

RWVA  
INSTRUCTOR  
MANUAL

**REVISION 2.6-16Aug18**

**Pistolseed**  
**Basic pistol course**



## Preface

*I often awake at night — my mind races, my heart screams and my soul aches. I see our nation surrounded by darkness and fog. Americans like savages huddled before dying fires in the darkening shadow of Liberty's cathedral. They know or understand nothing of the sacrifices made by the men and women before them.*

*John Hart, "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence" pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor when he signed the Declaration of Independence. The British, who were determined to hang the "traitor", relentlessly pursued him. Hart was driven from the bedside of his dying wife while his thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and gristmill were laid waste while for the next year he lived in forests and caves. When he returned home, his wife was dead and his children had vanished. John Hart died a few weeks later from exhaustion and sorrow.*

*Of the fifty-six who signed the "traitorous document", five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Nine fought and died from wounds or hardships incurred in the Revolutionary War. They sacrificed!*

*You and I, our lives changed forever, are no longer cooks but "Riflemen".*

*Our countrymen are adrift in a sea of uncertainty, floating nervously without a compass and no knowledge of their hearts' true north. We however have within our grasp the means to awaken them to their heritage, the path of a Rifleman.*

*A Rifleman will never stop learning and will never stop teaching others. A Rifleman committed to improving himself, his family, and our nation everyday of his life.*

*A Rifleman dedicated to restoring the freedom our Founding Fathers entrusted to us, their "posterity".*

*The battle is before us. Patrick Henry described the American Revolution as "the grand operation, which seemed to be assigned by the Deity to the men of this age in our country, over and above the common duties of life".*

*George Washington wrote the Continental Congress describing the type of soldiers he needed, "The type of men who will make a brave defense when success is very doubtful and falling into the enemy's hands is very probable".*

*We now more than ever need men and women of that same character! I pray God will bless our efforts in the struggle before us and when we find our final rest, that it will be said "They have men amongst them who know very well what they are about"*

## What Constitutes a “SAFE PISTOL”?

### ***Background:***

A “Safe Pistol” is fundamental to ensuring the safety of all those involved in the Pistolseed Program. Safety is everyone’s responsibility. The two principals involved in making a “Safe Pistol” are the shooter and the RSO. The final responsibility falls squarely on the RSO. The RSOs “thumbs up” is his assurance to the Line Boss that “the line” is clear. All of us then, when cleared by the Line Boss can move down range with confidence that every rifle is a “Safe Pistol”.

The following items constitute a “Safe Pistol”. Some items vary depending on the Pistol and will be discussed below.

**“SAFE Pistol” MAGAZINE OUT ,SLIDE BACK, CHAMBER FLAG IN ,Pistol GROUNDED Or Holstered**

**STEP BACK (This is optional, but many are already doing this.) NO ONE TOUCHING THE PISTOL Trigger should be covered by the Holster**

### ***Instructional Points:***

If you are not familiar with a particular Pistol, ask the shooter while “The line is hot” to show you how to load, unload and make their pistol a “safe Pistol”. If you have any doubts, find a more experienced Instructor or better yet, an Instructor who has that same type of Pistol to verify what the shooter has shown you.

### **Magazine Out or Cylinder Open**

Ensure the magazine is out if it can be removed. On Revolvers the cylinder open or loading gate open.

### **Slide Back**

The Slide should be locked back. This is not possible on all pistols the slide should be EASED FORWARD on the chamber flag.

**Safeties on some pistols can not be engaged with the slide locked back.**

### **Chamber Flag In**

Every Pistol on the line will have a chamber flag. The chamber should be examined closely before inserting the flag to be sure it is empty. **Remind shooters that the tip of the chamber flag can protrude from the barrel.**

### **Pistol Grounded or holstered**

The Pistol must be lying on the ground or table . The Shoot Boss may modify this as necessary during exceptionally rainy or windy, dusty conditions. Some shooters may choose to lay a towel or covering over their pistol to protect it from the elements after the shooter has made the pistol safe. The shooter should remove the covering so the RSO verify the “safe Pistol”, and then replace the covering.

### **No One Touching the Pistol**

The shooter or the Instructor will not touch the Pistol once the “line is clear”. Shooters, when returning from the targets, may be thinking about sight adjustmen may end up touching their pistols while others are downrange. Reemphasize that they may only touch their Pistol on the line during “prep time” or the “course of fire”. Tell them if they are not sure – Ask.

### **Specific Pistols:**

#### **Semi auto . PISTOLS**

Lock the slide back with the slide lock bar or lever. Safety on if possible, Camber flag in the ejection port with the end protruding out of the barrel.

#### **Revolvers**

The cylinder will be in the open position with the camber flag in the cylinder end of the barrel protruding out of the muzzle. On Pistols that the cylinder can not be easily removed such as Colt Peace Maker or 1895 Nagant the loading gate will be open and a chamber flag inserted in the cylinder to show all cylinders were checked by an RSO. The hammer should be forward on this type of pistol. On top break Pistols Webley or Thompson contender type the pistol broken open and the chamber flag in the cylinder and protruding out the barrel in possible.

**Remember if at any time you are not sure a Pistol is a “Safe Pistol” ASK!**

### **Dry Fire Safety**

Pick one room for dry fire practice and remove any ammunition from that room. Do not allow any ammunition to come into that room. You can use snap caps if you are concerned about damaging your firearm while dry firing. Contact the maker of your firearm if you are concerned about dry firing your handgun. Do not dry fire a rim fire firearm like a .22 or .17 without snap caps. Dry firing those firearms without snap caps will damagethe firearm. Practicing reloading along with your dry fire Drills must be done onlywith snap caps. You cannot allow any ammo into the room and those few dollars for snap caps are a lot cheaper than putting holes in something in your home or worse, negligently shooting someone. Never forget that you are 100% responsible for all rounds that come out of your firearm.

## **PARKING LOT DRILL**

The shooters may now bring their Pistols to the firing line and place their other materials behind the equipment line, which should be at least 15 feet behind the firing line. This is to be done under the watchful eyes of instructors in the parking lot and at the firing line to insure that the Pistols are safe and that safety precautions are observed. The instructors should also strive to hurry the shooters along. The words QUICKLY-QUICKLY come to mind.

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## **INITIAL FIRING LINE DRILL**

Tables will be used at the 7 yard line until the SB determines that the students can safely handle their pistols . All pistols will be grounded on the tables until this time even if the student is wearing a holster. This gives the line boss ,RSO, and LSO control over the pistol. Remember what is a safe pistol! After the holster draw instruction the table can be moved behind the firing line and used to hold ammo boxes, spare magazines ect... space will be made as not to hinder the RSOs and their duties.

1. Instructors should clear the Pistols as soon as all Pistols are on the line. In order to expedite placing Pistols on the line, the words QUICKLY-QUICKLY come to mind again. No one should proceed downrange until the Pistols are cleared.

2. The Line Commands are presented and explained.

3. It should be stressed that all shooters on the firing line maintain a straight line, not a wavy one. Therefore, we will insist that all muzzles be over the marked firing line at all times. This procedure will be in effect during all preparations for shooting, including transitions from standing to sitting or prone positions. The reason for this is that if one shooter is only a step behind his neighbors, he is much more likely to sweep his neighbors with his muzzle.

4. The shooters should be again quizzed on the Four Safety Rules.

5. After the Red Coat target is explained and engaged, it is recommended that the shooters be checked for eye dominance. Corrective factors, such as placing tape on their dominant spectacle lens, could be suggested, if indicated.

## **NEW!            EMERGENCY CEASE FIRE            NEW!**

An unusual situation has occurred in the past and something similar could occur in the future. An emergency could arise wherein it is not advisable or possible to take the time to clear the line in the manner just described by the normal sequence. The previous situation involved something which obviously should not have happened. A tracer round was fired and set a field on fire. Immediate action was required. Otherwise a catastrophic fire could have occurred and burned a few thousand acres, or worse. The recommended procedure in such situations would be for the Line Boss to immediately call CEASE FIRE, CEASE FIRE, CEASE FIRE! Then call for safeties to be engaged and for everyone to take care of the emergency situation immediately, even if it requires that they proceed down range. Of course, at least one person should be left on the firing line to insure that no one approached the pistols until the situation was resolved and everyone returned behind the firing line. Then the pistols could be rendered safe.

### **Line Commands**

**To maximize safety, the Line Commands will be delivered verbatim.** The Line Boss should deliver the commands with a cadence that allows him to be heard and understood by the shooters. Those commands should be given, and demonstrated, at the time those stages are encountered.

The Line Commands will be given after the Pistols have been cleared and the shooters are centered up on the firing line. They will be given verbatim and then followed up with a brief explanation. Keep the explanation simple and concise. Instructional Points are given after the commands below.

Additionally, after delivering a Line Command, the Line Boss should take specific actions and watch for the accomplishment of specific events. These will be noted in parenthesis in the explanations which follow.

The Line Boss will establish a maximum time limit of one minute for each Preparation Period. A few exceptions exist: The Preparation Period time may be decreased as shooters develop familiarity with line procedures and their equipment. Additionally, as Line Boss, you may establish a time period at the Target Line for breaks or for lunch. Communicate with the shooters what you expect and hold them to it.

## ***“Shooters! Your Preparation Period Begins Now!”***

### **Instructional Points:**

Explain to the shooters when they hear this command they may touch their Pistol. During the Preparation Period or the SOF are the only times the shooters may normally touch their Pistols. During the Preparation Period shooters may assume the firing position, dry fire, make sight adjustments, etc - but they will NOT load their Pistols. Be sure to make the concept of DRY FIRE absolutely clear to the shooters. Any time dry fire is called for, the pistols are NOT to be loaded. Most Pistols can be dry fired without damage but there are exceptions CZ70 comes to mind

(Start the clock and watch the shooters for safety violations or indications that you can end the Preparation Period early.)

