



Gun Safety for Women

I think women are just wired for safety. We are always looking out for the safety of others and have a very healthy fear of "dangerous" things. Gun Safety for women is a natural fit. Now, don't get cocky and think because we are naturally predisposed to being safe means that these gun safety rules or the practice of them is not required. It is! Actually, we as women shooters need to adopt the gun safety rules into every aspect of our lives as women gun owners.

These basic rules codified by Jeff Cooper are universal. They apply to EVERYONE and they apply ALWAYS! No matter how experienced a shooter and no matter what the circumstances. ALWAYS!

LEARN THEM, KNOW THEM AND SAY THEM EACH TIME YOU TOUCH A FIREARM.



The Gun Safety Rules Are:

1. All guns are always loaded.
2. Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target.
4. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.

RULE 1: ALL GUNS ARE ALWAYS LOADED

All guns are always loaded - period!

This gun safety rule must be your mind-set. Any and all guns must be treated as if they are loaded. If someone hands you a gun and says, "Don't worry, it's not loaded," do NOT believe them, no matter who it is. Whenever a gun is transferred from one person to another, have the owner remove the magazine, lock open the chamber, and show you the empty gun. With a revolver, have them open the cylinder and remove any rounds. When you accept the gun, assume the gun is loaded and check it yourself. Remember, there are no accidents, there is only negligence.

RULE 2: NEVER LET THE MUZZLE COVER ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO DESTROY

Naturally, if Rule 1 applies ALWAYS, Rule 2 applies EVERYWHERE—whether at the practice range, in your daily carry, examination or cleaning. A gun that is holstered properly, lying on a table, or stored properly poses no danger to anyone. It is only when handled that there is risk. This rule applies of keeping the muzzle (front) pointing in a safe direction, applies in self-defense, practice and daily handling. The muzzle of a firearm shall never point at anything you are not willing to destroy. If you are not willing to take a human life, do not point the muzzle at a person, including yourself! Do not allow the muzzle to point at your extremities, for example using both hands to re-holster your firearm. This is an unsafe practice. A well designed holster will accommodate one-handed holstering, so avoid holsters which collapse after withdrawing the gun. Safe dry-fire practice with an empty gun at home is a good habit and highly recommended.

Rule 3: KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET

Rule 3 is violated when any uneducated person handles a firearm. Since the hand naturally tries to work as a unit - as in grasping - separating the function of the trigger-finger from the rest of the hand takes effort. When drawing your gun, or picking it up, place your "trigger finger", your index finger, straight along the side of the gun frame. Do NOT allow your finger to move into the trigger guard until you have your target sighted. Never fire a shot unless the sights are superimposed on the target and you have made a conscious decision to fire. Allowing your finger to settle inside the trigger guard before you are ready to shoot is extremely dangerous. Once you move the gun sights off the target, the trigger-finger leaves the trigger and straightens alongside the frame once again. Under stress, and with the finger prematurely placed on the trigger, an unexpected movement, misstep or surprise could result in a negligent discharge. This rule applies any time a gun is handled. Practice placing your trigger finger extended along the frame to help minimize the natural tendency to slide the finger into the trigger guard. Please remember that keeping your finger off the trigger is also required when posing for photographs.

RULE 4: BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET AND WHAT IS BEHIND IT

Know what your target is, what is in line with it, and what is behind it. Never shoot at anything you have not positively identified. Remember - in many cases the bullet does not stop with your target and can pass through both interior and exterior walls. In self-defense situations, always be aware of what or who may be behind your target and assess the risk of hitting an innocent bystander. You may need to adjust your line of fire to avoid hitting others. You must assess the deadly threat from your attacker with the deadly threat from your bullets to others. Be keenly aware of your surroundings, whether on the range or in a life threatening altercation. Do not assume anything.

Secondary Dangers of Guns

DANGERS TO HEARING FROM NOISE

When a gun is discharged it emits a very loud noise, typically close to the handler's ears. This can cause temporary or permanent hearing damage such as tinnitus. Hearing protection such as earplugs (disposable or reusable) or ear muffs (including electronic devices that amplify quiet sounds) should be used to reduce the risk of hearing damage.

DANGERS OF HOT GASES AND DEBRIS TO THE EYES

A gun emits hot gases, powder and other debris when discharged which could be harmful. Some firearms, such as semi-automatic and fully automatic firearms typically eject spent cartridge casings at very high speeds. Casings are also dangerously hot when ejected and can fly quite a distance. Revolvers store the spent casings in the chamber, but will be very hot when you eject them. Any of these may hurt the handler or bystanders

through burning or impact damage. Because eyes are particularly vulnerable to this type of damage, eye protection should be worn to reduce the risk of injury. Prescription lenses and various tints to suit different light conditions are available.

DANGERS FROM TOXINS AND POLLUTANTS SUCH AS LEAD

Most of us are familiar with the fact that lead is used in making ammunition. Lead is released when a round is fired and residue is found on the spent casings. There can also be exposure when you clean your firearm. There are some basic things you can do to minimize your risk:

1. Use lead-free ammunition
2. Keep your hands away from your mouth and eyes and avoid eating or smoking when you are practicing, as any residue may be on your hand
3. Don't handle spent casings
4. Carry lead removal wipes or wash your hands immediately after shooting
5. Wear surgical gloves when cleaning your firearm
6. Check to make sure your indoor range has good ventilation to remove pollutants

DANGERS FROM MISFIRES

Though guns and their ammunition are made to exacting specifications and tolerances and designed to function reliably, misfires and malfunctions of firearms and ammunition do happen.

Misfires can be caused by some mechanical issue or be related to the ammunition. There are techniques for dealing with the different types of "misfires" related to ammunition. Mechanical "jams" may require professional attention, if your gun is having any mechanical malfunctions, a qualified gunsmith should look at it and repair it. Shooting with a dysfunctional firearm is not only careless; it puts you and others at risk.

DANGERS OF HANDLING A GUN IMPAIRED

Since handling a gun is a complex task with possible fatal outcomes if done improperly, gun safety dictates that a gun should never be handled while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or legal prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Since such substances may affect a person's judgment, zero tolerance is advocated by firearm safety teachers. This is codified in many states' penal codes as a crime of "carrying under the influence", with penalties similar to DWI/DUI.

Exhaustion can also constitute a form of impairment, as your reaction time, cognitive processing and sensory perception are all impaired by sleep deprivation and/or physical exhaustion. Firearm safety; therefore, discourages using guns when exhausted.