

# PISTOL NEW ZEALAND HOLSTER QUALIFICATION COURSE TRAINING MANUAL

EDITION 2018



## Foreword

Welcome to the Pistol New Zealand Holster Training Manual.

This is the next step for you if you wish to partake in the dynamic aspect of our sport as holsters are required for many of the pistol disciplines.

As with all aspects of our sport the emphasis is on safety. It is important that you are able to demonstrate to the instructor that you are not only safe with the different types of firearms but that you are also able to make aimed shots at the target.

This manual has been developed over many years, from the original manual produced by Jack Sims to this integrated enhanced version by our National Holster Instructor Peter Nield, as the range of dynamic disciplines has increased. Pistol NZ's commitment to training has led to the establishment of a National group of regional trainers who each work in turn with their local clubs. Training is ongoing for all of us.

The course you are about to undertake is comprehensive and the instructor will teach you all aspects required to be a safe, competent user of a holster and start your journey to being a competitive shooter. Please be an active participant and ask questions to clarify your understanding.

I look forward to seeing you on the ranges.

Regards

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President

Pistol New Zealand

March 2018

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# 1 Introduction

Action shooting is a rewarding sport which demands a high degree of self-discipline. There is risk inherent in most sports but the combination of firearms, speed and competition present unique challenges, and this requires shooters to adhere to a multi-layer series of safeguards. Pistol shooting in each of the action disciplines is all about risk mitigation and the more that can be achieved, the more a shooter can improve their skill, speed and confidence. Mitigation starts with the adoption of a series of standard drills and techniques which maximises safety, and this is amplified by training, assessment and on-going supervision.

There are four golden rules which form the basis of action shooting across all disciplines:

- ✓ React correctly to range commands.
- ✓ Keep muzzle pointing in a safe direction.
- ✓ Do not sweep any part of your body.
- ✓ Only place your finger in the trigger guard when engaging a target.

If, at any time, a shooter feels that they are about to breach one of these rules, the shooter must stop and assess what they are doing before a risk manifests as a dangerous situation. For new shooters this requires conscious thought but as the drills and techniques become more natural and automatic, getting close to breaching a golden rule will simply feel wrong.

As a new action shooter, or a shooter who is returning to an action shooting discipline after a break, you are encouraged to adopt the drills and techniques described in this manual right from the start of your training. The correct application and demonstration of these drills and techniques will ensure that you not only pass the PNZ Holster Qualification, but more importantly that you will be a safe shooter who can maximise their ability. Once you have qualified, you will likely adapt these drills and techniques based on your unique anatomy and preferences, but you remain responsible for all your actions, and you must remain safe. Take the opportunity to regularly evaluate how far you are drifting from the standard drills and techniques, and how much risk you are introducing in your actions.

## 1.1 Requirements for the Holster Qualification

There is a very small list of requirements for undergoing the PNZ Holster Qualification Assessment:

- ✓ Hold a current New Zealand Firearms License. Juniors (who are ineligible to have a Firearms License due to their age) are required to hold the PNZ Junior Proficiency Badge.
- ✓ Complete the PNZ Club Range Officer and Safety Test.
- ✓ Be nominated by your club to undergo assessment.

That's it. There is no minimum time, requirement to have a B endorsement or have your own pistol or equipment. However, each club will make their own determination of when a member is ready and may apply some form of additional requirements to make this easier. Once a member is qualified, the member's club is required to continue to observe the member's performance and attitude to ensure that the member remains safe, and to take remedial action where necessary. In extreme cases, PNZ may revoke a member's holster qualification.

## 2 Drills

The draw, holster, load, unload and reload drills are standard for all action disciplines and all shooters must be able to perform these drills as described in this section. However, Cowboy Action Shooting (CAS) has some unique characteristics relating to single action revolvers and to cross draw and weak side holsters. To simplify the format of this manual, the CAS specific drills are grouped together in a dedicated subsection.

### 2.1 All Action Disciplines




#### 2.1.1 Draw

##### *Introduction*

The draw is the fundamental drill for all action disciplines, not only because it is the commencement for the majority of stages, it is the first timed action, and it is what differentiates tyro shooters from holster qualified shooters. These are true, but the reason the draw is considered the fundamental drill is that it is the starting point for many actions that a shooter must perform which involve handling a pistol. In other words, every time you remove a pistol from a holster you are executing a draw.

