



UNITED KINGDOM PRACTICAL SHOOTING ASSOCIATION
United Kingdom Region of the International Practical Shooting Confederation



UKPSA/IPSC PRACTICAL SHOTGUN

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICAL SHOOTING CONFEDERATION

The IPSC, founded in 1976, is the world governing body for IPSC Practical Shooting and consists of around 60 regions (countries).

UKPSA

The UKPSA is the governing body for IPSC Practical Shooting in the UK and was founded in 1977. The Association operates within the International rules laid down although, however, any laws appertaining to the United Kingdom are expressly considered and may cause some variation by necessity.

PRACTICAL SHOTGUN

Throughout this document we are discussing UKPSA/IPSC Practical Shotgun and are not in a position to comment on practical shotgun activities being conducted by others.

Practical Shotgun can be briefly described as a target shooting discipline calling for participants to shoot various targets against the clock. It is a mis-conception that shotguns are imprecise and a high degree of accuracy is called for in this discipline. Surprisingly for some, misses occur, calling for a further, better placed, shot to score the target.

Pump-action and semi-automatic shotguns held under Section 1 Firearms Certificates are used but most frequently in conjunction with Section 2 Shotgun ammunition (birdshot and buckshot as defined by the Act). Solid slug ammunition is used but strictly only where authorised for that ammunition type.

The discipline is conducted on land where permission has been given for that type of shooting. In such cases all due consideration is given to safety matters. For each shooting area a 180 degree safety line is established beyond which no-one may be forward of whilst shooting is in progress unless a suitable physical barrier circumvents any safety problem. The maximum travel distance of the ammunition type being used is considered and this distance is doubled to provide a safety margin if a suitable backstop such as a hill doesn't exist.

In the case of Association sanctioned training courses or competitions, Instructors or Range Masters respectively would request an Ordnance Survey map to be made available to check for the existence of public footpaths or bridleways so that these can be considered for any possible safety hazard.

TARGETS

Targets conform to IPSC criteria and in the main small steel plates that fall when hit are used, but only with birdshot or buckshot ammunition. The size of these plates generally range from 150mm x 150mm to around 300mm x 250mm with various size configurations in between. Paper or cardboard targets are also used and the UKPSA chooses a neutral plain colour. Camouflage targets have long since been discontinued by the Association and the only markings are scoring lines. Paper and cardboard targets are shot with either solid slug or buckshot ammunition, solid slug is not shot against steel targets. Other targets such as frangible or reactive targets may be used subject to any range restrictions where they are intended to be used.

Targets are placed so as to be either horizontal or below horizontal to the shooting line and steel plates are in fact mostly positioned at ground level. Very occasionally targets may be arranged to be engaged above the horizontal line but only after all due consideration has been given to safety, an example of this could be in the case of some clay pigeons being included in the shooting challenge or competition stage.

BASIC SAFETY COURSES

Whilst not a condition of membership of the Association it is an absolute requirement that prior to being allowed to take part in competitions a Basic Safety Course, consisting of a minimum of 14 hours training, must be successfully completed. A two tier pass system operates and the Instructor needs to be satisfied that for the higher level pass a student is 'competition competent and safe'. Students are failed for safety infringements or for failing to meet a marksmanship criteria. Courses are open to non members to promote the discipline and to make the Safety Course available to others. Although the minimum course requirement is about 200 rounds it is more usual for approximately 300 rounds to be fired.

UKPSA members who have already passed a UKPSA Basic Safety Course in Practical Pistol **and** have successfully participated in four UKPSA Practical Pistol league competitions in the preceding twelve months may take a Safety Conversion Course from Pistol to Shotgun. This consists of a minimum of 7 hours instruction and generally involves the firing of between 250-300 rounds.

The Association prides itself on the quality of its training courses and stipulates that for the Basic Safety Course an Instructor may take a maximum of 6 students if he is on his own and a maximum of 12 students if he has an assistant. Assistants would normally be appointed UKPSA Club Coaches, trainee Instructors/Coaches or a qualified UKPSA Range Officer.

For the Conversion Course this ratio is reduced to 4:1 and 8:1 respectively but it is stipulated that the assistant must be a UKPSA Club Coach.

If the numbers on a course exceed those stated above then another fully qualified Instructor is required to be present to maintain standards. At all times involving live firing exercises students are supervised strictly on a one to one basis with the Instructor or assistant being at no more than arms length from the student. Guns are checked clear and safe before the student is allowed to leave the shooting line (actually this principle is fundamental for all shooters).

INSTRUCTORS

All UKPSA Instructors need considerable experience in the relevant Practical discipline in addition to having a general ability to teach. Potential Instructors start by assisting on other courses and first qualify as Club Coaches. When sufficient experience has been gained they must pass an assessment lasting around 6 hours prior to being qualified as an Instructor. They must continue to teach and participate in competitions to maintain their status. A Training Sub Committee (TSC) exists to monitor and administrate training.