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## ***“Shooters! Your Preparation Period Has Ended!”***

### **Instructional Points:**

The shooters should now be prepared to shoot the SOF. Those with magazine fed Pistols should have the necessary “prepped” magazines ready at hand. Slides are locked back and cylinders and loading gates open

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## ***“With XX Rounds, Load!”***

### **Instructional Points:**

The shooters may now make their Pistols ready to fire. Load the prepped magazine into their Pistol and chamber a round. Revolver shooters will be given time to load at this time when all are ready RSOs will give the line boss a thumbs up.

And again, you should be constantly on the alert for safety violations.

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## ***“Is the Line Ready?”***

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### **Instructional Points:**

The Line Boss is specifically talking to the shooters now, not the RSOs, and this is a rhetorical question. If the shooters are ready, they should not do or say anything. If a shooter is not ready he should signal by raising a hand and shout “NO!” (Or something to indicate the shooter is not ready) If the reason the shooter is not ready because of an issue, that issue should be resolved before proceeding. However, if the issue is not safety related, the Line Boss may use his discretion about proceeding.

(Listen for a “NO!” and watch for safety violations!)

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### ***“Ready on the Right?”***

#### **Instructional Point:**

Check the right side of the Line.

(Look at the **shooters** on the right for any indications they are not ready.)

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### ***“Ready On The Left?”***

#### **Instructional Point:**

Check the left side of the Line.

(Look at the **shooters** on the left for indications they are not ready.)

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## **“All Ready On The Firing Line!.....Fire!”**

#### **Instructional Points:**

“**All Ready On The Firing Line!**” Take a breath then issue the “**Fire!**” command. The shooters will then complete the appropriate SOF. Emphasize they should focus on shooting the correct number of rounds on the correct target. The shooters will continue until they either run out of ammunition or hear:

(Begin timing the SOF, observe the Line and watch for safety violations!)

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## ***“Cease Fire!.....Cease Fire!.....Cease Fire!”***

#### **Instructional Points:**

Emphasize and re-emphasize that when shooters hear this command they will stop firing **IMMEDIATELY!** “**Cease Fire!**” is **NOT** a “yellow light”. They are not to “machine gun” any remaining rounds, but instead stop **IMMEDIATELY!** Explain that the reason for the “**Cease Fire!**” may not be evident to the shooters. There may be a safety reason for the “**Cease Fire!**”. **EVERYONE** “owns” and anyone can call “**Cease Fire!**”.

Emphasize that anyone who observes anything they think might even be close to a safety issue should loudly yell three times, “**Cease Fire! Cease Fire! Cease Fire!**” Explain there is no harm if they mistakenly call “**Cease Fire!**”. The harm is if they don’t call

**“Cease Fire!”** and someone is hurt.

(Turn your head left and right to project your voice to all the shooters on the Line.)

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### ***“Unload And Clear!”***

#### **Instructional Points:**

Each shooter should now make his Pistol safe, and then step back away from the Pistol, behind the Equipment Line, which should be at least 15 feet behind the firing line. This is a good time for you, as LB or RSO, to ask the shooters how to make their pistols safe. If pistol are to be holstered or kept in the ready position the LSO will stop behind the firing side of the shooter and say SHOW CLEAR were as the shooter will pull the slide or open the cylinder to show the pistol is clear then he will holster or remain at the ready.

(Ensure the designated Instructors begin RSO / LSO duty.)

(When it appears the RSOs / LSOs have cleared the Line. Call:)

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### ***Show clear and Holster***

*During the instruction the students will need to draw from their holsters, At this piont a new command is given Show clear and Holster. The student after firing the string of shots will stay in the low ready position ( pistol pointed at the base of the target) until an instructor clears the students pistol by looking into the chamber and finger checking the mag well from the shooters firing side. Once the pistol is determined to be safe the instructor will give the command to holster the pistol. The student will ease the slide forward and re-holster and not draw again until given the fire command. Students are not to place there hands on the pistol until told to do so. Once holster come into play there is no need for a preparation period unless you want the students to dry fire or demonstrate a skill with the pistol.*

### ***“Is The Line Clear On The Right?”***

#### **Instructional Points:**

Now the Line Boss is specifically talking to the RSOs, and not the shooters. Explain to the shooters that as Line Boss you will be looking at the RSO on the right for the RSO’s thumbs up signal that the right side of the Line is safe. This is why shooters must be behind the Equipment Line until the command **“The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!”**

(Look for a thumbs up signal from the RSO on the right end of the Line)

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## ***“Is The Line Clear On The Left?”***

### **Instructional Points:**

Explain to the shooters that as Line Boss you will be looking at the RSO on the left for the RSO’s thumbs up signal that the left side of the Line is safe. This is why shooters must be behind the Equipment Line until the command **“The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!”**

(Look for a thumbs up signal from the RSO on the left end of the Line)

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## ***“The Line Is Clear!.....The Line Is Clear!”***

### **Instructional Points:**

This command informs everyone that the Line is clear. **However, no one** is to step across the firing line toward the target line until given permission to proceed down range.

**Shooters may be given the command to re-holster their Pistols if this is needed in this part of the instructions. Shooters at this point may ease their slides forward and re-holster the pistol.**

Typically at this point you will inform the shooters what to expect next. i.e., “Shooters, after checking and scoring your targets, center up for instruction.”

(Turn to the left and right as you give this command to project your voice to all the shooters on the Line)

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## ***“Shooters You May Proceed Downrange To check/ score/ post, etc, Your Targets!”***

### **Instructional Points:**

Emphasize that this is a **“Simon Says”** moment. Until the shooters hear this command, everyone must stay behind the firing line!

(Start the clock and remain, or designate another Instructor to remain on the Line. Watch for safety violations as shooters return from the Line.)

## **NOTICE: An Additional Command May Become Necessary.**

A problem may exhibit itself on the line before the **FIRE** command is given which

may require that the line be temporarily be put on hold before proceeding with any further commands. To effect this, the command:

### **“Stand Easy!”**

should be given. When the problem has been resolved, the Line Boss should follow it by receding back to the command **“Is the Line Ready!”**, and repeat the commands from that point forward again.

### **Line Commands (List)**

- “Shooters! Your Preparation Period Begins Now!”
- “Shooters! Your Preparation Period Has Ended!”
- “With XX Rounds.....Load!”
- “Is The Line Ready?”
- “Ready On The Right?”
- “Ready On The Left?”
- “All Ready On The Firing Line!.....Fire!”
- “Cease Fire!.....Cease Fire!.....Cease Fire!”
- “Unload And Clear!”

- **Show clear and Holster**

- “Is The Line Clear On The Right?”
- “Is The Line Clear On The Left?”
- “The Line Is Clear!.....The Line Is Clear!”

(If needed) Shooters you may reholster your unloaded pistols at this time!

- “Shooters, You May Now Proceed Downrange To check/score/post Your Targets!”
- “Stand Easy” used to temporarily hold the Line. If it becomes necessary to use this command, the Line Boss should follow it by receding back to the command,

**“Is The Line Ready!”**, and repeat the commands from that point forward again.

## **A Message From Fred**

Guys, our goals with PS are to 1) reach a new demographic with the AS message (ie, reach more people!); 2) teach a skill to people who want to acquire it; and 3) make the event as valuable as possible for the participants.

We can teach the skill, but one of the AS benefits for the shooter is putting that skill into a framework, to show the "Why" and to indicate the "When".

Example: At AS we frame the event with the "why", and we also make clear the "when". When do we take up arms? Against the powers-that-be? We answer the question by referencing the founders: Never, because we need to win the Soft War first (that's the "third option" which the founders gave us), and if we win the Soft War, there's never gonna be a Hard War. "Appleseed" is our (hopefully, successful) effort to win the Soft War. Hence, the "never" comment - because if we lose the Soft War, it's extremely likely that we will lose the Hard War, also. (Even if we soft-pedal - ie, never mention - that last logical conclusion!)

So, what do we do at PS which could prove very valuable for our students, while insulating our program from liability?

The answer is to lay out for the students "the Onion of Self-Protection", which is to stress that a pistol (or firearm of any kind) is the LAST thing you reach for when it comes to self protecting, and not the first thing.

I'll go further, and suggest the idea of the OSP is the MOST valuable thing the students will take away from the PS weekend.

And it will add ten minutes or less, in terms of time.

### **PS INSTRUCTIONAL BLOC:**

"The Onion of Self-Protection"

"Folks, let's stop a minute and put the skill you are learning today into perspective.

"For some, most, or all of you, learning this skill relates at least in part to a notion that the skill can be valuable for self-protection.

"True. But not the end of the story.

"The real truth of self-protection lies in layers of self-protection. You add multiple barriers between you and a threat - and the more barriers, the better. And a handgun, and the skill to use it, lies at the center of those layers. It's the LAST thing, the last barrier, the option of Last Resort.

"So think of protecting yourself as an onion with many layers, with you being at the center

of that onion, protected by all those layers, and with your handgun at the center, the last option in all those many layers.

"Here's an example of how you 'layer' yourself up, at home:

"First layer of self-protection at home might be a fence around your property; maybe even a locked gate.

"Second layer could be lighting at night;

"Third layer could be a large outside dog;

"Fourth layer would be good locks on all the doors and windows;

"Fifth layer could be a posted sign stating you have an alarm system (whether you do or not!);

"Sixth layer: an alarm system;

"Seventh layer could be a loud barking watchdog INSIDE the house, to complement the one OUTSIDE the house;

"An eighth layer could be an inner 'safe room' with a very secure door and lock, and a means of dialing 911.