##### *The Draw Drill*

There are three parts to the Draw Drill:

<p><b>Grip:</b> Whilst facing in a safe direction and clear of any obstacles, take a grip of the pistol with your strong hand without lifting the pistol from the holster. The grip must be firm enough to control the pistol, but still allow you to easily manipulate the controls of the pistol. Ensure that your index finger is well clear of the trigger guard. At the same time, move your weak hand to your stomach.</p>	
<p><b>Draw:</b> Lift the pistol from the holster and as soon as the muzzle clears the holster, rotate the pistol so it is pointing down range at approximately 45° from the vertical. Your weak hand remains on your stomach.</p>	
<p><b>Ready:</b> Raise the pistol up in front of your chest and close to your body, whilst keeping the muzzle pointing down range. Take up a freestyle grip on the pistol. Alternatively, you can perform other actions such as inserting a magazine, operating a prop etc.</p>	

### *The Draw Considerations*

The shooter must not commence the draw without a specific command from the Range Officer. The draw can only commence when the Range Office issues "Load and Make Ready", "Make Ready" or the signal to commence shooting.

The pistol must remain pointing in a safe direction throughout the drill. To achieve this, the shooter must ensure that their body is orientated in a safe direction before starting the draw. For example, if a stage starts with the shooter facing up range, the shooter must turn so their hips are facing down range (by default this means less than 90 degrees from directly down range) before starting to draw the pistol from the holster. Additionally, do not point the muzzle higher than the berm as you reach the ready position (part three).

The draw will involve the muzzle of the pistol moving close to the shooters strong leg, and potentially close to other parts of the body, which risks sweeping. Shooting positions such as sitting may increase this risk and it is often better to stand before starting the draw. If drawing in a seated position, ensure the muzzle is pointed away from your strong leg during the second part of the drill. Depending on the position of the holster, it may not be possible to completely avoid sweeping your leg, and the rules of some disciplines allow for this. However, the shooter should take every opportunity to minimise this risk, by orientating the holster appropriately.

The trigger finger must remain outside the trigger guard throughout the draw. Shooters must pay particular attention to this as there is a natural tendency to curl the index finger when taking up a grip on the pistol and the shooter must become comfortable with gripping the pistol with their index finger extended and well clear of the trigger guard.

There are several reasons for moving the weak hand to your stomach for the first two parts of the Draw Drill:

- ✓ It ensures that the weak hand remains behind the pistol for the remainder of the draw so it removes the chance of sweeping your weak hand/arm.
- ✓ It balances the movement of your strong hand keeping your body stationary and reducing the tendency to lean to your weak side.
- ✓ It prepares for additional actions such as retrieving a magazine from your belt or from a table in preparation for loading etc.

Any hesitation or resistance in drawing the pistol can cause a shooter to:

- ✓ Adjust their grip potentially resulting in the trigger finger moving closer to the trigger
- ✓ Use their weak hand to stabilise the holster or move clothing out of the way, increasing the risk of sweeping.

If there is a problem during the draw, stop, take stock and sort out the problem while remaining safe.

## 2.1.2 Holster



### *Introduction*

The ability to correctly holster a pistol is necessary to:

- ✓ Leave a safety zone or loading table with a holstered pistol
- ✓ Complete the Load drill
- ✓ Complete the Unload drill
- ✓ To move between strings or stages when a hot range is being operated.

### *The Holster Drill*

There are two parts to the holster drill:

<p><b>Prepare:</b></p> <p>Whilst facing in a safe direction and clear of any obstacles, ensure that the hammer has been decocked or apply the external safety. Move the pistol to the strong side of the body, ensuring the muzzle remains pointing in a safe direction down range. Keep your index finger well clear of the trigger guard. At the same time, move your weak hand to your stomach.</p>	
<p><b>Holster:</b></p> <p>Insert the pistol into the holster and check that it is secure before releasing your grip on the pistol.</p> <p>Once you have holstered the pistol, apply any locking mechanism if appropriate.</p>	

### *Holster Considerations*

There is an increased risk of sweeping when holstering a pistol due to two actions. The first is the need to manoeuvre the pistol into the holster which involves pointing the muzzle of the pistol in close proximity to your leg and foot. It is important that your holster be positioned on your equipment belt so that this risk is minimized. The second opportunity to sweep occurs if you need to secure your holster and/or loose clothing with your weak hand when holstering. Bottom line – sort out your equipment and clothing so you can easily and comfortably holster your pistol without sweeping your leg, hand or any other part of your body.

In all cases, apart from the very rare need to holster a pistol during a course of fire, the holster drill is not timed. Take your time to orientate your body to face directly down range, well clear of any obstacle, so you can keep the pistol pointing in a safe direction throughout the drill.

Do not attempt to holster a pistol while prone! It is very unlikely that you will be able to do this without pointing the muzzle in an unsafe direction. Stand up and then holster.

A pistol must be in a specific condition before it can be holstered, either:

- ✓ Hammer cocked and the external safety applied
- ✓ Hammer de-cocked and fully lowered.

This applies whether the pistol is loaded or unloaded. Further, the hammer on single action revolvers must be down on an empty chamber or spent case.



