

UNION COUNTY TARGET RANGE
Standard Operating Procedures

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

UNION COUNTY GUN CLUB
Union County, GA



April 4, 2023

UNION COUNTY TARGET RANGE
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Purpose of the Range:

The Union County Gun Club (UCGC) has developed this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in consultation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Union County for application for the Union County Target Range. The range located on GA State Road 180, between Mile Marker 18 and 19 in the Chattahoochee National Forest, Union County GA.

Target ranges operated by UCGC are maintained and operated to provide a safe environment for teaching proper firearms handling as part of the Educational Program, and to provide opportunity for the club members and public to participate in recreational shooting sports. It is crucial that ranges be operated in a safe and careful manner to provide for the safety of the public and to foster support for shooting sports. This SOP provides guidance regarding range rules, procedures and expectations to UCGC staff, volunteers and the general public and is intended to cover basic information for range operation. This SOP also includes guidelines for the maintenance of the range and its facilities. Each range (pistol and rifle) may have additional rules & regulations that are unique to that range as an attachment to this document.

Safety Shall Be the Governing Consideration at All Times.

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CHAPTER 2

Operations of the Range:

Range Safety Officer Roles and Responsibilities

The Range Safety Officer (**RSO**) provided by UCGC supervises and controls all aspects of range operation when shooters are present on the range. The Range Officer's primary responsibility is to ensure that the range is operated in a safe manner and that shooters abide by basic firearm safety rules and range rules. Range Officers should be aware that range safety extends beyond the users of the range. Many of the range rules are directed at preventing projectiles from leaving the range and causing injury to people or damage to property beyond the range. For this reason, Range Officers should monitor target placement and muzzle control on the firing line.

The Range Safety Officer is responsible for the safe operation of the Range.

Range Safety Officers shall be a National Rifle Association (**NRA**) Certified Range Safety Officer or have other approved certification. The Range Safety Officer shall also have or obtain training in basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (**CPR**).

The range safety officer is authorized to close the range or temporarily cease activity at any time should safety concerns warrant. The range safety officer is also authorized to require shooters to leave the range if they violate range rules or otherwise pose a threat to other shooters or to safe operation of the range.

The range safety officer is granted considerable discretion and it is expected that this authority will be used in a careful and responsible manner. Range officers should treat all shooters in a courteous and respectful manner, but should be firm in giving direction or correcting violations of safety rules. Range officers are representatives of both the UCGC and the U.S. Forest Service and as such must refrain from comments directed at a person's sex, race or appearance. Range officers should avoid derogatory comments regarding any person's firearms or shooting ability unless they pose a safety risk, and then such comments should be made in a matter-of-fact and respectful manner.

In the event that a person violates safe firearms handling rules or range rules and is asked to leave the range, the following should occur:

- 1) The range officer should make written notes of the situation immediately following the incident when he/she can safely do so. Such notes should include the time of the incident, a description of the safety violation(s), the response of the violator(s) – what they said and/or did, what the range officer said/did, and the name/phone numbers of any witnesses.

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- 2) The range officer should contact his supervisor by phone on the day of the incident and provide a verbal description of the event. If necessary, the RSO and/or his supervisor will contact Law Enforcement. Service Law Enforcement.

If an individual refuse to leave the range as instructed by the range safety officer or otherwise creates a disturbance, the range safety officer should cease fire on the range and contact Union County Law Enforcement Officer (**LEO**) and/or Forest Service (**FS**) or local law enforcement for assistance.

Shooter Responsibilities

Persons using UCGC operated ranges are expected and required to follow direction of the Range Safety Officer and conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner. Failure to comply with any of the following may result in expulsion from the range.

- Follow all range rules as posted.
- Obey all verbal instructions of the Range Safety Officer.
- Be certain that the range is clear before firing.
- Be certain that the range is safe before going down range.
- Be certain that the muzzle of your firearm(s) is always pointed in a safe direction.
- If you have a problem with your firearm, notify the range safety officer or Match Director immediately.
- Know how the firearm operates and be sure the firearm and ammunition are compatible.
- Cooperate with the other shooters.
- Shooters are responsible for ensuring that the projectiles from their rifles, handguns or shotguns with slugs remain within the designated range area.
- Notify the Range Safety Officer if you observe an unsafe condition or behavior. Any person can and should call a “Cease Fire” if they observe an unsafe situation.
- Adults who bring children are responsible for keeping them under immediate and direct supervision at all times.

