

THE **FIREARMS** INSTRUCTOR

The Official Publication of The International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors®



Featuring articles by:

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU



Team One Network

This is a partial listing of what Team One has going on.

All students must meet eligibility requirements.

For more information, call 540-752-8190, or visit their website at

www.teamonenetwork.com

Oct 4-5	National Capital Region SWAT Association SWAT Competition <i>Fairfax, VA</i>	Nov 5-7	Low Light/Laser Instructor <i>Dublin, CA</i>
Oct 5-10	SWAT Operator <i>Green Bay, WI</i>	Nov 8-12	IACP <i>San Diego, CA</i>
Oct 7-8	Shoot House Instructor <i>Nokesville, VA</i>	Nov 17-18	Sage Armors <i>Merced, CA</i>
Oct 9-10	Springfield Armory XD/1911 Armors <i>Florence, AL</i>	Nov 17-19	Tactical Ballistic Shield Instructor <i>Binghamton, NY</i>
Oct 20-22	Tactical Commanders <i>Norfolk, VA</i>	Nov 19-21	Sage Less Lethal Ordnance System Instructor <i>Merced, CA</i>
Oct 23-24	School/Work Violence Workshop <i>Norfolk, VA</i>	Nov 30-Dec 4	SWAT ROUND UP <i>Orlando, FL</i>
Oct 27-29	Tactical Breaching Techniques <i>Norfolk, VA</i>	Dec 8-9	Springfield Armory Armors (1911 and XD Only) <i>Firestone, CO</i>
Oct 27-29	Low Light/Laser Instructor <i>Stafford, VA</i>	Dec 8-12	Verbal Judo 102: Professional Communication Skills Instructor <i>Binghamton, NY</i>
Oct 27-29	Use of Force Manager <i>Binghamton, NY</i>	Dec 15-19	Range Master <i>St. Petersburg, FL</i>
Oct 30	Serpa Holster Workshop <i>Norfolk, VA</i>		
Nov 3-4	Shoot House Instructor <i>Dublin, CA</i>		
Nov 3-5	Springfield Armory Armors <i>Fontana, CA</i>		



U.S. Shooting Academy

All courses take place at the USSA headquarters in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

This is a partial listing of the classes USSA offers.

For more information, call 866-441-8772, or visit their website at

www.usshootingacademy.com

Oct 4	USSA Intermediate Tactical Handgun Skills 511	Oct 31	USSA Introduction to Rifle Marksmanship 252
Oct 4	USSA Oklahoma Concealed Carry 250	Nov 1	USSA Oklahoma Concealed Carry 250
Oct 6-10	USSA Tactical Handgun Intensive 214	Nov 2	USSA Introduction to Handgun Marksmanship 251
Oct 11-12	USSA Tactical Handgun 210 Sherman, Texas	Nov 8-10	USSA Tactical Rifle 230 3 Days
Oct 11-12	USSA Ladies Handgun 215	Nov 9	USSA Close Quarters Handgun Skills 513
Oct 17-19	USSA Competition Handgun 110	Nov 15-16	USSA Tactical Handgun 210
Oct 18-20	USSA Tactical Rifle 231 3 Days	Nov 17-18	USSA Tactical Handgun 211
Oct 18-19	USSA Tactical Handgun 211	Nov 19-21	USSA Tactical Handgun 212
Oct 18	USSA Oklahoma Concealed Carry 250	Nov 22-24	USSA Tactical Handgun 213
Oct 19	USSA Introduction to Handgun Marksmanship 251	Dec 6-7	USSA Tactical Handgun 210
Oct 19	USSA Advanced Tactical Handgun Skills 512	Dec 7	USSA Introduction to Handgun Marksmanship 251
Oct 21-22	Tactical Anatomy Instructor Course	Dec 13-15	USSA Tactical Shotgun 220
Oct 25-26	USSA Tactical Handgun 210	Dec 13-14	USSA Close Quarters Tactics™ 240
Oct 25-26	USSA Close Quarters Tactics™ 240	Dec 19-21	USSA Tactical Handgun 212

TOP TEN

Firearms Handling Mistakes

by John T. Meyer, Jr.

Somebody recently asked me what the biggest mistakes in handling firearms are. Guess what: I'd never quantified that question before. So after some thinking, and discussion with our Team One Instructors, here's what I came up with.

The most critical firearms handling mistake you can make are not following what we at Team One call the four Cardinal Rules of Firearms Handling. I've discovered that religiously following the CRs will eliminate most gun-handling mistakes.

- One: treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
- Two: point your firearm in a safe direction—one where an unintentional discharge will cause NO HUMAN INJURY and at most, minor property damage. (At Team One we call this THE LASER RULE)
- Three: Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard, indexed along the frame or slide until you are on target, have a legal right to fire and have decided to fire.

- Four: be sure of your target/threat, backstop, and beyond.

If people followed these four basic principles, negligent discharges and other mishaps would be virtually eliminated. But that isn't to say there aren't other gun-handling mistakes to consider. But let's start with the most basic one. **The Number One gun-handling mistake would be not following the four Cardinal Rules.**

Mistake No. 2 would be multi-tasking when handling a weapon. In other words, people trying to do two things at once may trigger (no pun intended) an involuntary muscle reaction.