### 2.1.3 Load




#### *Introduction*

The Load Drill occurs either at the start of a course of fire, in which case it is not a timed action, or during the course of fire if starting with an unloaded pistol in which case this will be a timed action. Regardless you must be able to confidently and efficiently load a pistol without breaching any safety rules.

#### *The Load Drill*

There are three forms of the Load Drill.

#### *Load a Semi-Auto Pistol*

<p><b><u>Draw:</u></b> Whilst facing in a safe direction, complete the Draw Drill. However, instead of moving the weak hand to the stomach as the pistol is drawn from the holster, grip the magazine with the weak hand during the Grip action and pull this from the pouch from the Draw action. If loading from a table, pick up the magazine from the table during the Grip step and pull this back to the stomach area during the Draw step, ensuring the weak hand is not swept by keeping a horizontal and/or vertical separation of the muzzle direction from the weak hand.</p>	
<p><b><u>Load:</u></b> Keep the pistol held up in front of your chest, tilt the pistol so the magazine well area is visible and insert the magazine. Ensure that the magazine is fully seated by pushing the base of the magazine with the heel of the weak hand. Keep the pistol pointing down range and ensure that the muzzle does not point above the berm (or other limit of safe direction).</p>	
<p><b><u>Cock:</u></b> Pull the slide fully to the rear and release the slide so this completely chambers a round.</p>	

**Prepare for holstering:**

Either apply the external safety or de-cock the hammer. This step depends on the type of trigger action as described in the considerations section below.

De-cock manually:



Decocking mechanism:



External safety:



Double action only:



**Holster:**

Complete the Holster Drill, or alternatively place the pistol on the table or other location required for the course of fire.



Load a Double Action Revolver

**Draw:** Whilst facing in a safe direction, complete the Draw Drill.



**Load:** Point the muzzle of the pistol towards the ground well clear of your feet, open the cylinder. Grip the speedloader/moonclip with the weak hand and pull this from the equipment belt. Insert the ammunition in each chamber. Close the cylinder. Leave the action de-cocked and the hammer fully lowered.

If loading from a table, pick up the speedloader/moonclip from the table and pull this back to the stomach area. Ensure the weak hand is not swept by keeping a horizontal and/or vertical separation of the muzzle direction from the weak hand.



**Holster.** Complete the Holster Drill, or alternatively place the pistol on the table or other location required for the course of fire.



### *Load Considerations*

The shooter must only commence loading a pistol after receiving the “Load and Make Ready” command from the Range Officer (or other suitable command if preloading at a loading table under supervision of a range official), or after the start signal if loading during the course of fire.

The Load Drill will typically start with the draw, but may involve a number of permutations such as loading from a table where either the pistol, the magazine/ammunition or both are placed on a table or similar surface. Loading from a table increases the risk of sweeping as the shooter must reach for the magazine/ammunition. Therefore, retrieve the magazine/ammunition with your weak hand and bring it back close to your stomach before drawing the pistol from the holster or retrieving the pistol from the table.

Inserting a full magazine may require some force. Keep your elbows tucked in to your sides and the pistol close to your body to increase leverage.

The Load Drill will typically complete with the Holster Drill, but may also finish with the loaded firearm being placed on a table. Regardless, the pistol must be configured in one of two specific conditions, based on the type of trigger action of the pistol:

- ✓ For single action only pistols with an external safety, the hammer will be cocked and the external safety must be applied
- ✓ For single action only pistols that do not have an external safety and double action/single actions pistols (i.e. most production division pistols), the hammer must be de-cocked and fully lowered. A further restriction is imposed by the requirement to only use the de-cocking mechanism if one is fitted to the pistol. This means that:
  - For double action/single action pistols that are fitted with a de-cocking mechanism (e.g. a SIG Sauer P226 or Beretta 92) the pistol must be de-cocking using the de-cocking mechanism
  - For pistols that are not fitted with a de-cocker, the pistol must be manually de-cocked (see below).
- ✓ For double action only pistols (such as Glock pistols or double action revolvers), no explicit action is required to de-cock the pistol as the pistol will remain de-cocked, until the trigger is partially pulled.

With the sole exception of manually de-cocking, keep the trigger finger well clear of the trigger guard throughout the load drill.

Manually de-cocking a pistol is risky unless this is done correctly. Use the following technique:

- ✓ Point the pistol down range, in a safe direction, well away from any props, obstacles etc.
- ✓ Pinch the hammer between the thumb and forefinger of the weak hand and pull the hammer back from the resting point on the sear. This ensures that the hammer is fully under your control.
- ✓ Retain control of the hammer and pull the trigger.
- ✓ Ease the hammer forward and gently press the hammer against the firing pin to ensure the hammer is fully lowered.
- ✓ Release the trigger and remove the trigger finger from the trigger guard.