"A ninth layer could be working out an agreement with a neighbor to be a back-up in case the 911 folks are slow to respond.

"A tenth layer could be a shouted-out warning, loud and clear, "I AM ARMED AND WILLING TO PROTECT MYSELF; THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN CALLED; LEAVE THE PREMISES, RIGHT NOW!"

"Eleventh layer: Mace, over cleaner, tear gas - maybe even a way to spray it thru the door of your safe room into the face of the intruder.

"You are starting, I hope, to get the message: The more layers of protection you can put between the threat and yourself, the more protected you are.

"And as you add those layers of protection, your firearm remains THE LAST LAYER OF PROTECTION - the one you hope and pray you never have to use.

"Because if you reach for it, you better be sure, as sure as you can be, that it is absolutely the last thing which stands between you and death.

"Hopefully, the mere display of your pistol will have the intended deterrent effect.

"Which would be another layer of protection, when you think about it.

"There is yet another layer of protection before actually firing on a threat: A warning shot.

"About now you're likely thinking to yourself, 'Gosh, what the heck use is this handgun, if I have to do everything I can do, to avoid using it?'

"Good question. Let's answer it, with ten words: It could be the only thing between you and death.

"But in the process, saving your life can come at great cost. Think TWO words: George Zimmer.

"Whenever you shoot someone, you are subject to being second-guessed much later in an air-conditioned courtroom setting where things may look quite a bit different, when the burden is on you to draw such a convincing picture of the circumstances for the judge or jury that 'justifiable' will be the ultimate judicial determination. In the process of reaching that outcome, you may - will almost, certainly - incur tens of thousands in legal fees, at a minimum - and if you lose the case, go to jail.

"But even a successful outcome is not the end. Because after the criminal trial comes the civil litigation - and here the standard of proof is not "reasonable doubt" but "the preponderance of the evidence" - ie, the other side no longer has to reach a 95% level of proof, but only a 51% level of proof.

"As in all judicial proceedings, the real cost will be the costs of the proceedings - tens or hundreds of thousands in legal fees; emotional distress of going thru a trial - and worse, all the months of waiting which precedes a trial; your life in limbo for months or years, until it is resolved.

"Ask George Zimmer: 'George, if you could do it over again, would you do anything differently?'

"I think he would. Folks, I want none of you to go thru what Zimmer will go thru. After his criminal trial, regardless of the outcome, will come his civil trial. Regardless of the outcome of that, he will be essentially bankrupt, possibly saddled with legal debts for years - and that's if he wins!

"If you are serious about your self-protection, you think in terms of the Onion - which means ONE, you put as many barriers/layers between yourself and the threat as possible; and TWO, understand that firing your firearm at another person is ABSOLUTELY THE LAST OPTION; it will be life-changing in ways you can't imagine.

"And let's add, as THREE, the more layers of protection you put between yourself and the

threat, the more likely the threat will never emerge. Predators tend to pick weaker prey, not stronger, well-protected ones. So think of your Onion as fulfilling that old and proven saw that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Far better to never experience an attack, than to have to repel one. Far better.

"For example, you shoot an intruder outside your bedroom door - shoot him dead. Are you still gonna want to continue to live in your house, with that image of the bloody body, lying on the carpet outside your door seared into your brain? How about the months and years of post-traumatic nightmares? (New carpet may not be enough!)

"Once again, follow the rule: USE OF A FIREARM IS THE LAST OPTION.

"If you take nothing else away from this weekend, taking that rule away with you, understanding the Onion of Self-Protection, can be something which can save you a lifetime of grief and trouble."

To reinforce the above, we need to come up with a one-page handout listing the layers of the onion and highlighting "THE LAST OPTION" rule.

PS: Anyone else have some more "layers" to add to the "onion"? The more we can list, the better...

## Disclaimer

When to use a firearm in self Defense is not a subject of this course, nor should any instruction or legal counsel on that decision be inferred or derived from this course.

Listen

Observe

Practice

# **MARKSMANSHIP INSTRUCTIONAL DRILL**

## **PROPER GRIP OF THE PISTOL**

Keeping the wrist straight and the thumb and fingers forming a V the rear of the pistol grip should be placed into the web of the hand. The lower three fingers will grip the lower portion of the pistol grip. The thumb of the firing hand around the grip and pointing in the direction of the target. A firm grip will do , no white knuckle grip. The non firing hand will wrap the lower three fingers over the tree fingers of the firing hand with the thumb along side of the firing hand thumb and pointing toward the target. No fingers or thumbs should touch the slide at any time. The trigger finger should touch the trigger in the middle of the first digit only. The elbows will be straight but not locked.

## **Dominate Eye**

To find your Dominate eye with both eyes open point toward a distant object ,then close one eye at a time. Your finger will not move when you are looking at it with the dominate eye. This is the eye you should use to aim with.

## **Chamber Checking**

**Camber checking is the act of visually checking your chamber for a round to see if the pistol is loaded or not. To chamber check and not place your hand in front of the muzzle, reach over the pistol slide and pull the slide to rear a quarter inch to see inside the chamber.**

**Careful not to chamber a round.**

## **POSITIONS**

We teach the weaver position

### **Weaver**

**The weaver position starts with the feet shoulder width apart non firing foot slightly forward. Firing elbow is straight but not locked with the non firing elbow slightly more bent. Bring the pistol up to eye level**

### **Isosceles**

**Feet are shoulder width apart ,shoulders are squared up with the target, elbows are not locked, bend forward slightly.**

### **Israeli**

**The Israeli method of drawing from a holster is loaded magazine in the semi auto pistol hammer down and no round in the chamber. This is a five count movement . Count 1 thru 3 are as normal at count 4 as the non firing hand is brought up to the slide and pull the slide to the rear most position and released chambering a round. The pistol is then pushed forward to the firing position.**

## **Guard or low ready position**

**Pistol is held in front of the shooter with the muzzle down range and pointed in the direction of the targets feet. This is a safe way to rest muscles while keeping the muzzle controlled.**

## **The Six Steps Of Firing The Shot**

This is the most complex and difficult instructional component that a shooter has to learn. It should be presented early Saturday and chorused early and often to enhance memorization. TPI ferociously. After NPOA is presented in this manual, an optional presentation will be offered which may make the learning process easier.

Teaching “The Six Steps Of Firing The Shot” requires that you as an Instructor know each of the six steps in order and verbatim. When teaching the Six Steps you should first state the Six Steps and then go back through each step with a complete explanation.

The Instructional Points below give you a suggested explanation of how to initially teach the Six Steps. Visual aids are a great help in doing so.

### **The Six Steps**

1. Sight ALIGNMENT --- Distribute the handout which demonstrates this.
2. Sight PICTURE
3. Respiratory PAUSE
- 4a. Focus your EYE on the FRONT SIGHT
- 4b. Focus your MIND on KEEPING the front sight on the TARGET
5. **Press** the trigger
6. Follow Through:
  - Hold the trigger back
  - Take a “MENTAL SNAPSHOT” of where the front sight was when the round went off.

## ***Instructional Points***

### **1. Sight Alignment**

**Open Sights:** Center the front sight post in the notch of the rear sight. The post should have an equal amount of daylight on either side of it and the top of the post should be the same height as the left and right sides of the notch.

**Scopes:** Center the eye so that there are no “shadows”. You should see a full, clear picture.

### **2. Sight Picture**

While maintaining sight alignment, bring the sights onto the target. At this point the question arises: Why not just do Steps 1 and 2 simultaneously, or why even bother with Step 1? Why not simply obtain a good sight picture at the beginning? The answer was alluded to earlier when the Natural Point of Aim was mentioned, But basically the reason is that your body must be relaxed in order to make a good shot. Therefore, if a good sight picture is obtained first, muscles will be required to accomplish this task. This can be confirmed if you close your eyes briefly and consciously relax your muscles. When opening your eyes, the sights will no longer be on the target. Therefore, you must move your body to obtain a good sight picture, and your body must be relaxed after obtaining it. It must be emphasized that you must not simply muscle the pistol over to place the sights on the target.

Center of Target (COT) method, or Point of Aim (POA)=POI. You would simply place your front sight on the exact point in the center of the target where you want the bullet to strike and adjust the sights so that the bullet strikes this point.

### **3. Respiratory Pause**

You cannot shoot accurately while you are moving. Breathing causes movement, so you will have to stop breathing at some point to make an accurate shot. This is what we call the Respiratory Pause.

In the Standing position, you will notice that as you inhale, the front sight will dip, and when you exhale, it will rise. Use the natural action of breathing to help hold the elevation. When the front sight reaches the desired place on the target, simply hold your breath at that point. In the later section on Natural Point of Aim, we will show you a way to increase accuracy even further by completely relaxing the respiratory system when you exhale to hold the sights on target.

How long can you hold your breath and expect good accuracy? In 5 to 8 seconds your vision begins to diminish. You won't be able to see as well as you'd like. You may even begin to tremble a bit. If you don't get the shot off within a few seconds, take another breath and start over.

#### **4a. Focus your EYE on the FRONT SIGHT:**

The eye cannot focus at more than one distance, and you are now trying to keep 3 things aligned. Years of shooting experience by thousands of pistol shooters have proven that

the best way to sight your pistol is to focus on the front sight and not on the target.

The **target will be fuzzy** in the distance. The **rear sight will be fuzzy** in your periphery. But this is the only way your eye can line up all three things accurately. It is imperative that you focus **ONLY** on the front sight. ( some shooters focus on the target then on the front sight just before they press the trigger.)

This is not a natural thing and requires constant monitoring and correction. If your groups start to expand, the first thing you need to ask yourself is if you are truly focusing on the front sight.

