



**NATIONAL RIFLE  
ASSOCIATION**

# **Probationary Training Manual**

**Pre Course essential reading material for:**

# **MODULE 1**

## Bisley General Information

The Probationary Course is designed so that your tuition is constantly assessed and evaluated by the Instructor Team. They are there to help you through the course and always remember, there are **NO SILLY QUESTIONS** so please do not be reticent about asking. If you're thinking it, there's bound to be another student on the course who is thinking the same thing.

## The National Rifle Association

The **National Rifle Association (NRA)** is the National Governing Body (NGB) for full bore rifle and pistol shooting sports in the UK and is in fact also the largest Home Office Approved Club in the UK with numbers in excess of 10,000.

Registered as a United Kingdom charity, its objectives are to "***promote and encourage marksmanship throughout the King's dominions in the interest of defence and the permanence of the volunteer and auxiliary forces, naval, military and air.***"

The formal purposes of the charity are to promote the efficiency of the armed forces of the Crown, or the police, fire and rescue or ambulance services.

The National Shooting Centre at Bisley is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the association.

The NRA was founded in 1859, 12 years BEFORE its American namesake and was originally located on Wimbledon Common, running along Parkside.

In 1890, the NRA re-located to the current venue at Bisley and this is when Queen Victoria granted the NRA a royal charter of incorporation.

There are also a large number of affiliated clubs who also use the ranges at Bisley on a regular basis, and although they may not have been through the same Probationary Course as you are doing, the standards of training are just as high.

The NRA boasts a very well stocked Armoury so once you have completed your training with us and have been issued your Full Membership and Shooter Certification Card (SCC), you will be able to rent firearms and purchase ammunition for use on the ranges.

There are a large number of ranges located at Bisley, ranging from 25 to 1200 yards and you will be allowed unaccompanied, unsupervised use of them all.

## About the Course

The NRA Probationary Course was originally developed from a UK Police Firearms Course which used the FBI Training Course structure as its source. It is a tried and tested format using rapid progression in firearms usage that makes the Probationary Course a very successful one.

The course structure spans 4 days of training both in the classroom and on the ranges with regular passive assessments carried out on your growing knowledge to reinforce any shortfalls you may encounter.

The afternoon of the fourth day is an assessment day and the Instructors will be testing you on various handling, range protocols and safety factors. This is to ensure that when you first arrive as a shooter on a range, your fellow shooters feel assured that you are in all respects a competent and safe person with firearms.

Your Instructors will verbally test you at the end of each day to ensure the information taught so far has been absorbed and if necessary, will assist you to ensure you are ready to progress.

## About the Course - (continued)

A word of caution though, if an Instructor doesn't feel you are ready to progress, they will first talk to you about repeating the particular day with the Lead Instructor/Chief Instructor or National Training Manager present for advice. Remember, it's not a "naughty step" it's so we are confident you can move forward comfortably and you don't get into the embarrassing situation of feeling lost in the next piece of training as it will have a cumulative effect.

Days 5 & 6 are designed to prepare you for the next step which is "leaving the nest" so to speak and acquitting yourself safely on the ranges.

Day 5 is all about shooting at ranges longer than 100 yards using scoped 7.62, Enfield .303 rifles and the AR15 straight pull in 5.56mm. For more information on these platforms, please consult the relevant sections at the back of this manual, but your Instructor team will give you a briefing about them before going out on the range.

Day 6 is conducted on short ranges of 50 yards and less and is designed to give you a little informal exposure to competition shooting. You will be using .22 LR semi auto rifles but this time they are equipped with red dot sights which your Instructors will show you prior to your range visit. For more information on this optic, please consult the section in this manual.

Upon successful completion of each Module, this book will be endorsed by the Instructor team so remember to bring it!

Each morning, you will be asked by the Lead Instructor for a verbal declaration. It covers:

- Any Ammunition?
- Anybody suffering from the effects of drink or drugs?

We require that you confirm with the Lead Instructor a negative in each case.

