

St. Joseph County Conservation & Sportsman Club Inc.

Affiliated with the Michigan United Conservation Clubs

23640 Featherstone Road, P.O. Box 339 Sturgis, MI 49091

(269) 467-7128

www.conservationclub.us

Dear New Member,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself, I would like to welcome you as a member of the St. Joseph County Conservation & Sportsman Club.

We hope that you will value your membership. We are looking forward to meeting you and working with you in the future. **Remember, your membership is worth only what you choose to put into it.** Our club is a volunteer organization and we ask that you donate some of your time each year to assist the club in our many activities. Without every member's help, the club will cease to exist in its present form.

We are pleased to present you with this "New Member Packet" and your membership card. This card is permanent (same card every year), and you will need to have it with you to get into the gate. You will also find a copy of the St. Joe County Conservation & Sportsman Club Constitution and By-laws, and Ground Rules. Please read them carefully. If you have any questions you can contact any board member for clarification.

I have also included two membership applications for you to give to friends. If you need additional applications contact me at 269-467-7989 and I will send more out to you.

Again, welcome to our club and we hope to see you at our membership meetings held the second Monday of March, June, September and December at 7:00 p.m. (You are always welcome to attend our Board Meetings also, held on the last Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.)

Sincerely,

Kathy Crandall

Kathy Crandall (Executive Secretary)

St. Joseph County Conservation & Sportsman Club Inc.

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Ground Rules

AUTHORITY: The Board of Directors

PURPOSE: The following rules and regulations are established to insure the safety of our members and their guest, as well as the safety of your neighbors and the surrounding community.

ENFORCEMENT: All members are required to enforce these rules. All members in good standing are expected to politely point out to anyone in violation of these rules, the nature of the violation, and request that they stop. They shall report the incident along with the violator's name to an Activity Director or Board Member for review.

PENALTY: The Board of Directors will review all reports of violations and after meeting with the member or members in question, will take one of the following actions:

1. No Action
2. Written Reprimand
3. Temporary Suspension of membership
4. Expulsion from the club

SHOOTING RANGES USAGE: Eye and ear protection mandatory

Trap, Skeet & Sporting Clay: Shotguns -- no slug or shot larger than 6

Cowboy Ranges: no shot larger than 7 ½.

Lower Range: Center fire and Rim fire rifles and handguns, Black powder rifles and handguns, and shotguns

ARCHERY RANGE: No firearms, eye protection

Note: No full auto firearms permitted on any range

RULES:

1. A member in good standing can use the club's ranges during daylight hours (or after 8am).
2. A member may invite a reasonable number of guests to shoot with them. He/She will be responsible for their actions.
3. A member must supervise their guest and/or relative under the age of 18 years.
4. A member shall abide by the rules of gun safety and co-operate with Range Officers.
5. A member or group wanting to use the club facilities for any special events must clear it with the Board of Directors
6. A member may rent the club facilities for family gathering, etc. after one year of membership.
7. Everyone is expected to clean up.
8. No hunting or trapping on club grounds. Or malicious killing of non-threatening wildlife
9. The control of our club grounds is the gate. Be sure it closes behind you. On days of scheduled events the event coordinator will be responsible for the gate.
10. No alcohol and/or drugs shall be used during shooting events or while handling guns.
11. On the days of sanctioned matches, other events or work bees, there will be no shooting except for match competitors. All scheduled use of any range shall take precedence over individual or personal activities.
12. A member must politely and positively respond when corrected concerning a violation of club rules.
13. Members/Shooter must follow the rules and safety precautions of their regulatory sanctioning body (such as ATA for trap, NSSA for skeet, IHMSA, IDPA, SASS for cowboy action shooting NRA, etc). A copy of these can be obtained from an Activity Director or the Executive Secretary.
14. Members must carry their membership card on their person, and be prepared to show it on request by a club official or member. Your gate/key card IS your membership card. You can't get in without it!
15. While on club grounds, all guns shall be unloaded, magazines out and pointed in a safe direction, especially while behind the firing line or in the clubhouse. Handguns may be holstered if unloaded. **Exemption:** Persons holding a valid Concealed Carry Permit may carry a handgun in accordance with their permit, concealed on or about their body while on club grounds. No loaded handgun will be removed from its place of concealment unless that person is on the Lower Range firing line facing down range.
16. Load gun on firing line only and keep them pointed safely down range. Guns shall not be loaded with people down range.
17. No one shall go down range until all guns are unloaded and the line is called safe.
18. While using the lower range(s) raise flag while shooting, lower when finished. Flag is located at the entrance to the lower range(s) on top of the hill.