**Scopes** create a single focal plane, and you should **focus on the reticle**, not the target.

If you experience **eyestrain**, simply focus at a distant object momentarily, and then back to the front sight. This relieves the eye muscles and will allow you to again clearly focus on the front sight.

#### **4b. Focus your MIND on KEEPING the front sight on the TARGET**

Up until this point, the steps have been sequential physical steps. Now we encounter a mental step. With all that you can muster, **focus your mind on keeping that sharply focused front sight precisely where it belongs, on the fuzzy target**. This will require a considerable amount of concentration and effort, and is why the steps must be practiced, becoming automatic, leaving the mind free to concentrate on the front sight and target.

### **5. PRESS the trigger**

Shooters have a tendency to “snatch” the trigger when the sights are momentarily on the target and before the sights can move off again. **PRESS the trigger straight to the rear using a steadily increasing pressure**. Use the ball point pen demo to further drive this point home. **The difference between a squeeze and a snatch is CONTROL.**

The problem with snatching the trigger is that the bullet is not yet out of the barrel. The added motion you impart to the trigger will start the bullet downrange at a slight angle. This diverging path from the target will continue to grow the farther the bullet travels.

By squeezing the trigger **you can stop at any moment** if the sights wander off the target. **DO NOT** release the existing trigger pressure. Simply continue to hold the pressure you have until the sights return to the target, then continue squeezing the trigger. Repeat, as necessary, until the pistol fires.

The middle of the first pad of the trigger finger should contact the lower portion of the trigger. This provides increased sensitivity, greater mechanical advantage, and it prevents the finger from dragging against the bottom of the receiver. Once the finger comes in contact with the trigger, it should not be removed until the string of fire is completed.

## 6. Follow Through: (Two parts)

Follow through has two parts when the shot goes off: 1) Hold the trigger back and 2) Take a mental snapshot of where the front sight was when the shot broke. We call this "Calling the Shot"

**Hold the trigger back:** Just as with pressing the trigger straight to the rear, you must continue Pressing the trigger to the rear after the shot breaks and hold the trigger to the rear long enough to allow the bullet to clear the barrel. Try to hold the trigger back until the sights are realigned on the target.

When you begin to release the trigger pressure, **release just enough pressure to reset the trigger.** The ball point pen should be used to demonstrate this concept. It is practically impossible to perform this exercise during a normal dry fire session, and it may be difficult to detect during live fire. The best way to detect it, and become accustomed to it, is to hold the pistol in your hand . It is best not to even aim at the target. Simply actuate the slide, press the trigger and hold it back with your trigger finger. Then using your other hand, actuate the slide again. Then slowly release the trigger until you feel and hear it reset, and hold it at that point. Do not let it go any further

forward. Press the trigger again and hold it back. Continue this process until it becomes a habit.

**Calling the Shot:** In order to accomplish this you MUST keep your eye open as the shot breaks. This will enable you to take an INSTANT mental snapshot of exactly where the front sight was, in relation to the target, when the shot broke. Initially it will seem very difficult to do, but it will become easier with practice. It should be obvious, of course, that you cannot do this if your eyes are closed as the shot breaks. It may take a great deal of effort and practice, but you simply must keep your eyes open until after the shot is fired.

**The ability to call your shot is important.** As an example, if you called the shot at 5 o'clock and just out of the black. Then when you check the target and that is where the bullet hit, the shot wasn't bad. The shot actually went where it was told to go. You just need to focus better on sight alignment and do the 6 steps required to put the shot in the center.

**Dry Firing is the perfect time to develop this skill** because there is no noise or recoil. Don't waste your prep period, dry fire as much as possible. You can even "call the shot" when you dry fire. Even when you can't see a hole in the target you will know where that shot went and could actually draw it on paper to compare with the real thing when you get to the target.

\*\*\*Dry firing at home is a great way to make the "Six Steps" second nature. If you dry fire in your home, you must check and recheck that the pistol is empty. Remove all live rounds from the room you are practicing in. Know what is behind the wall your target is on. If anyone comes in your practice room, stop and ask them to leave. Recheck that the pistol is empty and that there are no live rounds in the room! It will be a hard sell to the jury that you really didn't intend to shoot your daughter or the neighbor! \*\*\*

## **TIME LAG**

You may be wondering why we insisted that you do, or not do, some of the things discussed previously, such as dragging wood, holding the trigger back, not letting your trigger finger fly off the trigger quickly, jerking the trigger, or pressing the trigger straight back. Each of these things will apply a small force to the pistol, and the bullet does not exit the pistol the moment you press the trigger. There is a finite time lag, and as a result, these small forces will have a significant effect on where your bullet strikes the target. This time lag is, in fact, the sum of three individual time lags: lock time, ignition time, and barrel time. The total can amount to 1/10 of a second, or more, depending on the pistol and ammunition.

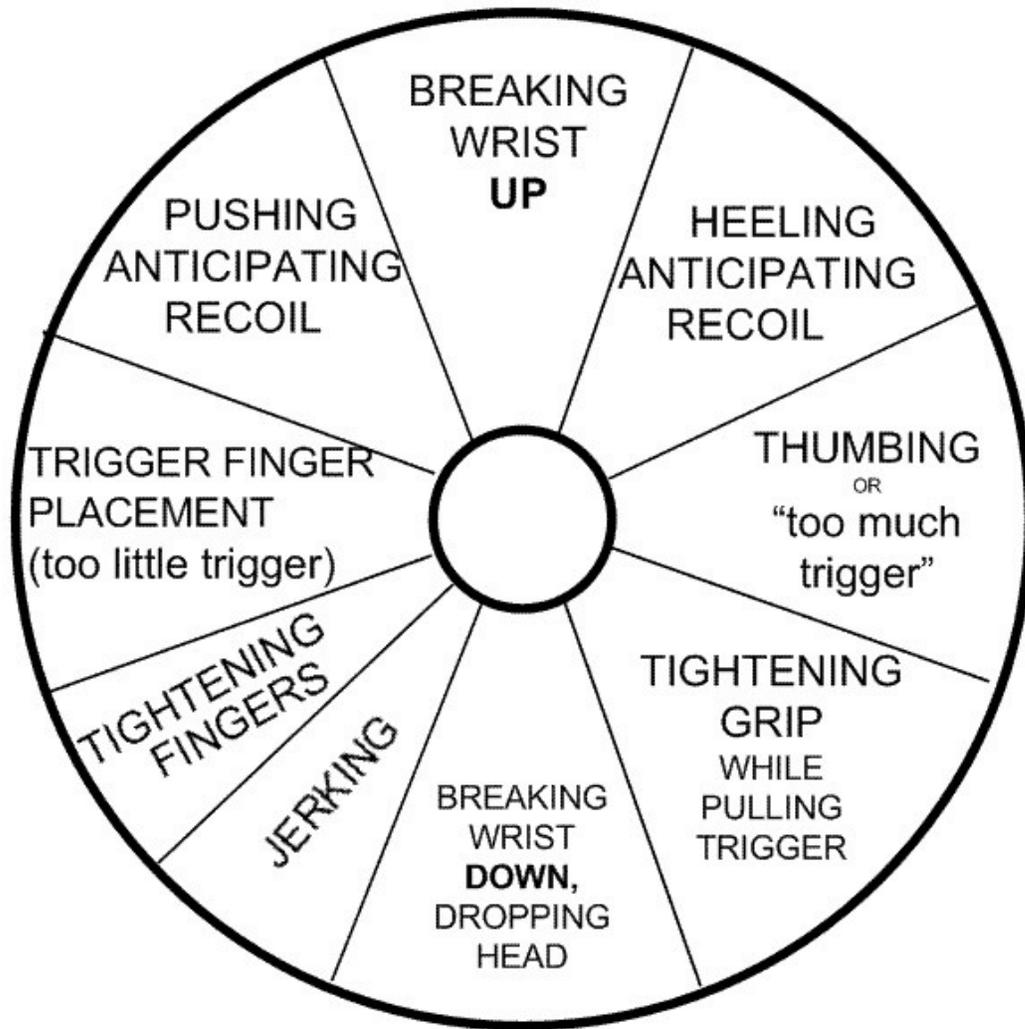
Another movement which will enter, of necessity, is RECOIL. The amount of pistol movement, and, therefore, bullet placement, due to recoil will be affected by anything which touches the pistol. The amount of cant of the pistol will also affect bullet placement due to recoil. Therefore, cant should be minimized. All of this means that the pistol should be held exactly the same each time it is fired. Consistency is the key to precision pistol marksmanship.

## **TALKING TARGETS**

The shooters should understand that the holes in their targets will tell them what their mistakes are, and they need to learn to interpret this information. In fact, it is imperative that they learn to do it themselves because after the Appleseed they will be at the range by themselves with no instructor to help them. Perhaps the best way to do this is to begin conditioning them for it in the early stages of the Pistolseed as some of the presentations are made.

During the presentation of the Six Steps, they are told to squeeze the trigger straight back. They should be asked what would be the result of pulling the trigger to the left or right, or of dragging wood. Most will respond that horizontal stringing would result. Also in the Six Steps, they are taught to focus on the front sight and not on the target. You can tell them that if they focus on the target that they can't see, with clarity, exactly where their front sight is. As a result, it will wander erratically. Therefore, their shots will be scattered all over the paper.

Experience has shown that the shooters will remember these patterns and their causes. However, to drive the point home to them, these questions should be asked of them just before they go down to check their targets the first time. As the instructors check the shooters targets and see these patterns, they should ask the shooters what their targets are telling them throughout the pistolseed event.



### **SHOOTER'S BUBBLE**

The shooter's Bubble is a description of the intense concentration a pistol shooter should have toward the task at hand. When he is so deeply absorbed in concentrating on his shooting, he becomes oblivious to any distractions. For anyone to excel at any type of activity requires exceptional mental concentration. When this is accomplished, the physical part comes almost unconsciously.