## Why?

### Ammunition

There will be firearms in the classroom throughout the course and you will be instructed in their use, including handling skills, loading, unloading and making ready. You will be divided into small groups of up to 4 with an assigned Instructor. The firearms will all have been checked and examined by the Instructor first, which they will then ask you to verify.

Don't worry if you don't know what to look for as the Instructor will detail this inspection process for you during the demonstration.

There will NEVER be any ammunition in the training rooms though for one simple reason. It's **DANGEROUS!**

### Drink/Drugs

You will agree that alcohol and firearms are literally a dangerous mix and we, as well as all other shooters, have a zero tolerance policy to it. In the future you might encounter someone who you suspect may be under the influence of either drink or drugs and you are duty bound to contact the Range Office as soon as you can so the duty staff member may then take action.

Illegal drugs have a similar effect too and, you should treat them in the same way.

### But...

## About the Course - (continued)

There are incidences when drink or drug use has been suspected in the past and the root cause has turned out to be a lack of taking the appropriate medication on the part of the person under suspicion.

An example would be a person with Type 2 Diabetes who has not had an Insulin shot and who subsequently exhibits all the hallmarks of being under the influence of something.

This example by no means affects everybody as there are many Insulin dependent people who do not exhibit these symptoms at all.

Hay fever sufferers require taking antihistamines to help alleviate their symptoms and sometimes it can make the sufferer appear drowsy.

Auto Brewery Syndrome is a classic issue as the sufferer smells of alcohol but has not been anywhere near drink of any kind.

Sometimes, a carefully chosen observation might be all that's needed as a form of reminder.

## Final Test

There's always a test...

The Probationary test is a 40 question multiple choice one. It is "**closed book**" meaning you should already be able to answer all the questions without help. The Instructors will talk you through this as you progress through the course but bear in mind there is a pass mark that has to be achieved. If for some reason you fail the test, the Lead Instructor or Chief Instructor will talk you through any remedial actions you are required to take in order to re-sit the test.

If you have dyslexia (or similar), please don't hide it but let an Instructor know and the team can take appropriate action to ensure you have a fighting chance with the test.

## A note on dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia

If you suffer from any of the above, **DON'T WORRY!** There's an exceptionally high chance that a good number of your fellow students have the condition too.

AND...

There are a number of Instructors you will meet on the course who have the same condition. Don't hide it but speak to an Instructor at a suitable moment so that the team are aware.

## Guest Days

If you have an acquaintance that wishes to get into shooting, you can invite them to special days registered as “Guest Days”. Your guest will have to submit what is known as a Declaration 21 which is a declaration from them that they are not prohibited in any way to be in contact with firearms. You can hire firearms from the NRA for this purpose if you do not possess firearms of your own.

What you cannot do though, is invite a friend down to Bisley to “have a go”. The last thing you want to do is get in trouble before you’ve even started your shooting career!

## Rules & Regulations

As you would imagine, shooting in the UK is very heavily regulated and as a result, we have to ensure that we are all abiding by those rules and regulations that govern the continued safety of our sport.

The Rules & Regulations are published by the National Shooting Centre which is responsible for the operation of all Bisley Ranges and governs the safe conduct of all shooting on those Ranges.

You will receive a pamphlet containing the latest Bisley Rules and Regulations upon your arrival on Day 1. They are also available from:

## Bisley Bible

This will have been handed to you as part of your Day 1 package. It contains all the rules and regulations relevant to Bisley at the front of the book. The main body is dedicated to the individual rules governing all the competitions shot at Bisley.

## NRA/NSC Website

Those same rules and regulations are also available for download on the NRA’s website. They are in PDF format and are updated in some cases, several times a year.

## Range Office

They are also printed and pinned to the wall in the Bisley Range Office for you to look at.

It’s a very good idea to acquaint yourself with the rules and regulations. There is nothing worse than starting your shooting career on a bad note. Many of them will probably not make much sense to begin with but as you progress through the course, they will be explained.

Remember though, these rules & regulations also apply to everybody else (with the exception of HM Armed Forces & Government Agencies who have their own NSC approved procedures) on the ranges so if you see something being done that you feel uneasy about, report it to Range Control. It might be nothing, and there again...