When de-cocking a single action only revolver at the loading table, the hammer must be lowered on an empty chamber. This may require that the cylinder is rotated to a suitable position before the hammer is lowered.

## 2.1.4 Unload




### *Introduction*

The Unload Drill is an untimed action. It allows both the shooter and the Range Officer to ensure that the pistol is completely unloaded. This is demonstrated when the trigger is pulled and the hammer drops without restriction against the firing pin. It remains the shooter's responsibility to ensure that the pistol is unloaded before pulling the trigger.

### *The Unload Drill*

There are two forms of the Unload Drill:

#### [Unload a semi-auto pistol](#)

<p><b><u>Remove Source:</u></b> Raise the pistol to a location in front of your chest. Eject the magazine and place either in a pouch or pocket.</p>	
<p><b><u>Action:</u></b> Pull the slide fully to the rear so the round, if present, is ejected from the chamber. Ensure the pistol is unloaded. Wait for the Range Officer to inspect the chamber, magazine well and action, and then issue the command "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster".</p>	
<p><b><u>Hammer Down:</u></b> Allow the slide to return to the fully forward position, aim the pistol at a berm or bullet trap and pull the trigger.</p>	

**Holster:**

At this point, perform the complete Holster Drill.

Unload a revolver

**Remove Source:**

Open the cylinder or loading gate.  
Push the ejector/extractor rod to eject the rounds from the chamber, or use the appropriate mechanism for your revolver to achieve this.



**Action:**

Ensure the revolver is unloaded. Wait for the Range Officer to inspect the chambers, and then issue the command "If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster" (or equivalent command that is applicable to the discipline).



**Hammer Down:**

Close the cylinder or loading gate.

There is no need to lower the hammer on a double action revolver as this will be in the fully lowered position after firing your last round.

However, if the hammer is cocked, you will need to lower the hammer. Ensure that you aim the pistol at a berm or bullet catcher and pull the trigger.

For some disciplines such as CAS, it is sufficient for the unloading table officer to observe you de-cock the hammer under control. However, it is still important to point the pistol in a safe direction when doing this.



**Holster:**

Once the hammer is lowered, perform the complete Holster Drill.



### *Unload Considerations*

The pistol must remain pointing in a safe direction throughout the drill. When you have finished shooting the timer has stopped so take your time to stand up and get stable. Move away from any obstacles or props.

You can unload whilst sitting, kneeling or when prone but you are going to have to holster your pistol before leaving the line. Trying to holster when kneeling or sitting increases the risk of sweeping, and there is no way to safely holster a pistol while prone. You may as well stand up before starting the unload. This will also assist the Range Officer to inspect the chamber(s) and action.

Wait for the Range Officer to issue the command “If Finished, Unload and Show Clear” before starting the Unload Drill. The Range Officer will be looking for the removal of the magazine, the round to be ejected from the chamber, and that the chamber(s) and action are clear. Make it easy for the Range Officer and ensure that the Range Officer is able to observe your movements. If the Range Officer cannot see he will reissue the command and you will need to repeat the drill.

When ejecting the live round, do not pull the slide back so forcefully that the round flies off into oblivion. Let it drop on the ground and retrieve it after you have finished the Unload Drill. Do not attempt to catch the round. You simply increase the risk of sweeping or pointing the muzzle in an unsafe direction. Arguably you will be simply demonstrating how unsafe you are.

Keep your finger well outside of the trigger guard until you have unloaded the pistol, and the Range Officer has issued the “If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster” command. At this point you will need to pull the trigger and allow the hammer to fall against the firing pin. You must make sure that the pistol is indeed unloaded before pulling the trigger. Remember, it is your responsibility.

You must take an aimed shot when dropping the hammer, just in case there is a round in the chamber – Mistakes do happen!

When unloading a revolver, there is a tendency to lift the muzzle to assist ejecting the rounds from chambers. Ensure the muzzle does not point over the berm whilst performing this action.

The ejector/extractor rod on most revolvers is close to the muzzle. Make sure you do not sweep your hand when activating the ejector/extractor rod, even if it is obvious that the pistol is unloaded.

Remember to retrieve any live round that has been ejected and your magazine, speedloader or moonclip after the pistol has been holstered.



## 2.1.5 Reload




### *Introduction*

The Reload Drill may be performed at any time during the course of fire. The aim is to complete the drill as efficiently as possible to allow the shooter to continue shooting.

### *The Reload Drill*

There are two forms of the reload drill.