Range Usage

Normal Operational hours are 6 days a week during daylight hours. The range is open except for special events authorized by UCGC, e.g., Matches, education and Law Enforcement Training.

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The Range is under the control of the Range Safety Officer and additional assigned Range Safety Officers during Normal and Special Operational hours.

Persons may only use the range on open days and hours of operation. Open days and hours of operation shall be designated on signs and at least one such sign will be posted at the entrance to the range. Unauthorized use of the range during non-operational hours is prohibited and shall be reported to UCGC, FS Law Enforcement and the County Sheriff's Office.

Range Closures and Use of Range by Other Organizations

The Range Safety Officer has the authority to shut down the Range if he/she deems it necessary.

In extreme cases, such as an accident or an unruly person as defined in Chapter 5 of this SOP, the Range should be closed down and the proper authorities (Fire & Rescue Squad and/or County Sheriff) notified. Union County Law Enforcement and Forest Service Law Enforcement Officer (**LEO**) shall also be notified as soon as possible.

UCGC will from time to time close ranges for maintenance or special events. Efforts will be made to notify the public of such closures by posting the closure on the website. UCGC will notify the Forest Service LEO and Recreation Program Manager prior to any closure. In the event of a long-term closure, a press release may be issued.

Non-profit organizations or government agencies may request to reserve the range for exclusive use but must do so at least 21 days in advance. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and scheduling such use should minimize impact to the public. Factors to be considered in granting the request include, but are not limited to:

The role of the organization and event in supporting the UCGC and USFS mission of conservation or promotion of shooting sports.

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Maintenance of the Range:

Range Safety Officer Roles and Responsibilities

The **VP of Operations** is responsible for the daily maintenance of the range including trash removal, rest room maintenance, removal of weeds and downed limbs, keeping area mowed and performing minor repairs as well as keeping all signs, gates and walkways in working order.

UCGC Roles and Responsibilities

For the duration of the agreement with the Forest Service, UCGC will maintain the authorized improvements and permit area to standards of orderliness, neatness, sanitation, and daily operational safety consistent with other provisions of the agreement. UCGC shall not be deemed a lessee, operator, or responsible party with respect to discharged bullets or shot deposited in the soils or facilities of the permit area. In the event the shooting range facility needs major repairs, UCGC and Union County agrees to work cooperatively with the USFS to evaluate and determine a proper course of action, and if so agreed, participate in the repair.

Forest Service Roles and Responsibilities

The Forest Service will notify UCGC of any upcoming press releases and closures as pertaining to the Union County Target Range.

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CHAPTER 3

Rifle and Pistol Range Rules

NRA Firearm Safety Rules:

3 Fundamental Rules for Safe Gun Handling:

- 1) Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
- 2) Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- 3) Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

Rules for Using or Storing a Firearm

Know your target and what is beyond it.

Be sure the firearm is safe to operate.

Know how to use the firearm safely.

Use only the correct ammunition for your firearm.

Wear appropriate eye and ear protection.

Never use or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs before or while shooting.

Store firearms so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

Be aware that certain types of firearms and shooting activities may require additional safety precautions.

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General Range Rules

Ranges may only be used during open days and hours of operation. Open days and hours of operation shall be designated on signs and at least one of such signs will be posted at the entrance to the range.

Approved eye and ear protection must be used at all times by shooters and spectators.

Visitors may not be under the influence of or in possession of alcoholic beverages or other controlled substances. No alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other controlled substances are allowed.

All firearms entering or leaving the range **must** be unloaded and properly cased.

Loading and unloading of the firearm may only be completed at the firing line with the muzzle pointed down range.

All firearms must be unloaded and actions open while targets are being hung or checked.

Persons under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult (age 21 or older) who is responsible for their actions. Persons under the age of 18 are not allowed to be on the firing line at any pistol range contained within a Target range facility. In addition, persons under the age of 21 in possession of a pistol on a Target range must be accompanied by an adult age 21 or older.

Incendiary or explosive targets are prohibited.

All targets must be located so that a bullet will strike between the base of and halfway up the backstop/berm so that no bullet strikes the ground in front of the backstop/berm.

All visitors must clean up their areas. All targets, litter, and spent ammunition cases must be removed by the shooter before leaving.

No shooter may fire from points other than designated firing points. Shooters may only shoot targets in their lane only.