# Safe Shooting System

This section is all about safety. Shooting in the UK is a sport just like any other and it is meant to be **fun**.

## But...

Due to the nature of the sport, we have to maintain our absolute maximum attention to safety and not let complacency creep in.

At the NRA, we abide by our Safe Shooting System and our 4 Safety Rules.

The Ministry of Defence requires all civilian organisations using military ranges to have an auditable system of training based on a specific risk assessment. In response, the NRA has developed a Safe Shooting System (SSS) which has been approved by the MoD, and was introduced in April 2008. Civilian shooters must also possess a current Shooter Certification Card (SCC) signed by their club chairman.

## Safe Person

A safe person is competent in the use of firearms and ammunition and demonstrates that capability at all times. The NRA Shooter Certification Card system is one example of an auditable record that the responsible officer of the club, normally the Chairman, has satisfied himself that, at the time of certification, the shooter has the ability to use firearms and ammunition safely. The NRA Probationary Course provides such training.

## Safe Equipment

The individual shooter is responsible for ensuring:

- that the chosen firearm is serviceable and properly maintained
- that the ammunition employed in combination with the firearm results in performance within muzzle velocity (MV) and muzzle energy (ME) restrictions for the range
- that the combination of firearm and ammunition is safe and suitable for the circumstances in which it is being used

## Safe Practice

Range Safety Officers (RSOs) and Range Conducting Officers (RCOs) are responsible for the safe running of ranges. Additional qualifications are required if pistols, moving targets, target shotguns, muzzle loading firearms, firearm/ammunition combinations developing a ME greater than 4500 Joules or event-specific courses of fire are being used. The NRA Rules of Shooting contain regulations detailing the conduct of shooting for each of its disciplines.

## Safe Place

A safe place is one in which the controls that are necessary to enable shooting to be conducted safely have been identified by a site specific risk assessment and implemented through Range Standing Orders (RSO). All ranges should have site specific Range Orders (RO) which must be complied with at all times. It is one of the responsibilities of the RCO/RSO to ensure compliance by shooters under his control. Ranges must be maintained regularly and subject to regular inspection.

Of these 4 elements, the most important and controlling factor is the **SAFE PERSON**.

The second set of safety rules are listed at the beginning of the Manual but we will also list them again next with an explanation. Your Instructors will also cover them in detail in the classroom.

## The 4 Safety Rules

Accompanying the NRA Safe Shooting System, we have 4 Safety Rules which, if you follow them, will endeavour to make your shooting now and in the future as safe as possible. Commit them to memory! They are:

1	<b>ALWAYS PROVE A FIREARM IS UNLOADED WHENEVER YOU PICK IT UP, OR HAND IT TO ANYONE, OR TAKE IT FROM ANYONE</b>	It is essential that the condition of a firearm (whether or not it is loaded) is known when being handled. <b>Always assume that a firearm is loaded until proved otherwise.</b> Unless the firearm is being fired on a range, it must never be loaded and must be seen to be unloaded and safe.
2	<b>ALWAYS POINT THE FIREARM AT YOUR TARGET</b>	<b>Directional control of a firearm is absolutely essential</b> , and the only direction acceptable is toward your target from the firing point designated. The design and construction of most outdoor ranges is such that <b>the ability of the range to contain bullets is determined by the fact that they must be fired in a specific direction from any particular firing point.</b> If they are fired at an angle of elevation or azimuth which exceeds these limits the bullet may well travel beyond the range boundary.
3	<b>NEVER PLACE YOUR FINGER ON THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOU ARE READY TO SHOOT</b>	This rule doesn't mean that the gun has to be carefully aimed at the target before the finger can be placed on the trigger, rather that the finger can be placed on the trigger when the firearm is in the shooting position pointing towards the target but before being carefully aimed.
4	<b>NEVER POINT A FIREARM AT ANYONE</b>	This means <b>NEVER</b> point a firearm at anybody as a result of horseplay, joking, lack of discipline or lack of thought. There are, of course, some perfectly legitimate exceptions, such as these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An instructor checking a student's eye alignment with the sights, under strictly controlled conditions</li><li>• Visually checking the bore from the muzzle end for obstructions or condition, on firearms such as the Ruger 10/22, where it is not possible to look through the barrel from the receiver end</li><li>• Using a pull-through to clean the barrel – the gun is pointing straight at your hand or head.</li></ul>

They are known as “**The 4 Safety Rules**” and on day 1, your Instructors will go through them in more detail but as you can see, they’re fairly self-evident.