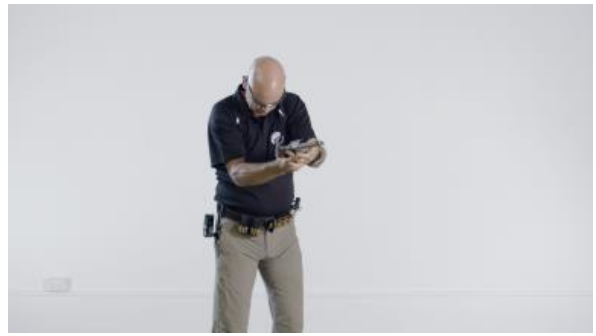
### *Reload a semi-auto pistol*

<p><b><u>Eject:</u></b> Move your index finger well clear of the trigger guard. Eject the magazine and allow it to drop on the ground. At the same time bring the pistol close to the body in front of your chest and move your weak hand to the new magazine, either on your belt or on a table etc.</p>	
<p><b><u>Reload:</u></b> Rotate the pistol so the magazine well is visible and fully insert the magazine, using heel of weak hand to ensure it is fully seated.</p>	
<p><b><u>Continue:</u></b> Rack the slide if necessary. Resume grip and continue shooting.</p>	

## Reload a revolver

### **Eject:**

Move your finger well clear of the trigger guard. Open the cylinder or loading gate, and eject cases from the chambers.



### **Reload:**

Lower the muzzle of the pistol slightly but ensure it remains well clear of your feet. Retrieve the ammunition from your belt or table and insert the ammunition in each chamber. Close the cylinder or loading gate.



### **Continue:**

Resume grip and continue shooting.



### *Reload Considerations*

Ensure the muzzle remains pointing in a safe direction throughout the drill. There is a tendency to raise the muzzle and point it towards the weak side when reloading a semi-automatic pistol. The risk of pointing the pistol in an unsafe direction is also increased when the body is already orientated towards the weak side, when moving across the range or when negotiating an obstacle. Keep the muzzle pointing no higher than the berm and in a safe direction.

Similarly, there is a tendency to raise the muzzle of a revolver when ejecting the cases and to point the muzzle close to the feet when inserting the new ammunition. Care must be taken to ensure the muzzle is not pointed in an unsafe direction.

When ejecting the magazine, the grip on the pistol may be weakened in order to reach the release button. There is a tendency to compensate by using the index finger of the strong hand to increase control of the pistol. Ensure that it remains well clear of the trigger.

When reloading from a table, the weak hand must be extended forward to retrieve the ammunition. There is a risk of sweeping so ensure the pistol remains either held up in front of the chest and pointing down range or for revolvers, at the ground in front of your feet. This will provide vertical separation from the weak hand.




## 2.2 Cowboy Action Shooting Specific Drills:

### 2.2.1 Draw

#### *Weak Side Holster*

CAS allows a shooter to have a second holster, fitted to the weak side of the equipment belt, and drawn using the weak hand. The revolver may be drawn from this holster either as a discrete action or drawn either before or after the strong side revolver. Only one loaded revolver is allowed to be drawn at one time.

The drill to draw a holster from a weak side holster is similar to the strong hand draw:

<p><b>Grip:</b> Whilst facing in a safe direction and clear of any obstacles, take a grip the revolver with your weak hand without lifting the revolver from the holster. The grip must be firm enough to control the revolver, but still allow you to easily manipulate the revolver. Ensure that your index finger is well clear of the trigger guard. At the same time, move your strong hand to your stomach.</p>	
<p><b>Draw:</b> Lift the revolver from the holster and as soon as the muzzle clears the holster, rotate the revolver so it is pointing down range at approximately 45° from the vertical. Your strong hand remains close to your body.</p>	
<p><b>Ready:</b> Raise the revolver up in front of your chest and close to your body, whilst keeping the muzzle pointing down range. At this point you can transition the revolver to the strong hand, cock the hammer and engage targets or perform other actions such as operating a prop etc.</p>	

#### *Cross Draw*

CAS also allow a shooter to position a holster between the centre of the shooter's body and the weak side hip (refer to the CAS rules for exact requirements) so that a revolver may be drawn from this holster using the strong hand. The drill to draw a revolver from a cross draw holster is identical to the strong side holster. However, the shooter must ensure that the revolver does not point in an unsafe

direction (CAS defines this as 170° i.e. 85° from directly down range) and therefore shooters will often push their weak hip down range by taking a small step forward with their weak foot and rotate their torso so the cross-draw holster is pointing in a safe direction prior to drawing the pistol. The position of a cross draw holster is important. The holster cannot be rotated greater than 30 degrees from the vertical and optimum position is forward of the hip.

**Grip:**

Whilst facing in a safe direction and clear of any obstacles, take a grip of the revolver with your strong hand without lifting the revolver from the holster. The grip must be firm enough to control the revolver, but still allow you to easily manipulate the controls of the revolver. Ensure that your index finger is well clear of the trigger guard. At the same time, move your weak hand to your stomach.