## **BALL AND DUMMY**

Ball and Dummy is an exercise in which the shooters work in pairs: a shooter and a coach. The coach will prepare the shooter's pistol in a manner such that the shooter does not know if a live round or an empty chamber is available to him. The coach will observe the shooter carefully to see what errors he may make. One magazine and five loose rounds of ammunition will be used and should be brought to the line. The coach will prep one magazine with only one round and set the pistol with the safety on on the a table, while the shooter closes his eyes and turns his head so he doesn't know how the pistol is prepared. If the coach isn't familiar with the shooter's pistol, he should inquire how it operates. In order for the coach to perform his job properly, he must Stand on the firing side of the shooter to observe if he blinks his eyes, drags wood, flinches, bucks his wrist, fails to hold the trigger back, jerks the trigger, or any of the other many errors possible. These errors should immediately be discussed with the shooter. During this process, the coach should pull his cap over his eyes or position himself, or his hand, to shield his face from the ejected brass. It is the coaches job to fool the shooter, to the best of his ability, so that the shooter does not know whether he has a live round or a dummy in his pistol. It will be easy to spot some errors when dummy rounds are used. If an error is detected, it is preferable to continue with dummies until the error is corrected. The coach should learn as much from this exercise as the shooter. The instructors should monitor the line during this exercise to point out errors which the coaches miss.

This exercise will continue until the five live rounds are fired, then the shooter and coach will change positions. A method to enhance the process is for the coach to draw a square on a piece of paper and insist that the shooter call the shot for each live round fired. The coach will then mark this location on the paper and have the shooter compare this with his target when they proceed down range. This procedure can be enhanced if each round is fired at separate one inch square on the one inch squares target sheet. And further, if the called shots are marked on a separate one inch square target sheet. Then it is easy to evaluate how each individual shot was called.

Thirty minutes should be devoted to the exercise. A suggestion is for the Line Boss to simply call the line HOT and start his timer instead of proceeding through the Line Commands. Shooting may begin when the line is HOT, and the shooter and coach may change positions when the five live rounds have been fired. At the end of 15 minutes the shooter and coach must switch positions if they haven't already done so. Then at end of 30 minutes, CEASE FIRE should be called.

This exercise should be preceded by a lengthy introduction and explanation, complete with examples.

## **Line Duties and Procedures**

To create a safe line and to standardize procedures, the following Line duties and procedures will be followed at an Appleseed event. The Shoot Boss will assign the following duty positions in the Pre-Shoot Instructor Meeting.

# ***Duties***

## **Line Boss**

The Line Boss is in charge of the Line. To maximize safety and situational awareness, the Line Boss will do absolutely no instructing during the SOF. The Line Boss has the “Big Picture”. He is first, responsible for safety of the Line and second, for keeping the Line on schedule.

## **Instructor**

The Instructor is the “Point of the Spear” for the Appleseed Project. He is in direct contact with shooters and remains constantly engaged, correcting errors, offering tips and techniques to improve their shooting ability. The Instructor must constantly be vigilant for safety violations. Instructors, at specific times during the SOF may also perform duty as an RSO or as an LSO.

## **Range Safety Officer**

Typically there are two RSOs, one for each side of the Line. The duty of the RSO is to clear the Line after “Unload and Clear!”, ensuring all pistols on his section of the Line are “Safe”. The RSO must perform his duty precisely and **WITHOUT DISTRACTION, focusing only on Line safety**. When not performing RSO duty, he mentally “flips the switch” back to Instructor duty. The two RSOs on the Line are direct safety links between the Line Boss and the Line itself. Accordingly, the RSOs will face, and report directly to, the Line Boss.

## **Line Safety Officer**

When the Line is too long for RSOs to safely and quickly clear the Line, the Line Boss may designate as many LSOs as necessary to assist in the process. The LSOs operate on the Line between the Line Boss and the RSOs. The duty of the LSO is to clear the Line after “Unload and Clear!”, ensuring all rifles on his section of the Line are “Safe”. The LSO will then face, and report directly to, the RSO. The RSO, who will be facing the LSO and the Line Boss, will receive the report from the LSO and report directly to the Line Boss. The LSO, like the RSO, must perform his duty precisely and **WITHOUT DISTRACTION** when clearing the Line, **focusing only on Line safety**. When not performing LSO duty he mentally “flips the switch” back to Instructor duty.

## ***Procedures***

## Line Boss

Normally only the Line Boss will issue Line commands. He will use the standardized Line commands, verbatim. If the Line is too long for all shooters to hear Line commands the Line Boss will direct Instructors to “echo” Line commands. Only the commands “Load!”, “Fire!”, and “Cease Fire!” will be echoed. Instructors will echo commands verbatim!

The only command “owned” by everyone on the Line is the “Cease Fire!” command. Anyone, Instructors and shooters alike, who observe a safety problem can shut down the Line immediately by yelling “Cease Fire! Cease Fire! Cease Fire!”

If an instructor observes a safety problem he should take IMMEDIATE ACTION to rectify it whenever possible. If this is not possible, he can resort to “Cease Fire”.

If the Shoot Boss has not done so, the Line Boss will designate two RSOs and an appropriate number of LSOs. The Line Boss will ensure RSOs and LSOs know their duty and communication procedures. The Line Boss will designate the “overlap pistols”.

The Line boss will time the Preparation Period, SOF and time spent at the Target Line in order to keep the shoot pace moving and to minimize wasted time.

The Line Boss will adhere to the Shoot Boss’s COF and run the Line according to schedule. The Line Boss should have with him a copy of the Line Commands and a means to time the events.

## Instructor

The Instructor has a multifaceted job and is expected to perform to the best of his ability. **Safety is always the Appleseed Instructor’s first priority.** Effectiveness is the next.

An Instructor is expected to remain in constant contact with the shooters. He should start at one end of his designated portion of the Line and engage a shooter. Evaluate the shooter’s position and technique. Offer correction for any problems noted with position, steady hold factors, firing the shot, etc. When satisfied, the Instructor moves to the next shooter and repeats the process.

At no time should an Instructor be chatting with a shooter or another Instructor when he could be instructing. Likewise, while instructions are being presented to the shooters the instructors should NOT be engaged in discussions with other shooters or Instructors. It is distracting to the presenter and the other shooters. But at all other times, it is the duty of the Instructors to constantly ENGAGE the shooters to improve their shooting. This process begins when the Instructor steps onto the Line. The Instructor is to be Pro-Active.

Instructors should be where the shooters are. If the shooters are at the target line, the instructor should be as well, diagnosing, teaching, and engaging the shooters. If shooters are on the firing line, in their prep period or during the SOF, that's where the Instructor should be, shouting out line patter, offering helpful tips, correcting positions, etc.

Instructors should engage in and accomplish as much instruction as possible before the "Fire!" command. Do not interrupt shooters unnecessarily during the SOF, especially during the 2nd and 3rd stages of the AQT, when time is a factor. But correct trigger control is necessary. Instructors during the SOF will evaluate the shooter for problems that can be quickly pointed out and easily corrected, such as touching a trigger finger to indicate dragging wood. However, the students are there to learn to shoot rather than attain high scores, except perhaps near the end.

If a shooter indicates he is not ready to fire, the Instructor nearest the shooter should determine the problem. If the problem is not a safety issue he will face the Line Boss and give the "thumbs up", allowing the Line boss to proceed at his discretion. If the problem is a safety issue, the Instructor ensures the muzzle remains pointed in a safe direction, gives a "thumbs down", and shouts "Safety Issue!" advising the Line Boss of the fact and awaits his command.

The command "Stand Easy!" from the Line Boss keeps the Line in place until the problem can be resolved.

An Instructor will work with the shooter to resolve the problem. Once resolved, he should face the Line Boss and give the "thumbs up".

The Line Boss should resume with the command "Is the line ready?" and proceed with the SOF.

### **Range Safety Officer**

At the command "Unload and clear!" the Instructors so designated immediately transition to RSO duty. The primary duty of the RSO is to clear his half of the Line after "Unload and Clear!". The RSO communicates with and reports directly to the Line Boss.

The Line will be cleared from Line center outward. The RSO will begin at the designated "overlap" rifle at Line center, and both RSO's will clear that pistol. He will then walk the Line from that pistol to the last pistol on his side, clearing each one.

When he reaches the end of the Line he will turn to face the Line Boss and watch the Line to ensure that it remains clear and safe. When the Line Boss asks "Is The Line

Clear?” he will display a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” in the clear view of the Line Boss, indicating the condition of his half of the Line. At the call: “The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!” the RSO mentally “flips the switch” and resumes Instructor duty.

**Remember:** The Instructor’s RSO duty starts with the command “Unload and clear!” and ends with the command “The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!”

### **Line Safety Officer**

The LSO is an Instructor who clears a section of an RSO’s half of the Line. The LSO communicates with and reports directly to his RSO, not the Line Boss. When the Instructor designated as LSO hears the command: “Unload and clear!” he mentally “flips the switch” and performs only LSO duty.

The LSO will begin clearing pistols at his overlap pistol nearest Line center and continue clearing outward to his overlap rifle farthest from Line center. When he reaches the outside “overlap pistol” of his section, which he will share with another LSO or the RSO, the LSO will face the RSO, and not the Line Boss, and give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” in the clear view of the RSO, indicating the condition of his section of the Line.

At the call: “The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!” the LSO mentally “flips the switch” and resumes Instructor duty.

**Remember:** The Instructor’s LSO duty begins with the command “Unload and clear!” and ends with the command “The Line Is Clear! The Line Is Clear!”