St. Joseph County Conservation and Sportsman Club accepts no liability for injury, theft or property damage involving members, guest, competitors or spectators at the outdoor or indoor ranges.

NRA Rules: The Basics

- 1) Always keep the Gun Pointed in a Safe Direction (even if unloaded)**
- 2) Always keep your Finger off the Trigger until Ready to Shoot**
- 3) Always keep the Gun unloaded until Ready to Use**

When using or storing a gun, always follow these NRA rules:

- . Know your target and what is beyond**
- . Be sure the gun is safe to operate**
- . Know how to use the gun safely**
- . Use only the correct ammunition for your gun**
- . Wear eye and ear protection, as appropriate**
- . Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting**
- . Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons**
- . Be aware that certain types of guns and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions**

GENERAL RIFLE & PISTOL RANGE RULES

Always treat any gun as loaded.

Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

Always keep the gun unloaded and action open until ready to use.

Always know your target and what is beyond.

Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.

1. No alcoholic or mind-altering substance consumption allowed on the premises.
2. No firing or handling of any firearm while under the influence of alcohol or mind-altering substances, including prescription drugs.
3. Eye and Hearing protection is mandatory for everyone, including spectators.
4. The ranges are open to members and their guests only. Members may have a reasonable number of guests and are responsible for them and must remain with their guests.
5. Raise the range flag, at the entrance to the range road (top of hill), when the ranges are being used. Lower the flag when leaving the range IF no one else is on the lower ranges.
6. Firearms not in use must be unloaded with action open, pointing downrange or unloaded and cased. Loaded concealed handguns are permitted if person has valid CPL/CCW permit.
7. Firearms in use must be pointed downrange, below the berm and may only be loaded at the firing line.
8. Muzzles must be even with or beyond the firing line, which is the downrange edge of the concrete floor.
9. No loading, unloading, or dry-firing of firearms behind the firing line.
10. A request to go downrange MUST be confirmed by ALL shooters before ANYONE goes downrange. NO FIREARMS SHALL OR WILL BE HANDLED WHEN ANYONE IS DOWNRANGE.
11. No shooting before 8:00AM or after 9:00PM, except by Club BOD approval.
12. Reactive targets such as Tannerite, milk jugs, glass bottles, tin cans, bowling pins, steel spinners/rollers, etc. are not allowed.
13. Paper targets or non-reactive steel "gongs" are the only allowable targets. No steel targets should be shot closer than 10 yards.
14. Position your targets to ensure all rounds fired will impact the berm.
15. No fully automatic or burst fire allowed.

Be courteous to your fellow shooters! We are all in this together! Know where your fellow shooters are when the firing is in progress.

Please remove targets from target backers. Clean up casings of any type; brass casing may be deposited in the range brass bucket. All other spent casing types (aluminum, plastic, steel, other) should be deposited in trash barrels.

PLEASE do not place live ammo, even if damaged, in trash; leave any non-fired ammo, including dud .22 long rifle, in the brass bucket, Club workers will dispose of properly.