**Draw:**

Lift the revolver from the holster and as soon as the muzzle clears the holster, rotate the revolver so it is pointing down range at approximately 45° from the vertical. Your weak hand remains on your stomach.



**Ready:**

Raise the revolver up in front of your chest and close to your body, whilst keeping the muzzle pointing down range. At this point you can cock the hammer and engage targets or perform other actions such as operating a prop etc.



## 2.2.2 Holster

### *Weak Side Holster*

When holstering a pistol in a weak side holster the same drill is used, but is mirrored so the revolver is held in the weak hand and the strong hand moves to the stomach area.

### *Cross Draw Holster*

One further variation of this is holstering a revolver in a cross-draw holster whilst simultaneously drawing a second revolver from a strong side holster.

#### **Prepare:**

Whilst facing in a safe direction and clear of any obstacles, ensure that the hammer is down on an empty chamber or spent case. Transfer the first pistol to your weak hand, holding the pistol in an overhand grip with your fingers wrapped around the cylinder and ensuring all fingers remain outside the trigger guard.






#### **Holster:**

Insert the first revolver into the cross-draw holster using your weak hand. Once the pistol is holstered, the strong side pistol may then be drawn.



### 2.2.3 Load

#### *Load a Single Action Revolver*

<p><b>Draw:</b> Whilst facing in a safe direction, complete the Draw Drill.</p>	
<p><b>Load:</b> Lower the muzzle of the revolver slightly, but well clear of your feet. With Colt clones halfcock the hammer and open the loading gate. Repeatedly, take a round of ammunition from the belt or table with the weak hand and insert the ammunition in each chamber. Close the loading gate and lower the hammer on an empty chamber. Ruger Vaqueros do not need to be on half cock to load.</p> <p>If loading from a table, ensure the weak hand is not swept when reaching for each round of ammunition by keeping a horizontal and/or vertical separation of the muzzle direction from the weak hand.</p>	
<p><b>Holster.</b> Complete the Holster Drill, or alternatively place the revolver on the table or other location as required for the course of fire.</p>	

## 3 Techniques

In addition to the drills described in the previous section, action shooting requires the shooter to complete the course of fire safely. Each action discipline has its own requirements and challenges and the following techniques may not apply to all disciplines. However, you are required to demonstrate that you can safely negotiate any course of fire and must learn all of the techniques to do so.

### 3.1 Adopt Shooting Positions

Action shooting requires that you be able to shoot from different positions; standing, kneeling and prone. You need to be able to change position without causing the muzzle of the pistol to point in an unsafe direction or sweeping any part of your body. Changing positions should become second nature so your attention can remain down range, on the targets.

Some shooters have trouble moving into different positions. If so, talk with the Range Officer before the start of the stage. He needs to be aware of any physical impairments and he may offer compensation (if allowed for in the match rules).

#### 3.1.1 Kneeling

Kneeling is defined as having one knee touch the ground. This could be your strong knee, weak knee or indeed both knees. There is no 'correct' option and you will need to adopt the position that is right for the circumstances. For example, if you are standing close to a fault line or prop, it may be better to step back and drop one knee to the ground. Similarly, if you intend to move off towards your weak side, you may be more comfortable kneeling down on your strong knee, so you can push off with your strong leg as you rise. You should practise getting into and out of each of these positions.

#### *Technique*

There are five ways to adopt a kneeling position from standing;

- ✓ Step forward with the weak foot and lower the strong knee to the ground
- ✓ Step forward with the strong foot and lower the weak knee to the ground
- ✓ Step back with the weak foot and lower the weak knee to the ground
- ✓ Step back with the strong foot and lower the strong knee to the ground
- ✓ Drop forward onto both knees



#### *Kneeling Considerations*

It is often better to draw your pistol and hold this up in front of your chest before moving into a position. This ensures that you have control of the pistol and can keep it pointing in a safe direction.



Ensure that the muzzle does not sweep your legs at any point. Keep the pistol up in front of your face/chest while kneeling. This is particularly true when stepping forward with the strong foot and dropping to your weak knee. Similarly, when standing up from kneeling on both knees and raising your strong knee, your strong knee can end up in close proximity to the muzzle.

Be careful if you need to push on the ground or a prop with your weak hand when getting back up from the kneeling position. Ensure the prop is strong enough. Also, there can be tendency for your strong hand to follow your eyes, increasing the risk of sweeping.

### 3.1.2 Prone

Prone is essentially lying with your stomach on the ground. There is no requirement for your feet, knees or elbows to be in contact with the ground but lying prone can be quite stressful and can affect your ability to breathe smoothly. Place your feet, knees and/or elbows on the ground if this is more comfortable.