Food, drinks, and tobacco products are prohibited on the firing line at any time.

Do not climb on berms or benches.

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~~No open toed shoes are allowed on the firing line.~~

No firearm larger than a 300-mag rifle may be used. Black Powder cartridge and Muzzle loaders above .50 caliber are allowed.

The following ammunition types are prohibited: tracer and/or incendiary ammunition, armor piercing or penetrator rounds.

The possession of a fully automatic weapon is prohibited.

Broadheads are prohibited on archery ranges.

Any activity that would be considered to present a safety hazard is prohibited.

Approved eye and ear protection **MUST** be used at ALL times by shooters and spectators.

Site Specific Rules

Permitted:

Single shot center fire and rim fire rifles and pistols less than .50 caliber.

Bolt action or lever action, magazine fed, center fire rifles, rim fire rifles and pistols up to 50 caliber.

Semiautomatic magazine fed, center fire rifles, rim fire rifles and pistols up to and including .50 caliber.

Black powder muzzle loading rifles and pistols.

Black powder muzzle loading smoothbore muskets.

Not permitted:

.50 Caliber center fire rifles, Browning Machine Gun (**BMG**).

Tracer and/or incendiary, armor piercing, penetrator or explosive ammunition.

Explosive materials and/or targets.

Fully automatic firearms.

Unauthorized targets (cans, bottles, glass, appliances, electronics, metal etc).

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Dry firing or aiming behind the firing line.

Loading muzzle loading firearms directly from a powder horn or powder container.

Rapid fire.

Alcoholic beverages, drugs or other controlled substances.

Administrative Rules

Parking

All users of the Range must park in the designated parking areas.

Occupancy

The range cannot be entered or occupied after hours.

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CHAPTER 4

Range Commands:

"Range is hot"

This means that shooters may handle their firearms on the firing line. They may also handle their firearms in the ready area provided the actions are open or otherwise made safe. Load only on the firing line. At all times the 3 basic NRA safety rules must be observed. (see page 6 of 23)

"Range is cold"

This means that the range is closed with respect to handling any firearms either on the line or in the ready area.

All firearms are to be cleared;

- Magazines removed and actions open or made safe.
- Hand guns may lay on the bench with the action exposed for verification by a Range Safety Officer.
- All shooters after benching their firearms must step back from the firing line.
- Firearms may only be transported between a member's vehicle in a case and the firing Range when the range is cold and there is no one downrange.

"Commence firing"

This command should be given by the RSO after the range is declared hot. It informs the shooters that they may begin firing at authorized targets.

"Cease fire"

Whenever this command is given all shooters must immediately stop shooting, remain in position with the firearm pointed in a safe direction, and wait for further instructions from the RSO.

NOTE: This command may be given by anyone who observes an unsafe condition on the range.

"Other commands"

There are other range commands like "Ready on the right, ready on the left, ready on the firing line, etc." that the Range Safety Officer or Match Director may see fit to use. The intent is to make sure that everyone is ready to begin firing. These commands will be given by the Range Safety Officer or Match Director when a competitive match is in progress.

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CHAPTER 5

Emergency Procedures

Emergency Contact

Emergency Communication	911
Union County Sherriff Department	706-439-6038
Forestry Service in Blairsville, GA	706-745-6928-0....Mon.-Fri.
UCGC President	706-400-8398

Directions to Range

From Blairsville, GA. take US 129 South to Ga State Road 180, between Mile Marker 18 and 19, on the right-hand side of the road.

Emergency Response Sheet/Checklist:

Emergency Response Sheet/Checklists are located in Appendix B of this SOP.

Place the date of the emergency as the Effective Date:

Check off each step in the checklist as it is completed. If an item on the checklist is not applicable to the emergency situation, check it off and note "NA" to indicate it was not overlooked.

Injury Report Form:

Injury Report Forms are located in Appendix C of this SOP.
Designate one of the RSO or Match Director to initiate the Injury Report Form and keep notes on what is occurring with times.

Fill in the DATE and TIME on the cover sheet. The same DATE and TIME should be reflected in the "Date of Injury" and "Time of Injury" boxes on page 1 of the Injury Report Form.

Fill in every box on the Injury Report Form. If there is no information available for a particular box or the box is not applicable to the event, mark the box with "NA" to indicate it was not overlooked.