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RIFLE RANGE RULES

1. See the **General Rifle & Pistol Range Rules**.
2. When someone goes downrange (to set or review targets, etc.)
 - a. Verify that all firearms are unloaded, and action are open.
 - b. Turn on your range safety light switch (everyone who goes downrange, at least one switch for each shooting station.)
 - c. Verbally check with everyone on the firing line before anyone goes downrange. Call out **“ARE YOU CLEAR?”**
 - d. Do not handle firearms when anyone is downrange.
 - e. Step back behind the firing line when anyone is downrange.
3. When returning to the firing line:
 - a. Turn off your range safety light switch.
 - b. When the range safety lights go out (all switches are off), verify that everyone has returned.
 - c. To return to live fire, call out **“GOING HOT!”**
4. Personal defense handguns are to be fired on the pistol range. Handguns designed for hunting can be fired on the short-range, rifle range (25/50/100 yd). Pistol caliber carbine rifles may be fired on the short-range, rifle range.
5. Rifle caliber pistols without a brace must use the pistol range. Rifle caliber pistols which utilize a stabilizing brace may use the short-range rifle range (25/50/100 yd)
6. If the door between the short-range and the long-range (200/300 yd) is down, let your fellow shooters know that you are shooting on the other side of the door, (or open the door) especially from the outside short-range firing point. Check with them before going downrange.
7. If you are zeroing a rifle for the first time, your first shots **MUST** be fired at 25 yards. A rifle “zeroed” at 25 yards will be close to “zero” at 100 yards. A 100 yard zero is **REQUIRED** to use the long-range.
8. The short-range (25/50/100 yd) and the long-range (200/300yd) operate independently. Shooters on the short-range may continue to fire while people are downrange on the long-range and vice versa. Going down range is allowed, at your own peril.
9. Calling a **“CEASE FIRE”** stops firing on your side of the divider berm. If necessary, call a second **“CEASE FIRE”** to stop firing on the both sides.
10. Set your “line-of-fire” perpendicular to your target or as close as possible. Do not shoot diagonally across the range.
11. If you bring your own target stands, please remove the club’s target backer(s) from behind your targets so the backer(s) are not damaged by shoot-through, ricochets, misses, etc.
12. No shooting into the North-South divider berm except when necessary for a sanctioned event or match.

IMPORTANT!!!!!!

**WHEN SHOOTING FROM A WINDOW,
YOU MUST HAVE YOUR FIREARM MUZZLE BEYOND THE WINDOW FRAME!!!**

This helps prevent window damage!

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PISTOL RANGE RULES

13. See the **General Rifle & Pistol Range Rules**.
14. When someone goes downrange (to set or review targets, etc.)
 - a. Verify that all firearms are unloaded, and action are open.
 - b. Verbally check with everyone on the firing line before anyone goes downrange. Call out **“ARE YOU CLEAR?”**
 - c. Do not handle firearms when anyone is downrange.
 - d. Step back behind the firing line, when anyone is downrange.
15. When returning to the firing line:
 - a. To return to live fire, call out **“GOING HOT!”**
16. Use the window to communicate clearly between shooters in the enclosure and in the open parts of the range.
17. Personal defense handguns are to be fired on the pistol range. Handguns designed for hunting may be fired on the short-range rifle range (25/50/100 yd). Pistol caliber carbines or rifles may be fired on the pistol range. .22 Long Rifle caliber rifles may be used on the pistol range.
18. Rifle caliber pistols without a brace must use the pistol range. Rifle caliber pistols which utilize a stabilizing brace may use the short-range rifle range (25/50/100 yd)
19. Calling a **“CEASE FIRE”** stops firing immediately.
20. Set your “line-of-fire” perpendicular to your target or as close as possible. Do not shoot diagonally across the range.
21. If you bring your own target stands, please remove the club’s target backers from behind your targets so the backers are not damaged by shoot-through, ricochets, misses, etc.