#### *Technique*

There are three techniques for moving into the prone position.

- ✓ Kneel down on both knees, place your weak hand on the ground and lower your torso forward.
- ✓ Squat down, place your weak hand on the ground and push your legs backward.
- ✓ Dive onto the ground.

Getting back up from the prone position typically involves placing your weak hand on the ground and pushing back up on to your knees, and then standing up from there.



#### *Prone Considerations*

Diving (or flopping) is not recommended, given the potential to cause injury. Lowering your torso forward or kicking your legs backward are more controlled movements.

Lowering your torso forward or kicking your legs backward may be dictated by your proximity to fault lines, props etc. Make sure you have sufficient room to complete the manoeuvre.

When placing a hand on the ground, there is a likelihood that you will look down at the ground and that your strong hand will follow your eyes. This may lead to an increased risk of sweeping your weak hand. This applies both when adopting the prone position and when standing back up.

You are allowed to place the pistol on the ground and use both hands to lower your body or to step back up. However, you must ensure that you stay within 1 metre of the pistol and that the pistol is in a suitable condition;

- ✓ Unloaded.
- ✓ Loaded with the hammer cocked and the safety applied.
- ✓ Loaded with the hammer de-cocked.

Do not attempt to holster your pistol whilst prone as this will require that the muzzle is pointed in an unsafe direction. It is often better to stand up and perform the entire Unload Drill whilst standing rather than doing this partially on the ground.

## 3.2 Single hand shooting

Most action shooting is done freestyle, allowing the shooter to use a two-handed grip on the pistol. However, each discipline may require the shooter to shoot either strong hand only or weak hand only, or you may simply choose to shoot one handed if you find it more efficient.

### 3.2.1 Technique

The technique for transitions from strong hand to weak and vice versa is the same.



#### *Transition to weak hand*

Hold the pistol in your strong hand up in front of your body. Using a swiping motion, place the heel of your weak hand on the pistol grip in the grip between the fingers and heel of your strong hand, and the web of your weak thumb up against the tang at the top of the pistol grip. Wrap the fingers of your weak hand around the front of the pistol grip at the same time as you rotate your strong hand off the pistol grip.

#### *Transition to strong hand*

Hold the pistol in your weak hand up in front of your body. Using a swiping motion, place the heel of your strong hand on the pistol grip in the grip between the fingers and heel of your weak hand, and the web of your strong thumb up against the tang at the top of the pistol grip. Wrap the fingers of your strong hand around the front of the pistol grip at the same time as you rotate your weak hand off the pistol grip.

#### *Single handed Shooting Considerations*

Drawing and holstering the pistol must be performed using your strong hand. Other drills such as loading and reloading, and clearing malfunctions may be performed with either your strong hand or weak hand, and this will be dictated by the shooter's skill and comfort with using their weak hand.

Most shooters will find gripping a pistol in their weak hand to be 'foreign' and require continual practice to get comfortable with this.

There is a risk that either of your index fingers could enter the trigger guard during the transition. This is particular true for your weak hand as you will naturally grip the pistol with more force with your weak hand. Ensure you can complete the transition both of your index fingers extended and well clear of the trigger guard.

If transitioning to your weak hand directly after drawing your pistol, you may find it easier to take a grip with your strong hand lower down on the pistol grip during the draw as this will leave more of the pistol grip exposed for your weak hand.

### 3.3 Moving on the range

You may be required to move in any direction on the range; forward or backward, left or right.

#### 3.3.1 Technique

Keep the pistol up at face/chest level, pointing down range and in a safe direction at all times. Pivot your body around your strong hand and pistol as necessary to move in the required direction.



You may find it better to remove your weak hand from the pistol grip, depending on the direction of travel and distance to be traversed.



### Moving on the Range Considerations

Your strong hand will follow your eyes. Avoid looking down at the ground as this increases the risk of lowering your strong hand potentially sweeping a part of your body.

Ensure that you have enough clearance as you move around obstacles and props. Bring the pistol in close to your body, and hold it up in front of you face/chest. This will minimise the risk of hitting an obstacle as you manoeuvre around the range. It will also allow you to keep your head up and looking where you are going.

When moving backwards you may find it easier to remain facing down range and move backwards, or to turn your body to either your weak or strong side and face the direction of travel. This leads to two considerations:

- ✓ Plan your movement so that you always rotate towards the down range berm. You must never rotate 'up range'. For example, if you are moving towards the back left and need to move towards the back right, rotate your body towards the right so you are facing down range. If you rotate towards the left in this situation you will end up facing up range, and pointing the pistol in an unsafe direction.
- ✓ When moving backwards on your strong side the pistol may inadvertently begin to point at your weak shoulder. Keep the pistol pointing down range as you turn, and hold the pistol out in front of your body with sufficient separation to ensure that this does not happen.