Identify any witnesses to the event, provide them with a "Witness Statement" and request that they fill it out with as much detail as possible.

Collect "Witness Statements" and attach them to the Injury Report Form when completed.

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Witness Statements are located in Appendix E of this SOP behind the Injury Report Forms.

Accidents:

Minor accidents - Cuts, sprains, dislocations, etc.
Administer first aid as required.

Major accidents - Heart attack, choking, broken limb, gunshot wound, etc.
Range Safety Officer should close down the Range (take charge of the situation).
Administer first aid (render aid).

Call 911 to report accident (call for help).

Station people to direct emergency vehicles to the Range.

UCGC and FS Law Enforcement should also be notified as soon as possible.

Unruly Persons:

For the purposes of these SOP's, an unruly person is anyone who refuses to follow the commands of the Range Safety Officer.
Move from top to bottom on this list depending upon how the situation develops:

Order the person off the Range Complex and report his/her name to the UCGC Administration.

Close down and secure the Range Complex and evacuate the area.

Notify UCGC, FS Law Enforcement, County Sheriff's Office, EMS and request assistance.

Weather:

In the event of severe weather that could endanger the lives of shooters and spectators, the Range Safety Officer should close down the Range and evacuate the area. The RSO should decide to either re-open the range or keep it closed after the weather clears. The RSO should use available information from the National Weather Service, local media and weather alerts regarding weather conditions.

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Firearm Stoppages and Malfunctions:

Any firearm stoppage or malfunction can cause serious safety problems if not handled correctly. RSO needs to be prepared for these occurrences.

Definitions:

Stoppage - An unintentional interruption in the operational cycle of a firearm.

Examples: Bolt fails to lock cartridge in position, a stove pipe in a semi-automatic pistol, double feed, failure of a cylinder to rotate in a revolver, etc.

Malfunction - Failure of a firearm to function as designed or to fire satisfactorily.

Two categories:

- 1) Firearm malfunction - For example; a broken sear or firing pin.
- 2) Ammunition malfunction - For example; a misfire, hang fire or squib load.

Range Safety Officers should consider any stoppage or malfunction as a major safety hazard and should know the difference between the two.

There are eight basic steps in the operating cycle of a firearm and a stoppage can occur in any one of the steps. The eight basic steps are:

- 1) Feeding: The face of the bolt makes contact with the base of the cartridge at the top of the magazine and pushes it toward the chamber.
- 2) Chambering: The bolt continues forward and pushes the cartridge into the chamber.
- 3) Locking: As the bolt continues forward, the locking lugs move into the locking recesses in the barrel, locking the cartridge into the chamber.
- 4) Firing: The trigger is pulled to the rear causing the firing pin to strike the primer and fire the cartridge.
- 5) Unlocking: As the bolt moves to the rear, the locking lugs rotate out of the locking recesses.
- 6) Extracting: As the bolt moves rearward, the extractor withdraws the cartridge case from the chamber.
- 7) Ejecting: As the face of the bolt passes over the ejector, the case strikes the ejector and is kicked outward through the ejector port.

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- 8) Cocking: As the bolt moves rearward, the firing pin moves into a cocked position.

Note: These are the eight basic steps of a firearm operational cycle but not all firearms follow these steps in exact order. For example, revolvers do not extract and eject between shots.

If a shooter experiences a malfunction where the firearm fails to function as designed, the cause will be due to the firearm itself or the ammunition. A malfunctioning firearm must be unloaded and removed from the firing line. An example of a malfunctioning firearm is a semi-automatic rifle that doubles, i.e. fires two rounds when the trigger is pulled. Such a gun is a hazard on the range and the owner should be advised to take the gun to a qualified gunsmith.

Ammunition malfunctions can be classified as:

Misfire where a cartridge fails to fire after the primer is struck by the firing pin.

Hang fire where there is a perceptible delay in the ignition of the cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.

Squib load where there is less than normal pressure or bullet velocity after ignition of the cartridge.

Normal procedure for handling misfires or hang fires is to:

Keep the gun pointed downrange (safe direction).

Wait at least 30 seconds in case it is a hang fire and at least two minutes in the case of muzzleloaders before attempting to unload.

Normal procedure for handling squib loads is to:

Stop firing immediately.

Keep the gun pointed downrange.

Unload the gun, make sure the chamber is empty.

Insert a cleaning rod down the barrel from the chamber end (if possible) to make sure the bullet is not lodged in the barrel.

