

# LRSA IDPA New Shooter Information Guide



**February 2017**

# Welcome to IDPA Competition!

IDPA shooting is a fun and safe way to learn defensive pistol skills and sharpen your gun handling and shooting abilities. We created this guide to help familiarize you with IDPA.

The Four Rules of Gun Safety always apply:

**All guns are always loaded.**

**Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy.**

**Keep your finger off the trigger till your sights are on the target.**

**Identify your target, and what is behind it.**

If these simple rules are always followed, most firearms accidents will never happen. When shooting IDPA your finger should never be inside of the trigger guard until you are on target and ready to shoot. Always get your finger out of the trigger guard before moving. Always be aware of your muzzle's direction and keep it safely downrange. Muzzle Safe Points are the limits that a shooter's muzzle can travel without being unsafe. Be sure to know where these limits are and always keep within them. Certain IDPA courses of fire may test your skills of keeping the muzzle in a safe direction. Be mindful of your muzzle and trigger finger, and you will always shoot safely.

## **Minimum Skills**

IDPA Matches (even club-level) are not an appropriate venue for teaching basic shooting skills to a new shooter. Shooters must have the following basic knowledge and practical skills in order to safely shoot in our matches:

- Loading and unloading the weapon
- Drawing from the holster and re-holstering (with one hand)
- Gripping and firing the firearm with strong hand, weak hand, and both hands
- Sight picture
- Trigger control
- Muzzle control
- Clearing malfunctions (basic)

Please don't bring a first-time shooter, that does not possess these basic skills to our matches. It is not safe and sets the new shooter up for failure.

**IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT SHOOTING IDPA AT LRSA:** We are a member supported IDPA club. It takes a total team effort to put on an IDPA match. Once you shoot your 2nd match, you are no longer a guest, you are a member of our IDPA club. That comes with certain responsibilities as a shooter. The IDPA Rulebook has a comprehensive list

of those responsibilities and conduct expected of shooters. Here are 4 of those highlighted:

1. Reset stages (including pasting targets) between shooters unless you are the current shooter, the on-deck shooter or have just finished shooting, unless instructed otherwise by a match official.
2. You are expected to stay and help tear down stages and put stuff on the trailer.
3. Join IDPA after your 3<sup>rd</sup> match.
4. Maintain a working knowledge of the current IDPA rulebook.

**EVERYTHING AFTER THIS POINT CAN BE LEARNED AS YOU GO; HOWEVER, THE MORE OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION YOU KNOW, THE MORE PLEASANT YOUR IDPA SHOOTING EXPERIENCE WILL BE.**

### **Hot and Cold Ranges**

The question of Hot and Cold ranges at the local club level is subject to individual club policy. This issue is the sole responsibility of local clubs and is beyond IDPA control. Matches sanctioned by IDPA are required to operate under the Cold range rule, but may use Hot Bays if desired.

A Cold range is defined as a range where all shooters' firearms must be unloaded unless under the direct supervision of a SO.

A Cold range with Hot bays is defined as "a range that does not allow loaded firearms in the holster outside of the shooting bays but does allow for loaded firearms in the holster within the shooting bays as directed by and under the supervision of the SOs". Loaded firearms may only be handled while on the firing line under the direct supervision of a SO.

**LRSA is a Cold Range.**

### **Range Commands**

To allow a shooter to compete anywhere in the world and hear the same commands, the IDPA range commands will only be given in English, the official language of IDPA.

**Range Is Hot, Eyes and Ears** This is the first command given to the shooter starting the action of shooting a stage. It is also notification to anyone in the shooting bay to check their own eye and hearing protection is properly fitted.

**Load and Make Ready** The shooter will prepare the firearm and magazines to match the start position for the stage. Typically this is to load the firearm and holster, but may include non-typical loading or staging of equipment

**Are You Ready?** After “Load and Make Ready,” the SO will ask the shooter “Are You Ready?” If ready, the shooter should respond verbally, or by obvious nodding of the head, but may also choose to stand ready. If there is no response from the shooter in approximately three (3) seconds the shooter is assumed to be ready.

**Standby** This command is given after the shooter is ready. This command will be followed by the start signal within one (1) to four (4) seconds. The shooter may not move or change positions between the “Standby” command and the start signal, unless required to do so by the CoF.

The following four commands are the only commands you will hear while you are shooting a stage.

**Finger** This command is given when the shooter’s finger is not obviously and visibly outside the trigger guard when loading, unloading, drawing, holstering, while moving (unless engaging targets) or during malfunction clearance.

**Muzzle** This command is given when the muzzle of the shooter’s firearm is pointed near a muzzle safe point. The shooter must correct the errant muzzle and continue with the stage.