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TRAP RANGE RULES

1. All trap help must have a flag or another warning device to warn of the trap boys exit from the trap house.
2. Trap personnel should be totally instructed in the potential danger of the trap (particularly the throwing arm).
3. Movement and exposure on adjacent traps should be kept to the minimum.
4. The practice of tracking targets behind a shooting squad is unsafe, disconcerting to the shooter, and is not permitted.
5. Avoid alcohol and drugs. Handling firearms while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs constitutes a criminal disregard for the safety of others. This rule shall be strictly complied with and shall apply to practice shooting as well as regular events.
6. In handicap there shall be no more than two yards difference between adjacent shooters in the squad, and no more than a total difference of three yards in a squad.
7. A gun which for any reason fails to fire as intended must be promptly opened without any determination by the referee of the cause of the failure to fire.
8. All guns must have the action opened and contain no live shell or empty shell at any time, except while the shooter is on the firing line. The gun's action may be closed when it is in a gun rack but it shall not contain a live shell or empty shell.
9. As a safety precaution, test shots will not be permitted, without permission of the puller, referee.
10. A contestant shall place a live shell in his / her gun only when at a firing point facing the traps. In singles shooting he / she may place only one live shell in his / her gun at a time and must remove it or the empty shell(s) before moving from one position to another. In doubles shooting he / she may place two live shells in his / her gun at a time and must remove both live shells and the empty shells before moving from one position to another. In changing from one position to another, the shooter shall not walk in front of the other competitors.
11. Snap caps or recoil reduction devices may be excluded from the above only if colored a safety orange as to permanently identify them as not being a live shell or empty shell.
12. All guns used by contestants must be so equipped and so used as not eject shells in a manner to substantially disturb or interfere with other contestants.
13. It is the shooter's responsibility and the club's responsibility to conduct a shoot in a safe manner.
14. It is the club's responsibility to remove any competitor who is conducting himself / herself in an unsafe manner.

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SKEET RANGE RULES

The safety of competitors, field personnel and spectators is of primary importance and requires continuous attention and self-discipline. On any part of club grounds, as well as on the shooting field, particular attention must be given to the safety procedures outlined in the following paragraphs and to other safe gun handling techniques. Caution must also be used in moving about the field and club grounds. Where self-discipline and attention to safety procedures is lacking, it is the duty of all club members and guest to enforce them.

1. Eye and Ear Protection.
2. No gun shall be loaded until the shooter is on the shooting station.
3. As a safety precaution, test shots will not be permitted without permission of the field referee.
4. The loaded gun shall be kept pointed in a direction that will not endanger the lives of shooters, field personnel or spectators.
5. When not on the shooting station, the gun shall be carried with breech open and empty. Pumps and automatics will have the bolt open. Fixed breech (double barrels including over-and-under's and side-by-sides) will be broken open.
6. When the shooter is on the shooting station and ready to shoot and a delay occurs, such as an equipment breakdown, the gun shall be opened and all shells extracted.
7. During the shooting of single targets, management may permit the loading of two shells. However, no one will be allowed to load two shells to shoot their last singles target on any station.
8. The loading of more than two shells in the gun shall not be allowed at any time.
9. A gun may not be used that will accept more than one gauge of shell at the same time.
10. A shooter will not be permitted to use a gun with a release-type trigger unless the referee and other members of the squad are notified.
11. Any shooter whose gun accidentally discharges twice within one round for mechanical reasons shall be required to change guns or, if time permits, have his/her gun repaired, before continuing to shoot the round or subsequent rounds.
12. When a shooter intentionally fires a second time at the same target, he/she shall be warned by the referee. The second time the shooter intentionally fires a second shot at the same target in any event, the penalty shall be automatic disqualification from the event.
13. The placement of markers other than those specified in the NSSA rulebook shall be deemed illegal.
14. No spectator shall be allowed on the skeet fields without the referee permission.

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BLACK POWDER MUZZLELOADER RULES

(LOWER RANGE) Pistol on Pistol, Rifle on Rifle

1. Never smoke while handling black powder or any type of gun powder.
2. Store powder in its original container. Never put powder or primers in a glass container.
3. Keep percussion caps away from powder.
4. Do not use steel spoons, measures, or funnels with black powder or its substitutes.
5. Avoid distractions when loading black powder guns.
6. Never load a muzzleloader directly from a powder source; always use a separate powder measure.
7. Always seat the ball or bullet firmly atop the powder when loading a muzzleloader.
8. Do not blow down the barrel of a black powder firearm.
9. Do not place a cap or prime the pan until ready to fire.

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COWBOY ACTION SHOOTING SAFETY PRACTICES

An expansion of SASS® safety practices dated April 2010

Our sport, by its very nature, has the potential to be dangerous and a serious accident can occur. Every participant in a Cowboy Action Shooting match is expected to be a safety officer. Each shooter's first responsibility is for his or her safe conduct, but all shooters are expected to remain alert for actions by others that are unsafe.

Any Range Officer or shooter may confront any participant about an observed unsafe situation, and it is expected the matter will quickly be corrected and not repeated. Any argument concerning the correction of a safety related matter can be expected to result in that shooter being ejected from the range.

Shooters shall adhere to the following safety guidelines:

1. Treat and respect every firearm at all times as if it were loaded.
2. Muzzle direction is important between, before, during, and after shooting a stage. A muzzle must not be allowed to "sweep" the other participants at any time. **Long guns will have their actions open with chambers and magazines empty and muzzles pointed in a safe direction when transported at a match.** Failure to manage safe muzzle direction is grounds for disqualification from the stage, and for repeated offenses, from the match.
3. All firearms will remain unloaded except when under the direct observation of a Range Officer on the firing line or in the loading area.
4. All loading and unloading will be conducted only in the designated areas. **NOTE:** Percussion revolver shooters must exercise care to ensure they maintain safe muzzle direction during loading and have fired or cleared all capped chambers prior to leaving the unloading area.
5. Six-guns are always loaded with only five rounds (five shooters with four), the hammer lowered and left resting on the empty chamber.
6. No cocked revolver may ever leave a shooter's hand.
7. Once a live round is placed under the hammer, the round must be expended. If the firearm is shot out of sequence, the shooter will receive a single procedural penalty. The shooter has the option of making the gun safe and moving to the correct position or restaging it. Shotguns may be opened and rounds removed or replaced without penalty.
8. The shooter shall not cock his revolver until the firearm is pointed safely down range. Any accidental or premature discharge of any firearm impacting within ten-feet of the shooter is unsafe and will result in disqualification from the stage or, if less than five-feet, from the match. Any accidental or premature discharge of any firearm resulting in a round leaving the range will result in a stage disqualification; second offense will result in a match disqualification. A second stage disqualification on the same day for either of the above violations shall result in the shooter's ejection from the match. A safe practice is to develop the habit of cocking handguns with the "weak" or off-hand after the gun has cleared leather and is pointed safely down range.
9. Rifles may be staged down range from the shooter with the magazine loaded, action closed, hammer down, and **chamber empty.**
10. Shotguns are always staged open with magazine and chambers empty and are loaded on the clock unless the stage begins with the shotgun in the shooter's hands. Mule-eared shotguns can be cocked at the beginning of a scenario, whether staged or in the shooters hands. Long guns are never staged with their muzzles on the ground.

11. Long guns will be left open with magazines and chambers empty at the conclusion of each shooting string (i.e., whenever the gun leaves the shooter's hands during or at the end of a stage). This does not apply to "restaged" guns.
12. A live round left in the chamber constitutes a stage disqualification. Any other rounds, live or empty, left anywhere in a long gun is a ten-second minor safety violation. Broken guns still containing rounds will not warrant penalties so long as the malfunction is declared and the gun made safe.
13. All shooters must demonstrate rudimentary familiarity and proficiency with the firearms being used. Shooters are expected to perform within their capabilities at all times. SASS matches are not the forum in which to learn basic firearms handling.
14. SASS matches **are not** fast draw competitions. Any unsafe gun handling in the course of a draw from the holster or any "fanning" will result in the shooter's disqualification from that stage. "Slip-hammering" is not the same as fanning and is legal.
15. Extreme care must be exercised when drawing a pistol from a cross-draw or shoulder holster or returning the pistol to leather. The user must "twist" their body, if necessary, to ensure the muzzle never breaks the 170 degree safety rule during the process. Failure to ensure the muzzle is always down range is grounds for an immediate stage disqualification. A second infraction during the same match is grounds for match disqualification. (Note: The 170 degree safety rule means the muzzle of the firearm must always be straight down range +/-85 degrees. If a competitor "comes close" to breaking the 180 degree safety plane, the 170 degree safety rule has been violated, and the competitor is at fault.)
16. When changing location during a stage, all firearms being carried must either have the hammer down on an empty chamber or spent case, or have the action open.
17. A dropped unloaded gun results in the shooter's disqualification from the stage. A dropped loaded firearm results in a match disqualification. A shooter may not pick up a dropped gun. The Range Officer will recover the gun, examine it, clear it, and return it to the shooter.
18. Ammunition dropped by a shooter in the course of reloading any firearm during a stage or "ejected" from any firearm is considered "dead" and may not be recovered until the shooter completes the course of fire. For example, if a round of shotgun ammo is dropped while reloading, the round must be replaced from the shooter's person or counted as a missed shot. No attempt may be made by the shooter to pick-up the dropped round, as to do so prompts muzzle direction loss of control. Staged ammunition dropped back where it was staged is not considered "dead."
19. The unloading officer or Range Officer **MUST** inspect all firearms before they leave the shooting stage. All rifles and pump or lever action shotguns must have their action cycled for the inspecting official. All pistols, whether used or not in the stage, must also be inspected.
20. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in the range area for all shooters, guest, range officers, and others, until shooting is done for the day. No shooter will consume any alcoholic beverage until he or she has completed all of their shooting for the day and stored their firearms.
21. No shooter may ingest any substance that will affect his or her ability to participate with a maximum state of awareness and in a completely safe manner. Both prescription and non prescription pharmaceuticals that may cause drowsiness or any other physical or mental impairment must be avoided.
22. Eye and hearing protection is mandatory for everyone in and around the shooting areas. While small, period glasses look great, full protection, high impact glasses with side shields are strongly recommended.
23. Only registered competitors may wear firearms.
24. The maximum size shot for any shotgun target is No. 7 ½ shot or smaller. Only lead shot may be used. Magnum and high-velocity loads are not allowed.