## **Troubleshooting On The Line**

To successfully detect and correct shooter errors at an Appleseed event it is necessary to have an orderly plan of attack. The information described below is that plan. It is repeatable and can be consistently used with each shooter. This plan by no means contains a description of all the possible problems and fixes you may find and need on the Appleseed trail. However, this plan will go a long way toward helping develop the skills and confidence required to aggressively engage shooters at an Appleseed event, and in turn, help the shooters progress rapidly.

Aside from equipment issues, almost all shooter problems are caused by the lack of, or the improper application of fundamentals. Regarding equipment, the progress of some shooters may be limited by their equipment. Do the best with the equipment available.

As mentioned previously, the Instructor must be Pro-Active on the line. There are many things an Instructor can easily point out just by observing the shooters on the line, without having to even look at their targets. Among these are the following:

Our goal is to teach the shooters to be self-sufficient – to make them aware of what they are doing and to begin learning to self-diagnose their problems.

Remember a pistolman persists! The following information is divided into three areas of concern: **Position, The Six Steps, and Mechanical Problems.**

## ***Position***

Since **establishing** and **maintaining** the proper position is the basic building block of shooting, it is important to first rule out position error as a cause for not consistently hitting the target. If the shooter cannot establish and maintain a proper position all other aspects of placing rounds on target will be difficult if not impossible.

Begin by observing the shooter's position. Evaluate and check off each Steady Hold Factor (SHF) in order. Use the SHFs as a checklist to evaluate the position. Other than the standing position, all positions have the same steady hold factors.

SHFs include:

- **Shooter angle** properly referenced to the target
- **Trigger finger** properly placed on the trigger

As an Instructor you need to know the SHFs cold. Knowing the SHFs cold will allow you to quickly find and correct any problems with the shooter's position.

For instance: A shooter complains of diagonal shot stringing.

Begin by asking yourself, which improper SHF could cause the problem. Continue checking the SHF's and apply this logic until you have one or more possible solutions to offer. Explain the correction to the shooter and watch that he actually implements the necessary correction. Then move on to the next shooter starting the process over. You must continually reevaluate each shooter for the correct SHFs.

Remember again that our goal is to instill self-diagnosis, to train him to THINK for himself.

## ***The Six Steps***

Next we will reference either FIRING LINE ERRORS, or TARGET LINE ERRORS, and use **The Six Steps Of Firing The Shot** to diagnose problems. Once you are certain that the shooter's position is correct, begin to look for other errors.

Based on your observations at the target line or from a shooter's specific complaint you should be able to quickly determine one or more possible causes and apply corrections. Or better yet, you should be able to get the shooter to quickly determine one or more possible causes. Ask him.

Begin by asking yourself; following the order of The Six Steps, which step of firing the shot, would cause the problem you see.

For instance: A shooter displays constant horizontal stringing.

Ask yourself if "Sight Alignment" would cause this? Not likely.

How about “Sight Picture”? Again, not likely.

“Respiratory Pause”? No, that would likely show up as vertical stringing, right?

“Focus your eye on the front sight”, no, not likely.

“Focus your mind on keeping the front sight on the target”, no, not likely.

“Squeeze the trigger” Yep! Maybe the shooter is snatching the trigger or squeezing it back at an angle. Watch the trigger finger on the next shot. And again, this is a problem which should have been discussed earlier and he should have remembered it.

“Follow Through”? Another possible culprit, so watch for “Follow Through”.

Another example: A shooter regularly places a nice tight group in the square. Then his groups begin to open up, but remain centered on the square. Hmmm!

Would “step one” do that? No, the group was still centered on the square.

“Step two”? Not likely for the same reason.

“Step three”? No, for the same reason.

“Step 4a”? YES! Remind the shooter to focus his EYE on the front sight. Remember, “The Six Steps” are a skill set that must be learned and reinforced until they are second nature. And each and every one of them must be done – and done right in order to fire an accurate shot.

“Step 4b”? Not likely, since the group is still centered.

“Step 5”? No, same reason.

“Step 6”? Nope, not likely.

Remember using “The Six Steps” in a logical sequence is another tool that helps you analyze and correct shooter errors.

Of course you should always be on the lookout for the signs of **Flinch, Buck, or Jerk**. Large groups with no appreciable decrease in size as they go along could be a Flinch, Buck, or Jerk problem. Time to get down on your belly and go to work.

Multiple target strings bring on even more problems involving **NPOA, Cadence**, etc.

However sometimes when everything looks good and the shots still fall where they aren’t supposed to. What then? Now is the time to look for mechanical problems:

### ***Mechanical Problems***

After exhausting the Position or “The Six Steps” as issues, you may want to start thinking

about problems with the pistol itself. Appleseeds have a way of bringing out problems caused by wear, tear, and inattention to maintenance. Obviously the first thing to check for erratically placed shots would be the sights. Especially when earlier shots were looking good. Check for loose front or rear sights, scope bases, etc. Also check for parts that have come loose on the pistol itself. Anything that should be immobile and is now moving with each shot is bad news. Closely inspect the pistol and secure anything that is loose or out of place.

The techniques described above can be applied either on the **firing line** or when diagnosing errors at the **target line**.

### ***Conclusion***

An instructor who has good knowledge of the Steady Hold Factors and The Six Steps can rely on that knowledge to help diagnose shooter errors. Having a logical plan to diagnose errors will quickly lead to one or more likely causes. A little practice will greatly improve your skills as an instructor.

But always allow the shooter to try self diagnosis. After all, the next time he goes to the range you will probably not be there to serve as his momma.

- **Check POSITION** (Steady Hold Factors)
- **Check SIX STEPS**
- **Check MECHANICALS**

# SAMPLE

## COURSE OF FIRE

Notice: This Course of Fire is most probably very different from those which many instructors are presently using with much success. And this is not an attempt to make all COFs the same as this one. This one does contain the necessary POI, as do those of other instructors. Experience has shown, however, that this sample does work effectively.

Make sure tables are set up at the 7 Yard line for the students to ground their pistols ,and to place their ammo and magazines. Mark an area off behind the firing line for students to prep magazines , this way students are not near the grounded pistols preping mags .Students will be close enough together on the firing line to make it harder to muzzle sweep each other .After the LB is satisfied that the students will use proper muzzle control and are not a safety risk the tables can be moved behind the firing line and used for reloading magazines the students pistols will be holstered at this time.

## COURSE OF FIRE

### DAY 1

1. Administrative work. Chamber flags. T-Shirts may be given to two day shooters, and sold to the others.

Welcome --- Introductions --- Explain IITs, Orange Hats, etc. Explain IITs are in training. They are all qualified Riflemen and are learning to become expert instructors. They may make mistakes, but if so, they will be corrected, and we hope you will understand.

Ask for any **medically** trained personnel.

Don't do anything that you think might endanger your **health or well being**.

If you need to **take a break** before I call one, feel free to do so. I would not mind if you request that I take a break. Sometimes I forget to do so.

Be sure to take your appropriate **medications**.

Take any appropriate measures to deal with hot or cold **weather**.

3. **Preamble and Introduction** to April 19<sup>th</sup>.

Lexington will be presented at lunch. Concord, and Old Men and the Retreat, will be presented on the morning, and at lunch of the second day, respectively. Brief accounts of the latter two may be presented Saturday afternoon.

**Description of Activities** \_\_\_\_\_

Most, perhaps all, of our shooting this weekend will be done at 25 to 7 meters.

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**Remind shooters about RWVA memberships**

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**Ask who has revolvers or single shot pistols**

4. Safety Rules \_\_\_\_\_

Additional emphasis on MUZZLE CONTROL! It is not too unusual for someone to have hot brass land on them. In some cases it may be very hot and surprise you so much that you automatically try to find relief, but in the process your muzzle may stray and point directly at someone while the pistol is loaded and your finger on the trigger. Your FIRST reaction should be to ground the pistol so that the muzzle is in a SAFE direction! Then attend to the burn. Shooting someone will be several magnitudes worse than your burn could ever be!!! The same dangerous reaction could be caused by any number of things, such as a bee sting or an asteroid striking you from the sky. The FIRST thing you MUST do is think about your muzzle!!!

A continual violation of the safety rules cannot be tolerated. You may be asked to leave the line.

If a pistol is dropped students will not try to catch it and let it fall to the ground. Grabbing at the pistol may cause an AD

5. Clearing pistols \_\_\_\_\_

You have been given chamber flags. Keeping the muzzle in a safe direction look into the chamber and be absolutely certain that it is empty, then place the flag completely into the chamber or barrel of the pistol leaving the slide locked to the rear or the cylinder open. Safety on if possible

6. With **parking lot observers:** \_\_\_\_\_ **And line observers:** \_\_\_\_\_

We are preparing to go to the Firing Line in a moment. Please follow the instructions below as we do so.

Bring everything to the shooting line except pistols, although you may bring pistols at this time if they are cased. If pistols are not cased, bring them to the line **AFTER** everything else, by themselves and with muzzles up, mags out, with flags in and slides back or closed on flags.

Place everything else, including ALL AMMUNITION and MAGAZINES, behind the equipment line. And after you have cleared your pistol after shooting, take your used magazines, unused ammunition, and yourselves, behind the equipment line while the instructors confirm that the pistols are in a safe condition. No ammunition should be on the firing line at any time, except what you will be using at the moment.

In order to address some possible safety concerns, it is important that all shooters on the firing line **maintain a straight line**, not a wavy one. In order to effect this, we will insist that all muzzles be extended **PAST THE MARKED FIRING LINE** at all times. This procedure will be in effect during all preparations for shooting, and shooting.

No one should proceed downrange past the firing line until the pistols have been cleared and you are told to go downrange.

Bring a pencil or pen to the firing line, and a staple gun, if you have one.