**Stop** This command is given when something unsafe has happened or is about to happen during a stage, or when something in the stage is not correct. The shooter must immediately stop all movement, place the trigger finger obviously and visibly outside the trigger guard, and await further instruction.

The remaining commands occur when the SO believes you may be finished shooting a stage:

**If Finished, Unload and Show Clear** This command will be issued when the shooter has apparently finished shooting the stage. If the shooter is finished, all ammunition will be removed from the firearm and a clear chamber/cylinder will be shown to the SO. If the shooter is not finished, the shooter should finish the stage and the command will be repeated.

**If Clear, Slide Forward or Close Cylinder** Once the SO has inspected the chamber/cylinder and found it to be clear, this command will be issued and the shooter will comply.

**Pull The Trigger** The shooter will point the semi-automatic firearm at a downrange berm (over the top of a berm is a Match Disqualification) and pull the trigger to further verify that the chamber is clear. This command is not needed for revolvers.

**Holster** The Shooter will safely holster the firearm.

**Range Is Clear** This command indicates to the shooter and anyone within the stage boundaries that the range is clear. This command begins the scoring and resetting of the stage.

## **Penalties**

For the most part, a new shooter who shoots carefully and deliberately will avoid most penalties. Penalties are given out for various rule infractions, but in IDPA penalties are used only when truly necessary. Safety Officers are here to help you have a fun and safe time, not to nit-pick.

**Procedural Error:** Procedural penalties are issued for . Examples are:

- Not engaging targets in proper sequence
- Not using Cover properly
- Not shooting while moving as required
- Not reloading as required
- Not following other course of fire rules as described

**Flagrant Penalty:** The key here is “competitive advantage.” If you do something against the rules with the intent of gaining a “competitive advantage” then it adds 10 seconds to your score. Examples:

- Strong Hand Only/Weak Hand Only strings/stages shot Freestyle
- Not going prone when required
- Not fully engaging all targets as required
- Not following stage requirement that takes longer than 3 seconds to perform
- Shooting an entire array while faulting the line
- Staging an ammunition feeding device incorrectly
- Extra rounds in magazines

**Hits on Non-Threats:** A 5-second penalty for hitting a non-threat (“hostage”) target. A penalty will be issued for each hit on each non-threat target. Rounds that pass through a non-threat and hit a threat target are counted on both targets.

**Failure to Do Right:** This is a seldom-issued penalty given to shooters who do not follow the spirit or rationale of a stage. It can also be issued for using illegal equipment. If you shoot the course of fire as outlined and do not try to use inappropriate techniques or equipment to gain an advantage, this will never be a problem. Adds 20 seconds to the competitor’s score.

If you wind up earning a Procedural Error, Flagrant Penalty, or Hit on Non-Threat, penalty, do not get upset. This sport is all about learning and the only one who will remember at the next match is you. Learn from your mistakes and have fun!

## **Movement**

Movement with a drawn pistol is easy if you follow the basics:

- First, always move only when your finger is outside the trigger guard.
- Second, be mindful of your muzzle at all times. You must keep the muzzle in a safe direction at all times.
- Third, take your time. You will see experienced shooters moving very quickly, but they started out moving slowly as should you.

Take your time, move and shoot carefully. Be sure to listen to the Safety Officer for any special instructions related to a particular course of fire.

Shooting while moving is a bit more advanced. Again, do not put your finger into the trigger guard until your sights are on the target. Move slowly and smoothly by keeping your knees and placing one foot in front of the other (“heel to toe” or “toe to heel” if retreating). Remember to get a smooth trigger pull on every shot. Your sights will move about, but unless you jerk the trigger, you can still get decent hits.

## **Engaging Targets**

Typically, when the course of fire mandates a number of rounds per target, the shooter engages the target that many times. Targets are engaged by order of threat. If all targets are visible, targets are engaged from near to far. If targets are hidden by a barricade or cover, targets are engaged as they are seen (slicing the pie). Fault lines indicate a position of cover.

## **Reloads**

There are only two (2) IDPA approved reloads:

Emergency Reload - is when the magazine/cylinder and the chamber are both empty in the firearm, and is the preferred reload for IDPA competition.

Loaded Cylinder/Chamber Reload (also known as a Tactical Reload or Reload with Retention) In some circumstances you may want to reload before the firearm is empty. The key here is to retain the magazine, speed loader or moon clip.

## **Scoring Rules**

The scoring system in IDPA is designed to reward a balance of accuracy with speed. IDPA scoring converts everything to a time score and the lowest time wins. The scoring system is also designed to be very simple to understand and use.