COMPETITION LICENCES

In order to monitor that members are currently authorised to participate in Association competitions a Competition Licence system exists. All members who pass at the required standard on Basic Safety Courses, or on a Conversion Course, are issued with a numbered licence. This licence number is checked by competition organisers to confirm eligibility to compete.

In the event of two safety infringements at competitions, leading to disqualification, occurring in any twelve month period the licence is withdrawn and the person concerned is then required to undertake a further training course before being allowed to compete once more. Licences become invalid in the case of a member who does not compete for some time and they have to pass a shooting competency test before being allowed to compete again. Both the TSC and the NROI (see below) maintain records of any member who has been the subject of a disqualification.

COMPETITIONS

Practical Shotgun is very much a competitive sport and those who participate enjoy this challenge whether it be at club or National league level.

Club competitions for their members exist as do inter-club matches. The Association organises, controls and monitors a National league of “Graded” matches highlighted by The British Open Championship match. This match is specifically awarded to the most appropriate hosting club each year and overseas competitors are invited. Other matches may be put on by various clubs subject to being affiliated to and meeting approval from the Association.

Competitors completing a minimum of 3 matches during the year are awarded a “grade” based on the average of their match results by percentage. The “grades” relate to divisions with these being classed as MASTER, A, B, C, D and OPEN . Prizes at every match are generally awarded for each division, best overall, best lady, best junior, best senior, best newcomer, best sportsman, etc.. In addition to their being a “British Open Champion” (both Ladies and Men’s Champion separately), being the winner of the match by the same name, the Association also recognises a British Champion (again separately for Ladies and Men) based on the results of the **best** 5 matches in the competition year, each year.

All Graded League matches have to be confirmed in advance with the Association’s Competition Secretary and must be advertised to all members equally who have a right to participation subject to space allocation being available (first come first served). Non-members are specifically not allowed to compete in UKPSA Graded League matches.

Competition organisers have to be able to meet certain criteria relating to the running of a match. This criteria includes suitability of venue, availability of UKPSA Range Officials including a Range Master, minimum numbers, allocation of percentage of entry fees to a trophy table and Association approval of the various parts (stages or Courses of Fire) of the match.

A written submission of the intended Courses of Fire has to be sent to a Course Reviewer approximately 6 weeks in advance of the match for checking and approval. This includes any special notes, information or local safety rules that may be relevant. The Course Reviewer carefully checks the content and intended design of the match as far as may reasonably be done on paper. Any queries relating to design, rules and most importantly safety are raised with the match organisers and changes made if considered necessary. Finally, after various deliberations, approval for the Courses of Fire will normally be given. However, it should be noted that this approval would be withheld and matches withdrawn if an organiser refused to comply with reasonable requested changes.

A match organiser has to arrange for sufficient Range Officials to be present and certainly sufficient to ensure that each competitor is supervised on a one to one basis on each stage of the match. This official, known as a Range Officer has a primary responsibility of safety and further responsibilities for scoring and timekeeping. It is also a requirement to arrange for a Range Master to be present who takes charge of all other range officials and is responsible, as far as reasonably possible, for range safety and safe Course of Fire design. He/she actually checks the physical design and layout and may insist on changes if considered necessary including the deletion of any elements or parts of the match that can't be altered.

A competition will usually be run over 2 or 3 days with each competitor completing the match in one day. There are usually between 6-12 Courses of Fire totalling between 100-200 rounds per match.

The use of safety glasses by competitors, range officials and spectators is mandatory when metallic targets are being used. It is suggested that eye and hearing protection be worn at **ALL** times while on range and clubs/organisations hosting matches may require these protections as a condition of entry to a competition.

RANGE OFFICIALS

The Association has in place the National Range Officers Institute (NROI) to monitor and administrate Range Officers (RO), Chief Range Officers (CRO) and Range Masters (RM), to advise and/or enforce rules and to provide training and guidance on relevant matters.

Intensive two day seminars are a requirement for each of the levels of Range Official. The seminars consist of theory, examinations and practical range work. If the seminar is successfully completed each candidate for RO must then assist at three matches as a supervised RO, where their ability and attitude is further assessed, before finally being fully qualified providing they have continued to attain the required standard.

Every shooter/competitor is supervised by a minimum of one, but usually two or three, ROs. Each range area is controlled by a CRO and competitions are under the overall control and supervision of a RM. The primary responsibility of a Range Official is SAFETY with scoring and shooter supervision secondary.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Clubs may affiliate to the UKPSA and generally at least some of the members of each club will have attended a UKPSA Basic Safety Course and so can steer their club in the correct procedures and safety considerations. However, it is just not practically viable for the Association to be able to properly monitor and control clubs at this level and instead restrict the controls to training matters and sanctioned competitions.

CODE OF DRESS

With the exception of serving military or police personnel who may wear their normal service clothing, any clothing, or combination of clothing, which has a paramilitary style is considered inappropriate at UKPSA competitions. Camouflage clothing of any irregular pattern is specifically banned.