**Proceed to the Firing Line.**

7. At the firing line:

Line Commands \_\_\_\_\_

8. Special instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Please do not talk to or seek help from the Line Boss until after he informs you that you may go down range. He has much on his mind and does not need distractions.

Also, please do not talk to or seek help from the other instructors while they are clearing rifles after the Unload and Clear command. It is their job to help you at any other time, and they will be glad to do so.

Ammunition Difficulties \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: There are some possible ammunition difficulties which are rare but could be dangerous, even deadly. Discuss actions required.

1. Misfires.

2. Hangfires.

3. Squibs.

If a shot does not sound right or feel right, STOP IMMEDIATELY! Keep your muzzle downrange. Call an instructor and wait at least 30 seconds before doing anything else.

Make sure the ammo you have is the exact same as the caliber stamped on the side of your firearm! If it is not the same don't shoot it. Some pistols will not have the caliber stamped on them (Luger, in .30 Luger)

Ask them to repeat the **Safety Rules** once more --- or continue until they get it right.

## A Message from Fred:

Guys, our goals with PS are to 1) reach a new demographic with the AS message (ie, reach more people!); 2) teach a skill to people who want to acquire it; and 3) make the event as valuable as possible for the participants.

We can teach the skill, but one of the AS benefits for the shooter is putting that skill into a framework, to show the "Why" and to indicate the "When".

Example: At AS we frame the event with the "why", and we also make clear the "when". When do we take up arms? Against the powers-that-be? We answer the question by referencing the founders: Never, because we need to win the Soft War first (that's the "third option" which the founders gave us), and if we win the Soft War, there's never gonna be a Hard War. "Appleseed" is our (hopefully, successful) effort to win the Soft War. Hence, the "never" comment - because if we lose the Soft War, it's extremely likely that we will lose the Hard War, also. (Even if we soft-pedal - ie, never mention - that last logical conclusion!)

So, what do we do at PS which could prove very valuable for our students, while insulating our program from liability?

The answer is to lay out for the students "the Onion of Self-Protection", which is to stress that a pistol (or firearm of any kind) is the LAST thing you reach for when it comes to self protecting, and not the first thing.

I'll go further, and suggest the idea of the OSP is the MOST valuable thing the students will take away from the PS weekend.

And it will add ten minutes or less, in terms of time.

## **PS INSTRUCTIONAL BLOC:**

"The Onion of Self-Protection"

"Folks, let's stop a minute and put the skill you are learning today into perspective.

"For some, most, or all of you, learning this skill relates at least in part to a notion that the skill can be valuable for self-protection.

"True. But not the end of the story.

"The real truth of self-protection lies in layers of self-protection. You add multiple barriers between you and a threat - and the more barriers, the better. And a handgun, and the skill to use it, lies at the center of those layers. It's the LAST thing, the last barrier, the option of Last Resort.

"So think of protecting yourself as an onion with many layers, with you being at the center of that onion, protected by all those layers, and with your handgun at the center, the last option in all those many layers.

"Here's an example of how you 'layer' yourself up, at home:

"First layer of self-protection at home might be a fence around your property; maybe even a locked gate.

"Second layer could be lighting at night;

"Third layer could be a large outside dog;

"Fourth layer would be good locks on all the doors and windows;

"Fifth layer could be a posted sign stating you have an alarm system (whether you do or not!);

"Sixth layer: an alarm system;

"Seventh layer could be a loud barking watchdog INSIDE the house, to complement the one OUTSIDE the house;

"An eighth layer could be an inner 'safe room' with a very secure door and lock, and a means of dialing 911.

"A ninth layer could be working out an agreement with a neighbor to be a back-up in case the 911 folks are slow to respond.

"A tenth layer could be a shouted-out warning, loud and clear, "I AM ARMED AND WILLING TO PROTECT MYSELF; THE AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN CALLED; LEAVE THE PREMISES, RIGHT NOW!"

"Eleventh layer: Mace, over cleaner, tear gas - maybe even a way to spray it thru the door of your safe room into the face of the intruder.

"You are starting, I hope, to get the message: The more layers of protection you can put between the threat and yourself, the more protected you are.

"And as you add those layers of protection, your firearm remains THE LAST LAYER OF PROTECTION - the one you hope and pray you never have to use.

"Because if you reach for it, you better be sure, as sure as you can be, that it is absolutely the last thing which stands between you and death.

"Hopefully, the mere display of your pistol will have the intended deterrent effect.

"Which would be another layer of protection, when you think about it.

"There is yet another layer of protection before actually firing on a threat: A warning shot.

"About now you're likely thinking to yourself, 'Gosh, what the heck use is this handgun, if I have to do everything I can do, to avoid using it?'

"Good question. Let's answer it, with ten words: It could be the only thing between you and death.

"But in the process, saving your life can come at great cost. Think TWO words: George Zimmer.

"Whenever you shoot someone, you are subject to being second-guessed much later in an air-conditioned courtroom setting where things may look quite a bit different, when the burden is on you to draw such a convincing picture of the circumstances for the judge or jury that 'justifiable' will be the ultimate judicial determination. In the process of reaching that outcome, you may - will almost, certainly - incur tens of thousands in legal fees, at a minimum - and if you lose the case, go to jail.

"But even a successful outcome is not the end. Because after the criminal trial comes the civil litigation - and here the standard of proof is not "reasonable doubt" but "the preponderance of the evidence" - ie, the other side no longer has to reach a 95% level of proof, but only a 51% level of proof.

"As in all judicial proceedings, the real cost will be the costs of the proceedings - tens or hundreds of thousands in legal fees; emotional distress of going thru a trial - and worse, all the months of waiting which precedes a trial; your life in limbo for months or years, until it is resolved.

"Ask George Zimmer: 'George, if you could do it over again, would you do anything differently?'"

"I think he would. Folks, I want none of you to go thru what Zimmer will go thru. After his criminal trial, regardless of the outcome, will come his civil trial. Regardless of the outcome of that, he will be essentially bankrupt, possibly saddled with legal debts for years - and that's if he wins!"

"If you are serious about your self-protection, you think in terms of the Onion - which means ONE, you put as many barriers/layers between yourself and the threat as possible; and TWO, understand that firing your firearm at another person is ABSOLUTELY THE LAST OPTION; it will be life-changing in ways you can't imagine.

"And let's add, as THREE, the more layers of protection you put between yourself and the threat, the more likely the threat will never emerge. Predators tend to pick weaker prey, not stronger, well-protected ones. So think of your Onion as fulfilling that old and proven saw that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". Far better to never experience an attack, than to have to repel one. Far better. "For example, you shoot an intruder outside your bedroom door - shoot him dead. Are you still gonna want to continue to live in your house, with that image of the bloody body, lying on the carpet outside your door seared into your brain? How about the months and years of post-traumatic nightmares? (New carpet may not be enough!)"

"Once again, follow the rule: USE OF A FIREARM IS THE LAST OPTION.

"If you take nothing else away from this weekend, taking that rule away with you, understanding the Onion of Self-Protection, can be something which can save you a lifetime of grief and trouble."

To reinforce the above, we need to come up with a one-page handout listing the layers of the onion and highlighting "THE LAST OPTION" rule.

PS: Anyone else have some more "layers" to add to the "onion"? The more we can list, the better...

## Disclaimer

When to use a firearm in self Defense is not a subject of this course, nor should any instruction or legal counsel on that decision be inferred or derived from this course.

Listen

Observe

Practice

Post Red Coats Tip: Place them center on the cardboard.

**NOTICE: STAPLE YOUR TARGETS, NOT YOUR FINGERS!!!**

9. Explain Red Coat: This exercise is to see how small of target you can hit , if you apply proper fundamentals you can clean this target. This is only a test of your ability. **Start by prepping magazine with 1 round and fire one round at the largest target 3 times ,this will help the instructors evaluate who needs the most help on the line. Do this until three rounds are fired at the first target. After 3 rounds are fired single shot Engage the rest of the targets with 10 rounds.** Mark hits and put your name and date on the target. Engage at 7 yards
10. **Check for eye dominance using a small circle made with the forefinger and thumb.**  
Put Scotch Magic Tape or opaque tape on their dominant eye glass if appropriate. Shooters wearing progressive bifocal lenses may have difficulty with their scopes or sights.
11. **How to clear ( unload) and chamber check a pistol.** First step is to remove the magazine. Place the thumb on the slide catch pull the slide to the rear and lock. Look into the chamber, place the pistol on safe if possible. To chamber check pull the slide to rear about a .25 inch and look into the chamber. For revolvers open the cylinder and observe the cylinder for rounds . **Pistol ready position** ,hold the pistol about 45-degree angle pointed toward the target.

1. **Grip** : A proper grip is one of the most important fundamentals of quick fire . The pistol must become an extension of the hand and arm , it should replace the finger in pointing at an object. The firer must apply a firm ,uniform grip on the pistol. With firing hand forming a v shape place the back of the pistol grip into the web of the firing hand and wrapping the bottom three fingers of the firing hand around the pistol grip below the trigger guard. The firing finger outside the trigger guard . The thumb around the opposite side of the pistol. The non firing hand is wrapped with the four finger wrapped around and stacked over the three fingers of the firing hand with the same amount of pressure as the firing hand. The thumb of the non firing hand is pointed forward along side the firing hand thumb. Pressure is front to back on the grips not side to side. Wrist is straight with firing side elbow straight but not locked. The non firing elbow is slightly more bent than the firing elbow. **Warning do not place the non-firing thumb in the path of the slide an injury will result.**

**Stance** : The feet are about shoulder width apart with the non firing foot slightly in front , similar to a boxers stance with your knees bent to get a good center of balance. Bring the pistol up to your eye level do not drop your head to the level of the pistol. Lean slightly forward. Now combine the grip you just learned with the stance. Dry fire a few times.