RSO on duty must be particularly vigilant to observe any gun malfunctions, stoppages, or ammunition malfunctions and be prepared to move to the shooter's aid. If the shooter starts to do something incorrectly, the RSO must be prepared to step in.

Be in control and in a low, but firm, voice say: **STOP! POINT THE MUZZLE DOWNRANGE!** At this stage let the shooter clear the firearm and

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bench it. If the shooter experiences problems in doing this, try to talk him/her through the clearing process. Only as a last resort should the Range Safety Officer take control of the firearm. To do this, approach the shooter from the left side (for a right-handed range officer), grasp the barrel of the firearm behind the muzzle with the weak hand, control the direction of the muzzle so that it points in a safe direction, and have the shooter step back. Use the strong hand to control and reposition the firearm if necessary. Determine the stoppage and clear it. Explain to the shooter what went wrong and how to prevent it from happening again.

Remember throughout the entire process of stoppages and malfunctions to adhere to the three NRA rules of safety. **(See page 6 of 23)**

Problems with the normal operation of a firearm pose special safety conditions which must be managed by on duty range officers. All Range Officers should be familiar with the operation and functioning of all firearms that they are liable to encounter on the range.

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CHAPTER 6

Range Equipment

Rifle covered firing line points with benches

Pistol Covered firing line points with benches

Wooden target frames

One type III emergency first aid kit

A copy of the Standard Operating Procedures for the Union County Target Range

Trash cans and brass recycling bin

Signs

Barricades

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APPENDIX A:
Range Inspection Checklist

Prepared By:

Title: Date:

Check the bulletin board and Range SOP Folder for special instructions.

Walk the firing line and inspect the bullet impact zone to ensure that everything is clear to begin firing.

Explain to everyone as they arrive what the firing line commands are.

Observe and supervise all shooting noting in particular shooters who may be experiencing difficulty.

Assist shooters as the need arises. Be aware of any misfires, hang-fires, or double feeds and react accordingly.

Require shooters to police their firing points and leave each point in a clean condition.

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APPENDIX B:
Emergency Response Sheet/Checklist

Effective Date: 07/24/19

Emergency Communication	911
Union County Sherriff Department	706-439-6038
Union County Fire & Rescue and EMA	706-439-6091

Immediate Response for Injuries or Illness:

- ☐ Call a cease fire immediately and issue the command to unload, clear, and bench/rack all firearms.
- ☐ Identify one of the Range Safety Officers or other responsible person to secure the gear of the injured person.
- ☐ Identify one of the Range Safety Officers or other responsible person to notify emergency services via 911 and provide the following information:
 - 1. Specific location of incident with directions
 - 2. Telephone number that you are calling from
 - 3. Your name
 - 4. What happened and possible hazards for rescuers
 - 5. Number of people injured or ill
 - 6. Condition of people injured or ill
 - 7. First aid provided
 - 8. If the accident involves a gunshot injury the Sheriff's Office must be notified
- ☐ Station one of the Range Safety Officers or other responsible person to direct emergency services to the scene.
- ☐ Provide first aid until the emergency services arrive provided the injured party agrees.
- ☐ Assume implied permission if the injured is unconscious or unable to respond.

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- ☐ Avoid dispensing any medicine unless directed to by emergency services over the telephone.
- ☐ Assign someone to complete an Injury Report Form (if applicable) and keep a log of events and time relative to the injury or illness.

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APPENDIX C:

Injury Report Form

Name of Injured Party:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Date of Injury:

Time of Injury:

1. Describe the nature and extent of the injury (specify parts of body):

2. Describe how the injury occurred:

3. Describe first aid given:

4. First aid was provided by (include names and telephone numbers):

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5. Disposition (specify name of hospital, telephone numbers, time of transport, etc.):

6. Persons notified:

7. Location of incident:

8. Conditions prevalent at the time of the incident:

9. Witness statements: Interview witnesses separately.

A. Witness (Name, Address, and Telephone Number):

Statement Attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

B. Witness (Name, Address, and Telephone Number):

Statement Attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

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C. Witness (Name, Address, and Telephone Number):

Statement Attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

D. Witness (Name, Address, and Telephone Number):

Statement Attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Notes and Comments:

11. Injury report completed by:

Name:

Title:

Date:

Signature:

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Witness Statement

Prepared by:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Date:

Time:

Statement: