

# Establishing and Training Local Safety Range Officers (SROs)

## Introduction

On a UK indoor smallbore rifle range, the **Range Conducting Officer (RCO)** is responsible for the safe control and operation of the range while shooting is taking place. In practice, duties are similar whether the qualification is obtained through the National Small-bore Rifle Association (NSRA) or the National Rifle Association (NRA), although individual range procedures may vary.

The Management Committee of Shrivenham Smallbore Club (SSbC) has identified a requirement for local Club Safety Range Officers (SROs) to implement universally understood safety protocols for the range at Shrivenham.

To achieve this, it is hoped that the majority of FULL members who hold an FAC will engage with the process and become SROs. This will allow SROs to rotate through the role of **Duty Safety Range Officer (DSRO)** for each detail, leaving the Club's official **Range Officer (RO), Armourer and Keyholder** to officiate and oversee all club events.

The nominated DSRO will be identified by wearing an **orange armband or tabard**.

For clarity:

- The RO remains in the Clubroom.
- The nominated DSRO controls the Gallery.
- If the RO wishes to shoot, they should:
  - Nominate a temporary RO/Armourer from the available SROs; or
  - Secure the Armoury and nominate a Full Member to man the desk.

This approach is also intended to increase safety awareness within the Clubroom and reinforce adherence to the Club's safety protocols.

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## Training Notes

### Post-Opening Checks (Before Shooting Starts)

The RO should:

#### 1. Inspect the Range

Inspect the range for safety and serviceability.

## **2. Ensure the following:**

- Stop butts/backstops are safe.
- Target boards are available and correctly positioned by individual shooters.
- Lighting and ventilation are adequate.
- Emergency exits are clear.
- First aid arrangements are available.

## **3. Confirm Shooter Eligibility**

Confirm that shooters are authorised and competent to use the range.

The RO should confirm:

- All checks have been completed.
- The range is satisfactory to continue.
- SRO FAC holders are available for rotation.
- Non-FAC holders have a designated Buddy in addition to the DSRO, Buddy Safety Range Officer (BSRO).

## **4. Check Firearms and Ammunition**

Ensure:

- Firearms and ammunition are appropriate for the range certification.
- No "hot" rounds are used.

**Note:** This is a subsonic-only range.

## **5. Brief the DSRO**

The RO should:

- Brief the DSRO on any Buddy requirements.
- Assign a BSRO as required
- Hand over the Gallery's running for the session.

Notes:

- It is suggested that only one non-FAC shooter is included in any detail of the four shooters.
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# DSRO Gallery Commands and Protocols

## Detail: "GET READY"

The DSRO should instruct:

### Safe Rifle Position

- Unloaded rifles to be pointed towards the right-hand far corner of the range butts.
- Command: **"POINT TO SAFE"**

### Going Forward

Shooters proceed to place targets:

- leaving order: Lane 4, Lane 3, Lane 2, Lane 1

Then returning promptly to the Gallery.

### Gallery Occupancy

Only the following should be present:

- Four shooters
- BSRO (if required)
- DSRO

### Gallery Control

- DSRO asks shooters, Final equipment checks - ear defenders/glove/sling/scope/glasses/ammo/ammo block etc
  - DSRO closes the door.
  - If required, instruct:
    - **No talking in the Gallery.**
    - The DSRO is the only voice to be heard.
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## Detail: "ARE YOU READY?"

When ready:

- Shooters look towards the DSRO.

Only when all shooters are ready:

## **Detail: "GET READY TO SHOOT"**

Shooters should:

- Assume a comfortable shooting position.
- Link up with the rifle.
- Indicate readiness by removing their **breech flag**.

Safety reminders:

- Finger off the trigger.
- No rounds in the chamber.

## **Lights Off Procedure (Optional)**

If pre-identified:

- Command: "**LIGHTS OFF**"
- Lights switched to red.
- Final checks conducted by the DSRO. allowing time for the shooter's eyes to adapt

## **Detail: "SHOOT WHEN READY"**

Shooters may:

- Load and commence firing - **ALLOW FOR 6 SHOTS ON SPOTTER AND 10 SHOTS ON TARGET**

Instructions:

- Do not look through a spotting scope with the breech closed.
- Shoot spotters and targets at will.
- **There is no race.**

When complete:

- Hold position.
- Replace the breech flag.
- **Point the rifle to safe.**

## **Completion Check**

DSRO confirms:

- All breech flags are fitted.

## Lights On Procedure (Optional)

If pre-identified:

- Command: "**LIGHTS ON**"

## Target Collection

DSRO nominates a shooter to:

- Go forward and collect targets.

Remaining shooters should:

- Clear the Gallery.
- Tidy spent cases.
- Return rifles to racks if required.

Targets are then handed to the desk for scoring.

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# Incident and Emergency Actions

## If a Shooter has a Problem

A raised hand generally indicates:

- Malfunction.
- Stuck cartridge. - **a Safety concern.**
- Medical issue.
- Another issue requiring supervision.

The DSRO should:

- Acknowledge immediately.
  - Ensure the firearm remains pointed downrange.
  - Ensure the shooter's finger remains off the trigger.
  - Approach the firing point.
  - Assess the situation.
  - Halt firing or call a Ceasefire if required.
  - Resolve the issue safely.
  - Resume shooting only when safe to do so.
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# Misfire / Hangfire

## Misfire

A cartridge that fails to fire.

## Hangfire

A delayed ignition.

Procedure:

- Keep firearms pointed safely downrange. - **Wait 30–60 seconds.**

Shooter actions:

- Raise your hand.
  - Await DSRO instructions.
  - Do not attempt to clear the fault independently.
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# Squib Load

## Immediate Actions

If a shot sounds unusually quiet ("pop" rather than "bang") or recoil is noticeably reduced:

**DSRO command:**

"STOP, STOP, STOP"

The DSRO must ensure:

- All firing ceases.
- Firearms are unloaded. - **Breech flags are fitted.**

If the lights are switched on - **This is a silent "STOP, STOP, STOP"**

- All shooters stop.
- Unload.
- Replace breech flags.

Movement only occurs when instructed by the DSRO.

## Confirming a Squib

With the rifle made safe:

- Remove from the firing line - **secure in assembly cradle**
- Open the bolt.
- Inspect for an obstruction.

# Clearing a Squib

## Visual Inspection

After confirming the rifle is unloaded:

- Remove the bolt.
- Inspect through the breech.

**Note:** Martini actions may be difficult to inspect visually.

## Tools Required

- Solid brass, aluminium, or cleaning rod.
- Rod slightly smaller than .22 calibre bore. - **A dead-blow hammer or rubber mallet.**

**Avoid:** Wooden dowels.

## Removing the Obstruction

- Determine safest direction for removal.
- Usually push the bullet back toward the breech.
- Tap gently and consistently. - **Use lubrication if required.**

## Post-Clearance Inspection

Inspect for: Barrel bulges ("ringing"). - **Bore damage.**

Final verification must be conducted by the DSRO/RO before the rifle returns to service.

If necessary:

- Remove the rifle from service.
  - Flag it in accordance with club procedures.
  - Note ammunition batch
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# During Ceasefires

The DSRO should:

1. Confirm all rifles are unloaded and safe.
  2. Verify actions are open.
  3. Verify chamber flags are fitted. - **Command: "CLEAR"**
  4. Personally verify the range is safe.
  5. Prevent handling of firearms while personnel are downrange.
  6. Move carefully around firing positions.
  7. Maintain awareness of non-FAC shooters - **if BSRO present: confirm "SAFE"**
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# What You Can Do as an SRO

## General Duties

- Act as Duty SRO when requested.
- Act as a Buddy Safety Range Officer (BSRO).
- Generally support probationary and non-FAC members.

## Within the Clubroom

Maintain a safe environment by:

### Firearm Safety

Ensuring all firearms are:

- Unloaded.
- Actions open.
- Chambers clear.
- Breech flags fitted where required.

### Muzzle Awareness

Monitor:

- Safe muzzle direction.
- Safe handling at assembly stations.
- No sweeping of other persons.

### Ammunition Control

- Handle ammunition only as required.
- Organise ammunition into detail blocks.
- Batch check ammunition.
- Remove damaged ammunition.

### Supervision

Ensure probationers:

- Understand club procedures.
- Are properly supervised. - **Attendance and Security**

Confirm:

- Sign-in requirements are met.
- Visitors are signed in.
- Probationary members are supervised.
- Only authorised FAC holders access firearms. - **Unsafe Behaviour**

Monitor for:

- Horseplay.
- Distraction.
- Complacency.
- Fatigue.
- Alcohol or drug impairment. - **Emotional distress, out-of-character status**

**Please talk to each other to assess potential problems.**

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## **If Acting as Armourer**

Ensure:

- Club firearms are correctly stored.
- Bolts removed if required.
- Unserviceable firearms are flagged.
- Cabinets and racks are secured.

Support housekeeping by ensuring:

- Spent cases are cleared.
  - Cleaning chemicals are used safely.
  - Oily cloths are stored in glass jars.
  - Oily cloths are soaked in water before disposal.
  - Trip hazards are removed - **Gun cases are out of the way**
  - Rifle cases are stored safely
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## **Compliance Responsibilities**

Ensure compliance with:

- SSbC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- NSRA guidance.
- ORL guidance.
- Club safety requirements.

Remain alert to:

- Unattended firearms.
- Unattended ammunition.
- Suspicious activity
- Unauthorised persons.

**Report concerns immediately.**

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## What an SRO Cannot Do

Unless formally authorised under Club or Range rules, an SRO may not:

- Act as the legally recognised NSRA RCO on certified ranges away from SSbC.
  - Conduct shoots requiring a qualified RCO.
  - Sign official documentation requiring RCO status.
  - Override range certification conditions.
  - Supervise higher-risk shoots alone where regulations prohibit it.
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## RO Administrative Duties

The RO remains responsible for:

- Opening and closing the range - **Alarm setting**
- Attendance records.
- Confirming departure times.
- Confirming all personnel have left the range.

Ensuring compliance with:

- Club rules.
  - Home Office approval conditions.
  - Range certification conditions.
  - Insurance requirements.
  - NSRA advanced guidance.
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# Legal and Governance Context

The SRO must ensure:

- Emergency access routes remain clear.
  - Fire exits remain unobstructed.
  - First aid equipment remains accessible.
  - Emergency contact procedures are known.
  - "BLUE" WhatsApp emergency coordinates are available.
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## Summary

The DSRO is effectively the **person in charge of the SSbC Gallery while firing is underway**.

The RO is the Range Officer, and is responsible for the Clubroom activities.

The Armourer is responsible for the content of the Armoury and Firearms entering into the Clubroom. Having the authority to refuse the use of a visiting firearm or ammunition at the club.

A SRO's primary responsibility is maintaining continuous situational awareness and intervening early before a minor lapse develops into a safety incident.

A qualified (recognised) NSRA, RCO visiting should be made aware of the Local Control differences at SSbC.

At SSbC, safety around firearms remains paramount.

Now complete the Knowledge Test...