**New shooters will load one round at a time until they are sure of their ability to keep good muzzle control instructors will work closely with new shooters others may fire five rounds**

2. **Sight alignment:** Sight alignment is the centering of the front sight blade in the rear sight notch. The top of the front sight is level with the top of the rear sight and is in correct alignment with the eye. For correct sight alignment the firer must center the front sight in the rear sight. Raise and lower the top of the front sight so that it is level with the top of the rear sight . Sight alignment is essential for accuracy because of the short sight radius of the pistol. 1/10th inch error in sight alignment front or rear will cause a miss of 15 inches at 25 yards. Sight placement is positioning of the pistols sight on the target Center mass of the target is the correct aiming point. The eye should focus on the front sight. The target and rear sight will remain fuzzy. There will be some

moment of the pistol when aiming this called the wobble area, this is a natural movement , the firer most minimize this movement.

### Shooters load and fire 5 rounds

**3. Trigger control :** Trigger control is the independent movement of the trigger finger in applying increasing pressure on the trigger straight to the rear without disturbing the sight picture until the pistol fires. Semi auto shooters place the middle of your trigger finger on the lower middle of the trigger. Press the trigger and hold ,only release the trigger enough to reset . Then follow up with your next shot if needed. Revolver shooter if firing single action use the same method as semi auto shooters ,if firing double action put the first joint of your finger on the trigger. Revolvers will not need to reset their triggers. Follow through is the continued effort of the firer to maintain sight alignment before , during and after the round is fired. The firer must continue the the rearward movement of the finger after the round has been fired. Releasing the trigger too soon after the round is fired results in an uncontrolled shot, causing a missed target. A press of the trigger is all that is needed ,remember to follow through.

### Shooters then fire 5 rounds

## 4. Six steps to firing a shot

The Six Steps

1. Sight ALIGNMENT
2. Sight PICTURE
3. Respiratory PAUSE
- 4a. Focus your EYE on the FRONT SIGHT
- 4b. Focus your MIND on KEEPING the front sight on the TARGET
5. **PRESS** the trigger
6. Follow Through:  
Hold the trigger back

Take a “MENTAL SNAPSHOT” of where the front sight was when the round went off.

Remember to Hold the trigger to the rear and let off the trigger just enough to reset the trigger for the next shot.

Have students Dry fire practicing the 6 steps

Fire five rounds

**5. Magazine change.** After firing when the current Magazine is empty the slide is usually locked to the rear most position push the mag release to allow the mag to drop free of the pistol and insert a fresh mag putting the flat surface on the rear of the mag against the flat surface on the rear of the mag well with your index finger in front of the mag pointing up toward the first round in the magazine . Push the mag up until it clicks into place then with the palm of the same hand slap the bottom of the mag to make sure it is seated into place. Then with the hand that inserted the mag place the palm over the top of the slide and push the slide to the rear and release it. The slide will move forward and chamber the first round and is ready to fire as soon as the non firing hand is in position on the pistol. Do this step slow **Load the next 2 mags with 2 and 3 rounds for a total of 5 shots.**

6. Practice Mag changes a few more times

**7. Stoppages: Stove pipe :** The fired round has partially ejected from the pistol and is sticking out of the chamber like a stove stack. To clear this type of jam simply pull the slide to the rear and rotate the pistol so the empty round falls out of the chamber , observe the empty brass fall to the ground and release the slide and continue firing. Or use the sweep method to clear the brass by sweeping your hand over the brass as you reach over the top of the slide and pull it to the rear. **Instructors will setup a stove pipe malfunction in the shooters pistol (semi autos) shooters will clear and fire 3 rounds**

**Double feed** : usually the slide will be partly open and not in battery the trigger is dead. Lock the slide back. Remove the magazine and place it under your pinky finger of the firing hand if your going to reload that magazine or place it in a pocket. Pull the slide to the rear three times in rapidly reinsert the magazine pull the slide to the rear and continue firing.

**Failure to fire:** Trigger is pressed hammer falls and nothing happens. Slide is forward. Tap the bottom of the magazine , pull the slide to the rear. Press trigger and attempt to fire if needed. **Slide is pulled to the rear and released an empty magazine is placed in the pistol.**

**8. Presentation from the holster** : We teach the Israeli method of holster draw. The pistol is in the holster with the magazine in the magazine well but on round in the chamber , hammer is down safety off. There are 5 steps to presenting the pistol (drawing)

Step 1: The firing hand grasps the pistol grip with the trigger finger straight along side the frame. The non-firing hand moves to the chest area to keep out of the line of fire.

Step 2: The pistol is lifted up until it clears the top of the holster the trigger finger is straight along the frame and not on the trigger.

Step 3: The firing side elbow is lowered and the muzzle is rotated directly toward the target. Finger is straight non-firing hand on the chest.

Step 4: The pistol is moved up in front of the face and tilted so the chamber area is visible the non-firing hand moves over the top of the pistol and slaps the slide to the rear chambering a round . The non-firing hand then moves to the support side and the pistol is pushed forward toward the target As you acquire the sights.

Step 5: Bring the pistol into the firing position and press the trigger to fire a shot if necessary.

To re-holster clear the pistol : remove the magazine ,pull the slide to the rear and visually check the chamber . Place the magazine in your pocket ,then a quike chamber check and do steps 3,2,1, turning the head and checking that the holster is clear . Remember to keep the trigger finger out of the trigger

guard and straight along the frame of the pistol. Students are to dry fire this by the numbers until the Line boss is satisfied that there will be no problems. Then have the students shoot one magazine until they are proficient then go to multiple magazines.

**Ball and Dummy:** Ball and Dummy is an exercise in which the shooters work in pairs: a shooter and a coach. The coach will prepare the shooter's pistol in a manner such that the shooter does not know if a live round or an empty chamber is available to him. The coach will observe the shooter carefully to see what errors he may make. Two magazines and five loose rounds of ammunition will be used and should be brought to the line. The coach will prep one magazine with only one round while the other magazine is to remain empty. The coach will arbitrarily load one of the magazines into the pistol and actuate the slide while the shooter closes his eyes and turns his head so he doesn't know how the pistol is prepared. If the coach isn't familiar with the shooter's pistol, he should inquire how it operates. In order for the coach to perform his job properly, he must stand on the firing side of the shooter to observe if he blinks his eyes, drags wood, flinches, bucks his wrist, fails to hold the trigger back, jerks the trigger, or any of the other many errors possible. These errors should immediately be discussed with the shooter. During this process, the coach should pull his cap over his eyes or position himself, or his hand, to shield his face from the ejected brass. It is the coach's job to fool the shooter, to the best of his ability, so that the shooter does not know whether he has a live round or a dummy in his pistol. It will be easy to spot some errors when dummy rounds are used.

If an error is detected, it is preferable to continue with dummies until the error is corrected. The coach should learn as much from this exercise as the shooter. The instructors should monitor the line during this exercise to point out errors which the coaches miss.

This exercise will continue until the five live rounds are fired, then the shooter and coach will change positions. A method to enhance the process is for the coach to draw a square on a piece of paper and insist that the shooter call the shot for each live round fired. The coach will then mark this location on the paper and have the shooter compare this with his target when they proceed down range. This procedure can be enhanced if each round is fired at separate one inch square on the one inch squares target sheet. And further, if the called shots are marked on a separate one inch square target sheet. Then it is easy to evaluate how each individual shot was called. Clear and re-holster pistols

**Calling the shot:** To call the shot state where the bullet will impact the target the instant the pistol fires. For example, High, a little low, five o'clock. If the firer calls their shot incorrectly in range fire they are failing to concentrate on

sight alignment and trigger press. As the pistol fires the firer does not know where the sight picture is. Load two magazines 2 and 3.



**Controlled pairs:** Controlled pairs or slow double taps is used to stop a threat. Often in the confusion of the moment you don't know if the first round struck the target or not so you fire twice. If the threat continues you fire two more rounds until the threat is over.

**Load magazines 5 and 5**

**. Multiple Target engagement:** using a controlled draw shoot two rounds in your target and two in the one to the right of you. Instructors may need to point out targets. Load magazines 5 and 5

**Shoot this drill again**

**Move to 25 Yard line and shoot targets at a slow pace using the six steps to firing a shot, proper trigger control and breathing**

**Prep mags 5 and 5**

**Shoot this drill again until shooters improve, instructors should be engaged with students**

**After action drills: To break target fixation and look for other threats look both ways with pistol at the ready position. After looking both right and left look over both shoulders and check pistol condition reload if needed.**

**Teach the kneeling position or sitting if the student can't kneel and shoot. The kneeling is one knee on the ground the other knee up in about a 90 degree position with the non firing elbow just forward of the knee cap ,no bone to bone contact.**

**The PQT is subject to change until we get a course worked out we are working on Pistol patches too**

**Shoot a PQT : Pistol Qualification Test**

**Army qualification w/ the M9 is 40rds total, shot @ 25 to 7 meters onto a silhouette target.**

**10 standing @25 yards, 2Min.**

**10 kneeling or sitting @25yards 2Min.**

**10Rds two mags 20 seconds Standing @25 yards**

**10 rds. 5 and 5 7 Yards 12sec**

**Take your total score divided by .8 = score**

**If shooting .22 score divided by .9 = score**

**210 or better = pistol patch**

**shoot a Red Coat target: 13 rounds for the last target of the day.**

I have been having the Pistolseed as a one day event to keep from taking too much instructor time away from Appelseed . One day is plenty of time to conduct a basic pistol course , stress to the students to practice what they have been taught by going slow and smooth rather than fast and clumsy. I have done a few two day Pistolseeds and they can work well too as long as the students are not too tired and can focus. Good Luck and Thank You. Steve