHES IN THE COLUMBIA CASCADE SECTION OF OREGON**

Albany Rifle and Pistol Club, Albany	2 <sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month
Cossa Gun Club, Bend	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month
Tri County Gun Club, Sherwood	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month
Dundee Gun Club, Dundee	4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month

Albany, Dundee and Tri County Gun Clubs make up the Columbia Cascade Section of USPSA. Regular points matches are shot at one range each month. These POINTS matches establish the overall positions of competitors within the Columbia Cascade Section for Trophies and Slots to shoot in the National Championships. There is no extra cost in shooting for points in the Columbia Cascade Section, but you do have to sign up to compete. Unclassified competitors can shoot in the POINTS matches. If you have any questions ask any of the Albany USPSA Staff.

Other matches in Oregon (Oregon Section of USPSA):

Klamath Falls Gun Club, Klamath Falls	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month
Roseburg Gun Club, Roseburg	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month
Cossa Gun Club, Bend	3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month
Medford Gun Club, Medford	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month
Isacc Walton Gun Club, Eugene	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month

In addition to these regular club matches there are other special matches you can attend. Information on special matches can be found on the Columbia Cascade Section website and the USPSA website.

Please feel free to ask any Albany Staff about additional matches.

Throughout the area there are 3 Gun Matches being held in conjunction with USPSA. These matches have stages for handgun, shotgun and rifle. Most of the same rules and protocol apply, however the equipment and thought process is different. If you get a chance to watch a 3 Gun Match, check it out.

Here is some additional information for you.

Mike McCarter's website [www.nassonline.org](http://www.nassonline.org)

Albany USPSA website is [www.arpc-USPSA.org](http://www.arpc-USPSA.org)

Mike McCarter's email address is [nomikes@hotmail.com](mailto:nomikes@hotmail.com)

USPSA website is [www.USPSA.org/](http://www.USPSA.org/)

Columbia Cascade Section website is [www.columbia-cascade.org/](http://www.columbia-cascade.org/)

Albany Rifle and Pistol Club website is [www.arpc.info](http://www.arpc.info)