One look at some of the horrors that abound on social media sites is clear evidence of shocking handling errors that would have been avoided if those persons had just abided by these 4 Safety Rules.

Abiding by the NRA Safe Shooting System and these 4 Safety rules should ensure your shooting career will be a long, safe and happy one.

# Muzzle Awareness

## What is muzzle awareness?

Muzzle awareness is always being aware of, and paying attention to, where the barrel is pointing when the firearm is either being handled or when it has been set aside. The end of the barrel (muzzle) should always be pointing in a **SAFE** direction, **ALWAYS**.

If a firearm is pointed at you, your natural reaction would be one of self-preservation and you will move out of the line the firearm is pointing. Nobody likes to be staring down the barrel of a firearm!

## Normal Safety Procedures or NSP's

Before reading this section, refer to Safety Rule No 1. Which is:

**ALWAYS PROVE A FIREARM IS UNLOADED WHENEVER YOU PICK IT UP,  
OR HAND IT TO ANYONE, OR TAKE IT FROM ANYONE**

Normal Safety Procedures are a 3 fold checking process (after removing the magazine if fitted) that you want to repeat twice to absolutely, totally and utterly confirm to both yourself and others present that the firearm you are using **OR** are about to use is **SAFE!**

Let's break them down into the constituent parts using the Ruger 10/22 as an example. They apply equally if you're starting shooting as well as finishing.

1a <b>REMOVE THE MAGAZINE...</b>		3 <b>INSPECT THE CHAMBER – CLEAR OF ANY CARTRIDGE?</b>	
1b <b>...FROM THE MAGAZINE WELL</b>		4 <b>INSPECT THE MAGAZINE WELL – NOTHING PRESENT?</b>	
2 <b>LOCK BACK THE BOLT</b>		5 <b>INSPECT THE BOLT FACE – CLEAR OF ANY CARTRIDGE?</b>	
6 <b>Repeat steps 3,4 &amp; 5</b>			

## Normal Safety Procedures or NSP's (continued)

During the initial walk through, the Instructor will point out all the working parts and their methods of operation. They will explain how the mechanism operates and how to load and unload. They will also describe the NSP process which is also known as a "show clear".

The walk through will concentrate on the Ruger 10/22 .22LR semi-auto and the Marlin .357 Magnum Lever Action

### Your 1<sup>st</sup> Range Visit

This first range visit is purely to get used to firing real firearms (if you've not done so before) and you will not be asked to go through the NSP's yet. That will come later. This session is not about who can drill the smallest group into a target but getting used to firearms, building confidence and feeling comfortable.

Depending on conditions, you will be using the .22 LR from the Ruger and the .357 Marlin (see the next section on Ammunition).

At this stage, your Instructor will not be critical of how you shoot but obviously will stop you if there is a potentially dangerous situation brewing.

We will introduce a couple of what are known as range commands. There is a full section on Ranges as part of Day 3 though.