When moving to your weak side there is also a tendency for you to point the pistol towards your weak side. Be aware of this as you may need to release your weak hand from the pistol grip and rotate your strong wrist to keep the pistol pointing down range. This may also come into play if you are performing the Reload Drill while moving towards your weak side as there will be a tendency to point the pistol towards your weak side both when reloading and when moving. Doing both at the same time will amplify this tendency.

### 3.4 Shooting around barricades

Barricades can be problematic as you will be in close proximity to a solid object. This will obstruct the freedom that you have to move the pistol from side to side.

#### 3.4.1 Technique

When transitioning from one side of a barricade to another, lean back away from the barricade and pull the pistol back in close to your body, up in front of your chest. Then push the pistol out towards the targets on the other side of the barricade.



#### Shooting Around Barricades Considerations

You need to ensure that there is sufficient clearance to move the pistol from one side of the barricade to the other. Ensure that as you move the pistol that you do not hit the side of the barricade with the barrel, as this may cause you to point the pistol in an unsafe direction. Damaging your pistol is a secondary consideration. Move back away from the barricade and pull the pistol in close to your body as you move from side to side.

Do not rotate the pistol above the barricade or below the barricade as you will either point the pistol in an unsafe direction, or run the risk of sweeping your feet.

Moving from one side of the barricade to the other is deemed to be moving. Keep your index finger well clear of the trigger guard when performing this transition.

### 3.5 Moving through doors

Doors open in one of five ways; they either swing inwards or outwards and to the left or right; or they lift up. In each case you will need to manipulate the door with a part of your body extended in front of your pistol, increasing the risk of sweeping.

#### 3.5.1 Technique

Hold the pistol in your strong hand at chest level and offset to your strong side as you manipulate the door with your weak hand or one of your feet (if opening inwards). This will ensure that you can open the door without sweeping your weak hand or other part of your body.

If the door opens outwards, you may need to step backwards as the door opens to ensure there is sufficient clearance.

#### Moving Through Doors Considerations

If the door opens outwards or tilts towards you as it opens, do not simply lean towards the door to operate it and then lean back as the door opens. This increases the chance that you will lower the pistol and sweep your weak hand. Step close to the door to operate it and step back as it opens, keeping your head up and the pistol at eye level.

When opening an outward opening door, there is a possibility that you may hit the door with the pistol. Step back as you open the door and keep the pistol close to your body, up in front of your face/chest. Do not let your hand drag the pistol around the door as you start to move forward.

Do not operate the door with such force that it bounces back and closes. If you are not moving through the door frame but are opening the door to shoot through the doorway, be prepared to stop the door closing by leaning against the door with your shoulder or by holding it with your foot.

## 3.6 Shooting through ports

Shooting through ports can be challenging as it restricts the field of view of a shooter and forces the shooter to move into a position where they can see the target.

### 3.6.1 Technique

Stand back from the port if possible, in a position where the targets are visible and engage the targets by shooting through the port, in preference to pushing the pistol through the port.



### 3.6.2 Considerations

If you push your pistol into a port there is an increased risk of hitting the side of the port as you push the pistol forward, interference with the operation of the pistol if the slide or cylinder contacts the side of the port, or a malfunction if the ejected case is obstructed from leaving the ejection port. You will also need to extract the pistol from the port as you move to the next shooting position, with the potential that you will point the muzzle in an unsafe direction if you allow your hand to drag the pistol around the edge of the port.

If you do need to push your pistol through a port in order to engage a target, ensure that you pull the pistol back from the port completely before moving to the next position.

Standing back from a port is often a better option as it reduces the amount of movement that you need during a course of fire and allows more freedom as you manoeuvre around the range.

You need to consider the offset of your sights from the axis of the barrel when aiming through a port to ensure that the barrel is indeed pointing through the port and that your rounds don't hit the edge of the port. This is particular true for optical sights which typically have a larger offset. Just because you can align your sights with the target doesn't mean that you will hit it.



## 4 Final Steps

### Assessment Forms and Payment

Once the course is completed, the holster instructor and shooter will need to complete the following steps:

- ✓ Fill out the final assessment form, this can be found on the 'Training' page of the PNZ website.  
Send to the PNZ Executive Officer, by E-mail ([exec@pistolnz.org.nz](mailto:exec@pistolnz.org.nz)) or post to P.O.Box 391, Hastings 4122
- ✓ Collect the fee of \$30 and send this with the form or direct bank the monies to the account shown on the form

### Questions

All questions of a technical nature should be directed to the Instructor.

All questions of a qualification procedure nature should be directed to the PNZ Executive Officer

### Further Information

Further information on the Holster Qualification can be found on the PNZ website under 'Training'.