The main thing to remember when scoring in IDPA is that everything is based on time, the raw time it takes to shoot a stage and the accuracy of the hits on the targets, where inaccuracy adds time to the score. Part of the simplicity of IDPA scoring comes from not using the total points of a target, and instead using points down on each target. Each point down adds 1 second to the time for the stage.

A stage will always specify Unlimited or Limited scoring:

**Unlimited:** Unlimited scoring allows the shooter to shoot at each target as much as deemed necessary, as long as this does not violate other IDPA rules. The best hits on a target are used for score. This gives the shooter the option to make up misses or hits that they are not satisfied with, to improve their score. When the shooter does not fire enough rounds, the unfired rounds are counted as misses.

**Limited:** Same as Unlimited described above except the number of shots to fire on a target, string or stage is limited to exactly the number specified in the Stage description. Additionally, the Failure To Neutralize penalty does not apply in Limited stages.

## **Targets**

Official IDPA cardboard targets may be stationary or moving. These targets will be scored as marked, as down zero (-0), down one (-1), down three (-3), and a miss is down five (-5). The newest IDPA target has a 4" circular "down zero" area in the head zone. Refer to the rulebook for a picture.

## **Threat and Non-Threat Target Designation**

Threat targets may be designated by displaying a normal sized threat indicator, like a firearm or knife. Threat target designation is not mandatory, but is highly recommended.

Non-threat targets must be designated by displaying a pair of normal sized open hands of contrasting color.

Threats indicators of different kinds all have equal threat value and do not change target engagement priority. That is, a knife is equal in threat to a shotgun, rifle, or other firearms.

## **Malfunctions**

If your firearm fails to fire do not panic. Malfunctions happen, and competition is an excellent place to learn how to perform recovery procedures quickly.

Keep the muzzle downrange. Most of the time the problem is due to a bad round or improperly seated magazine. In this case: Tap the bottom of the magazine upward into the gun to re-seat the magazine, rack the slide back to chamber a new round, and then pull the trigger to verify that the gun will now fire. This is known as the *Tap-Rack-Bang* method.

If a Tap-Rack-Bang does not work and you are not sure how to proceed, it is best to stop and request help from the Safety Officer. If requesting help, keep your muzzle downrange and follow the Safety Officer's instructions.

A potentially dangerous malfunction is known as a squib. This is caused by a cartridge that has a primer but insufficient powder in the case. When a squib round is fired, the bullet is pushed into the barrel where it stops. Firing a subsequent round may cause the barrel to rupture, resulting in extreme damage to the gun and possibly the shooter. A squib can be identified audibly by the "pop" or "pfft" noise and by the distinctly reduced recoil.

If you even suspect that this has happened, stop immediately and request help from the Safety Officer. Remember to keep the muzzle downrange and follow the S.O.'s commands precisely.

If you experience any kind of malfunction a jam and are in doubt as to how to fix the problem, stop and ask the Safety Officer for help. Better a bad score than having to replace a damaged gun (or damaged hands or face).

## **Shooting Gear for the New IDPA shooter**

To start out at most IDPA matches, all that is needed are the following:

- A safe handgun that is reasonable for self-defense
- Holster that carries the gun inside or outside the waistband on your shooting-hand side (no shoulder, cross-draw, or tactical thigh-rig holsters) For new shooters, we can start you at low-ready.
- Three magazines, speedloaders or moonclips
- Two magazine pouches (or a one double magazine pouch) or three speedloader/moonclip pouches
- Quality eye and ear protection
- Concealment garment (after your first match) that can cover your holster and ammunition carriers. Long tail shirt, jacket, vest, etc.

***It is important that you try the sport first, before going out and spending money on specialized equipment.*** Find out that you enjoy it, and what the experienced competitors use (and why they use it). Being in too much of a hurry to buy your equipment before you start competing may mean that you end having to buy a whole kit of different gear several months later. Most matches will require to shoot anywhere from 50 to 150 rounds of ammo, so make sure you bring enough. If you are not sure, simply ask.

## **Miscellaneous**

Don't forget the sun screen, band-aids, bug spray, a bag to hold your gear, and a good hat. It is also advisable to bring water or sports drink, as well as energy bars since matches can last up to six or more hours.

## **IDPA Rulebook**

The IDPA Rulebook expands on much of this information included in this **New Shooter Information Guide**. Please begin to become familiar with the IDPA Rulebook, This guide is only intended to get you started.

## **Contact Information**

If you have any questions, please contact the LRSA IDPA Match Director:

Lee Turner  
lee@lrsa.info  
229-269-2100

Also consider signing up to receive Match information via e-mail. Signup using the online form on our website at <http://www.idpa.lrsa.info>