<b>STOP! STOP! STOP!</b>	A shouted command that means... <b>STOP!</b> If you hear it – <b>FREEZE</b> . The only thing the Instructor wants to see moving is your finger coming off the trigger – <b>DO NOTHING ELSE!</b>
<b>EYES &amp; EARS OR ADJUST YOUR MUFFS AND GLASSES</b>	Always ensure that prior to walking onto any range, you put your hearing protection on. On some ranges we also insist you wear protective eyewear. These items are issued to you as part of your Day 1 pack
<b>* MISFIRE</b>	A misfire is exactly as you would think, you pull the trigger and the firearm goes "click" instead of "BANG!" Misfires can occur with rimfire ammunition and the Instructor will tell you prior to your first range visit to just keep the firearm pointed downrange and they will sort out the issue for you
<b>LOAD</b>	Means insert a loaded magazine into the magazine well
<b>MAKE READY</b>	Point the firearm at the target and rack the action. The Instructor will do this for you at this stage but you will do it in the PM range session
<b>UNLOAD</b>	Means do this in the following order: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Keep the firearm pointing at the target at all times!</li><li>2. Remove the magazine</li><li>3. Lock the bolt back</li><li>4. Do your NSP's (previous section)</li><li>5. Show the firearm to the Instructor (remembering your muzzle awareness!)</li></ol>
<b>BENCH FIREARM</b>	Exactly that, just lay the firearm down on the table with the muzzle pointing towards your target with the action open and facing upwards.

## Firearms and Ammunition

It's important to know the locking mechanism is robust enough to ensure the bolt continues to be locked during firing because in a full bore rifle like a .308, there is approximately 21 tons per square inch of pressure only a few inches away from your head.

**21 Tons per sq. inch = 47,040 PSI = 3243 BAR = Lots!**

That's a lot of pressure.

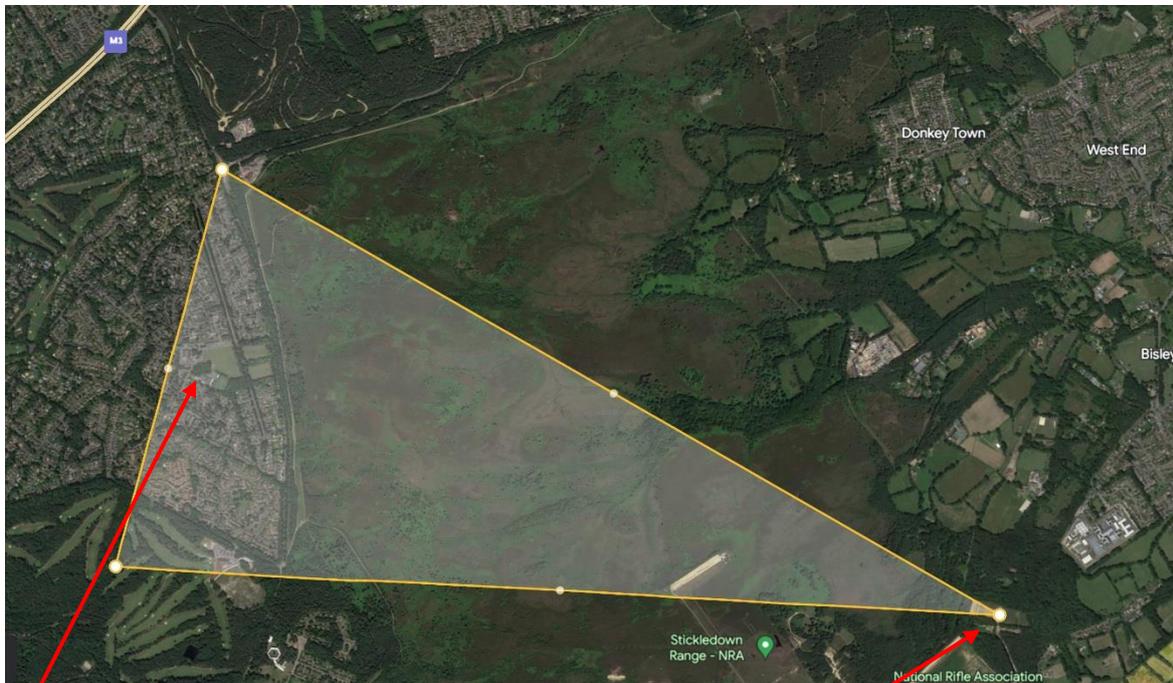
You will find variations on a theme with firearms and high pressure cartridges. They all employ the same style of lug system though with 2 or more.