Mistake No. 3 is not protecting the trigger. Look - if you put yourself in a situation where your 4-1/2 pound trigger isn't protected from being pressed, pulled, snagged on clothing or hit by you, by some other person, like the criminal trying to get it away from you, the firearm is going to go off.

Mistake No. 4 would be choosing a poor holster—one, for example, that doesn't protect the trigger—or, not using a holster and

sticking your firearm in the waistband of your trousers. Mistake No. 4-A would be not practicing your draw and reholstering your weapon. You'd be surprised how many people start to holster their weapons with their fingers still on the triggers or, with the hammer cocked back with a double action weapon.

Mistake No. 5 is wearing poor choice wardrobe. I've seen instances where the cinch drawstring lock gizmo in an officer's jacket got caught in his trigger guard thereby discharging the weapon when he tried to reholster.

Mistake No. 6 is taking a shortcut and skipping the six-step procedure for rendering your weapon safe. The six steps are:

- Point your firearm in a safe direction - one where an unintentional discharge will cause NO HUMAN INJURY and, at most, minor property damage (Yes, that's the Laser Rule again).
- Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard at all times throughout the clearing/unloading process.

- Place the SAFETY ON. (If Applicable)
- Remove the magazine.
- Cycle the action several times then lock the bolt or slide to the rear.
- Visually and physically inspect the chamber to confirm the firearm is unloaded.

Never, never, never pull the trigger to dry fire, or pull the trigger prior to disassembly without following the six steps above and physically and visually checking the chamber. Never!

Mistake No. 7 is assuming that your secret hiding place is secret! It ain't. How many times did you find stuff your parents hid from you? So what makes you think your kids and their friends aren't as smart as you? Keep your weapon in a safe, or, use a trigger lock (and for God's sake, never use a trigger lock on a loaded weapon).

Mistake No. 8 is not understanding how your firearm works or not being intimately familiar with it. Yeah, intimately. Put your ego on the shelf. If you don't understand something about how the weapon works, ask someone who does.

One of our top firearms instructors once told a student that he works with *his* firearm at least ten minutes a day to stay proficient.

Now, some people might think that sort of dedication was being obsessive. It's not. After all, why do people who are in really good shape still go to the gym? To stay that way of course. Well, we have to maintain our proficiency with our firearms. That doesn't mean shooting every day, but it does mean working with an UNLOADED weapon, practicing our draw and reholstering techniques, dry-firing, reloading drills, breaking the weapon down and reassembling it.

Look at it this way: if you only used a computer program twice a year (most officers qualify only every six months), you'd have a damn hard time producing a complicated piece of computer work in just a few minutes. And it would be even tougher if you knew your job depended on the quality of your work.

Same thing goes for firearms. You're going to use your weapon under stress. So, you have to take the time on a regular basis to become v-e-r-y familiar with the tool that's going to save your life. End of sermon.

Mistake No. 9 is using your firearm for something it wasn't designed for. It is not a hammer, a pry bar, or an impact weapon. Exception being as a last resort, then hammer away. No matter what the flashlight ad says, please, don't use your gun to drive nails.

And mistake No. 10 is being complacent. Firearms are firearms. Put your mind in gear before you engage your hands. Take nothing for granted. When you handle a firearm turn the mental switch ON and keep it ON, if something distracts you, you should immediately re-check your firearm; magazine out, open slide/bolt and check chamber....you can never be too careful.

On the other side, tactically, as a responsible person carrying a firearm to protect yourself and others you should always confirm that the firearm is loaded. The two loudest noises are the **BANG** when you thought there should be a **CLICK** and the **CLICK** when you thought there should be a **BANG**.

After all, every gun is loaded, right?

Stay safe. **TFI**

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CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSES

BY KEN FARREN

Recently there have been several deaths of suspects involving local law enforcement officers. As fellow officers and friends of the officer involved, we find ourselves at a loss of what to say to this officer when he or she returns to duty. Many officers, wanting to be macho and upon seeing the officer for the first time might say, "Wow, that was a great shooting the other night, that guy was a real dirt bag. I'm glad he is dead." or "I wish I had got to shoot that guy."

The flip side is the officer who wants to show compassion for the officer and make a statement such as, "I know you really wish that had not happened. I bet you feel bad about having to kill that guy; it will be all right. I would have probably done the same thing." Or "His families will probably understand."

Remember that an officer who is involved in a death of an individual may have a huge range of emotional reactions to what has occurred. He may be angry, scared, sad, or depressed. He may be suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. He may have no emotional reaction at all. He may want to be supported in all his actions, or he may be questioning himself.

So what do we say to this officer to help him through these hard times?

Basically, what will help the most is to tell the officer, "I'm glad you're okay" or "I'm glad you were not hurt." or "I'm glad to see you back at work." Tell the officer you are available if he or his family needs anything. What this officer needs to hear and know at this point is that someone cares about him and his family and are available to talk, visit, or anything else the officer might need.

Remember that officer involved deaths are life changing events and that each officer will react differently. Just be a friend and show support, and it will be appreciated. Healing takes time for any wound. Give the officer some time to heal but be there if he needs you.