

SAFETY GUIDANCE NOTES

Treat all air weapons as if they are loaded, even if you're sure they aren't.

Demonstrate to others that your weapon is safe. When not on the firing line ensure that magazines are removed, the cocking bolt is back and the breech is clear (no pellet in). The weapon should not be cocked. On spring rifles ensure that the barrel is broken or the cocking lever is free. It's good practice with pre-charged PCP rifles (but not springers) to dry fire before leaving the firing line. Never rely on a safety catch. Air rifles are not like live round rifles, even with a safety catch on they can still go off.

There are only three places you may ever point your air rifle; downrange, at the sky or at the ground. Only ever point a rifle at something you intend to shoot. Even if you know that a rifle is unloaded, always carry it pointing at the ground with hands away from the trigger. Pointing up is also acceptable (but only with air rifles and NOT live round), but it is usually easier to carry pointing downwards. Take care when using a sling as if you bend over the rifle will point forward at head height. **These 3 basic rules will ensure that you are safe, but there are other considerations to ensure that no accidents happen.**

When on the firing line make sure you are as close as you can to the line preventing anyone from walking in front of you. You should be close enough to be able to touch the line but all parts of your body must be behind it. Having the front portion of your barrel just over the line is ideal.

When standing with a rifle, never rest the end of the barrel on the top of your foot and never put a finger over the end of the muzzle.

If a ceasefire is called, discharge your rifle immediately into the ground 5-10 feet in front of you. Don't even think about trying to get that last target, it's possible that the reason the ceasefire has been called is because someone is about to walk in front of you or your target so take the scope away from your eye before you discharge. Keep your rifle pointing towards the ground throughout the ceasefire and under no circumstance either cock or reload until instructed to. Don't be tempted to use this time to carry out adjustments or repairs.

Never touch anyone else's gun without their permission. They may not be as safe as you and left it loaded. Out of courtesy to others, if you're leaving the firing line to take a break remove your equipment and put it somewhere safe so someone else can use your space.

If you put your rifle down on the firing line, ensure it's pointing downrange and not back towards other shooters.

Use only lead or lead alloy pellets. Steel or brass will ricochet back when shooting at close targets with enough energy to cause injury. They also damage targets.

Never shoot tyres, golf balls or rubber objects. The pellet WILL ricochet back at you at very high velocity.

Never consume alcohol or use medication that can cause drowsiness before or during a club session.

Ensure your rifle is in good working order and is not in any way damaged. The air receiver on PCP rifles can hold 2000-3000psi of compressed air which represents an enormous amount of energy so be careful not to damage it in any way.

If you have difficulty getting up from a bean bag, ask someone to hold your (unloaded) rifle for you.

If your rifle malfunctions or it has a pellet stuck in the barrel, remain on the firing line with the rifle pointing downrange and call for assistance. A committee member will then assist you in making the rifle safe. Do not wander off with the rifle until it has been proven to be safe.

Use the club chronograph on a regular basis. This will ensure that you remain legal, but can also help pick up problems with your rifle before they become noticeable or expensive. If your rifle is running at or close to the legal limit you will be expected to reduce the power before bringing the rifle back to the club. The ideal output is 11-11.5 ft/lbs which gives you a margin of safety.

Don't be afraid to politely ask another member to observe the rules. People can be easily distracted and may have forgotten to take out a magazine or break their barrel. If you feel that someone else is consistently not following these rules please notify a committee member. The safety of the club comes down to each individual member, and anyone who feels they don't apply or that they're experienced enough to selectively ignore them will not be welcome. Shooting at a club is a very different experience to shooting over private land on your own and habits learnt from hunting are not always acceptable in an environment where you are in close proximity to others.

You should also consider your own safety, especially with spring rifles. When cocking a springer it's tempting to let go of the cocking lever or barrel (if it's a break barrel) to load the pellet. There have been instances where the rifle has fired whilst the owner is loading it, which invariably converts at least 2 of your fingers to mince meat. Ask Robert to show you how to do it safely.

The one thing that will get you suspended faster than you can blink is behaviour that represents a risk or danger to club members regardless of it being intentional or accidental. The club has an obligation to ensure the safety of all members, and this is something we take very seriously.