Here is a statistic that you should always remember when it comes to safely handling firearms. How far the bullet will travel if you accidentally fire it when the firearm is pointing approximately 30 degrees off the horizontal:

Calibre	Distance <b>IN MILES!</b>
.22 LR	Approx <b>1 MILE</b>
.38 / .357 mag	Approx <b>1 MILE</b>
5.56	Approx <b>2 ½ MILES</b>
.308/7.62	Approx <b>2 ½ MILES</b>

If you fire a .22 on the Winans range over the backstop at an angle off the target line, it **WILL** reach houses outside the danger area in Bisley town. Similarly, the danger area beyond the butts on Short Siberia Range is approximately 2 miles then it is Camberley...

Below is a basic graphic of where a full bore rifle bullet will go if fired from approximately 30 degrees from the 100 yard firing point on Short Siberia.



Camberley (people)

Short Siberia Range

Always remember that a bullet fired from a firearm YOU are using is your responsibility until it comes to a complete stop in the **SAND BEHIND THE TARGET!**

## Ammunition (continued)

To fire a round of ammunition, the primer has to be struck by the firing pin. There are two forms of case incorporating a primer, they are either Rimfire (**RF**) or Centrefire (**CF**).

A CF cartridge is initiated by a separate primer cap which is press fitted into the base of the centre of the case.



An RF cartridge is initiated by being struck anywhere on the rim of the case.

You can see that the instant benefit of CF over RF is the primer is a separate entity on the CF case and can be pushed out and the case recycled, thus allowing the user to build a fresh round of ammunition whereas the RF case is essentially 1 shot and disposed of. It is extremely difficult to accidentally have a CF round of ammunition go off outside a firearm as a result of dropping, but on the other hand it is extremely easy (and unlucky) to accidentally initiate a RF round because the rim is effectively exposed.

# Principals of Marksmanship

There are four Principles of Marksmanship and they are:

What	Definition	Explanation
Position & Hold	<b>“The shooting position and hold must be firm enough to support the rifle”</b>	a good relaxed grip of the firearm using the body’s natural support
Natural Alignment	<b>“The rifle must point naturally at the target without any undue physical effort”</b>	the rifle should naturally point at the target using the body’s bone structure and not held onto the target by applying undue physical force
Sight Picture	<b>“Sight alignment and sight picture must be correct”</b>	<b>For iron sights :</b> the foresight must be in the centre of rear sight aperture (more on Day 3). <b>For Scoped sights :</b> The sight picture should be clear and distinct (more on Day 2)
Shot release & follow through	<b>“The shot must be released and followed through without undue disturbance to the position”</b>	Remember: Controlled breathing & trigger pressure then observation of the new position of the firearm to confirm your <b>Position and Hold</b> & your <b>Natural Alignment</b> .

## Position & Hold

Remember: **“The shooting position and hold must be firm enough to support the rifle”**

Day 1 is all about shooting from a standing position with a firearm unsupported by any other aid (bench etc) so it’s very important that you are as comfortable as possible. Straining to get comfortable with a firearm will distract even the strongest person, and because of this, their thoughts will be drawn away from concentrating on the job at hand – shooting accurately, and they will be fretting about the pain developing in their shoulders/back/arm/anywhere else.

The main thing to remember about using any firearm is:

**The firearm should always fit around you, not you around the firearm.**

## Natural Alignment

Remember: **“The rifle must point naturally at the target without any undue physical effort”**

## Sight Picture

Remember: **“Sight alignment and sight picture must be correct”**

On day 1 you will be using open sighted firearms and although rudimentary, they are still accurate enough to shoot a small group. The sight picture for iron or open sights consists of lining up the rear sight with the foresight, on the target.

## Shot release & follow through

Remember: **“The shot must be released and followed through without undue disturbance to the position”**

Shot release: A good, controlled trigger pull is absolutely essential to accurate shooting. Yanking away or flicking it will only ensure your grouping suffers.

The trigger pull should be a slow but measured increase in pressure directly backwards, not angled across the firearm. The contact patch of your finger should be the soft part of the tip of your finger on the trigger, just forward of the last joint.

**This is just a preliminary read through for your information and everything detailed above will be explained in greater detail, both in the classroom and on the ranges. Enjoy the course!**