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3-D ARCHERY SELF-SERVE RULES

The archery range is open to club members and their guests.

There is no charge for shooting the practice targets located in the low area south of the archery storage building.

There is no charge for shooting the bag target range located next to 3D target 5. This range has targets from 10 to 60 yards out.

Score cards and envelopes are in the mail box.

Before shooting the 3-D woods walk range, put your shooting fees in an envelope and place it in the slot in the door. Shooting fees are as follows:

Club members and youth (9-17) \$4 each,

Non member adults \$8 each,

Members of Michigan Bow Hunters \$1 discount,

Eight and under, free.

Please only shoot one arrow per 3D target.

You are welcome to keep score, but prizes are only awarded at scheduled shoots.

**If you find anything damaged on the course,
please contact the Archery Activity Director, Larry Murray, at 269-659-6005 or 269-659-6002.**

ARCHERY RANGE (3-D and Bag Target) SAFETY RULES

- Never dry fire a bow
- No arrow shall be on the string until an archer is ready to shoot. This also means:
 - Never have an arrow on the string if somebody is standing in front of you!
 - Never walk the course with an arrow on the string.
 - Always wait until you are at the shooting stake before placing your arrow on the string.
- Shoot from a shooting stake or closer to the target. Never shoot from beyond the shooting stakes.
- When pulling arrows, be sure to hang your bow on the bow hanger provided or place it in front of the target.
- When anyone is pulling arrows, all other participants must allow at least 10' so as to avoid being injured by the nock end of the arrow as it is being pulled from the target.
- When looking for an arrow behind the target, be sure to leave your bow in front of the target.
- If there is a bow on the hanger or in front of the target, assume there is an archer behind the target looking for a lost arrow.
- Draw the bow with the arrow level or pointed down and pointed toward the target. Arrows pointed toward the sky while drawing have a tendency to land well beyond the target.
- Any targets other than the bag targets and 3D animal targets provided, must be approved by the Archery Activity Director. This would apply to aerals, moving targets or novelty targets.
- Target or field points only. No broadheads are allowed on the archery ranges.
- All bag targets are designed to accommodate crossbows. Some of the smaller 3D targets will not stop crossbow bolts. Please use discretion when shooting the 3D range with a crossbow.

**If you find anything damaged on the course,
please contact Larry Murray at 269-659-6005 or 269-659-6002.**

IDPA

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can shoot an IDPA event?

If you can shoot a handgun safely and can legally bear arms you will be welcome to participate in our IDPA matches. St. Joseph County Conservation and Sportsman Club, Inc. make it a practice to welcome shooters from other clubs, law enforcement personnel, and new shooters to join us.

How much does it cost to shoot an IDPA event?

St. Joseph County Conservation and Sportsman Club, Inc. range/match fee is \$15 for the monthly matches and \$5 for the Wednesday night practice matches. These fees cover the cost of targets, equipment, and insurance.

What types of matches are held by the IDPA?

There are levels of competition within the IDPA. Local club matches are the most informal. We have a practice match every other Wednesday evening. Monthly matches are typically held on Saturday and are larger, and more complex. Major or sanctioned matches are the most rigorous and complex matches. They are more expensive and typically involve advanced competition with trophies being awarded. An example of such a match would be a state championship. Finally there are local classifier matches; these are highly structured stages to classify each shooter's skill level.

What is a classifier?

In order for shooters to be able to compete fairly with their peers, IDPA competitors are divided into five classifications based on skill level. A "Classification Match" is a standard formatted match scored by an accredited Safety Officer. We recommend you shoot a classifier if you are going to compete at any level. St. Joseph County Conservation and Sportsman Club, Inc. hold a Classifier match in the spring or by special arrangement.

What are the Classifications and Divisions?

IDPA classifications are: Novice, Marksman, Sharpshooter, Expert, and Master. These classifications are determined either by performance in a Classifier match or meritorious advancement by winning a classification/division in a major match.

Divisions are the five different types of pistol used in competition.

Service Stock Pistol, SSP – Semiautomatic 9 mm or larger:

Enhanced Service Pistol, ESP – Semiautomatic 9 mm or larger with certain modifications;

Custom Defensive Pistol, CDP – Semiautomatic .45 ACP;

Compact Carry Pistol, CCP – Semiautomatic, 9 mm or larger, barrel length of 4.10: or less

Enhanced Service Revolver, ESR – revolvers making the same power factor as a .45 ACP with a barrel length of less than 4.2 inches; moonclips are allowed;

Service Stock Revolvers, SSR – revolvers of at least .38 special with a barrel length of less than 4.2 inches; Reloading an SSR may be done with speedloaders, but not with moonclips.

What kind of a gun do I need?

IDPA requires the pistol be "safe and serviceable". That means they have to operate safely and be reliably. The IDPA also requires a certain minimum "power factor". These power factors are usually met by pistol shooting .38 special or more powerful cartridges.

What else should I bring to matches?

Hearing protectors (either muffs or ear plugs), eye protection (impact resistant sun or regular glasses or clear shooter's glasses), a holster; hip only, no shoulder holsters, cross draws, or pocket holster. Inside the waistband holsters are ok. You will need three magazines or speedloaders for revolvers (only two are required for most scenarios but it is much better to have three). You also should have a garment that conceals you handgun in its holster.

I just want to improve my shooting skills; I am not interested in the competition. Can I just shoot for practice?

Lots of people come out and shoot just for practice. Because of safety requirements we will treat everyone who is shooting just the same. You will have a safety officer right behind you all the time and he will time your run. If you are not interested in your scores, just ignore them.

Do I need a concealed carry permit to shoot IDPA?

NO

Is IPDA safe?

Yes, IDPA has an admirable safety record; far better than other recreational activities such as softball or jogging. And we intend to keep it that way. To minimize risk there are stringent safety requirements. We will not bend, alter, waive, or otherwise try to shortcut safety rules.

A Safety Officer (SO) remains just behind every shooter for every scenario. Handguns can only be removed from their holster in a designated “safe area” or when the SO tell you. The SO will check downrange to confirm it is clear and then tell you to “Face downrange, load and make ready”. The Safety Officer asks “Is the shooter ready”? When the shooter confirms that they are ready, the SO will say “Standby” and start the timer. On the signal the shooter may start their run, when they finish, the muzzle must remain pointed downrange. The SO tells you to “Unload and show clear”. For a revolver that means to open the cylinder and remove all rounds, showing the SO an empty cylinder. For an automatic, remove the magazine and pull back the slide, showing the SO an empty chamber. The SO tells you to “Close your Cylinder/Drop your slide”; “Drop the Hammer”; “Reholster”, and “Range is Safe”