



SAGA SNIPPETS

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Flying with Firearms

This article has been written as a collaboration between Nico Smit of the Civil Aviation Authority of South Africa, Heinrich Maritz of Airlink, and John Welch of SAGA.

South African hunters usually drive to their hunting destinations, very seldom would they fly, especially by commercial airways. However, sport shooters often fly to participate in their sporting activities. On the other hand, foreign visitors seldom drive, they like to fly, since time is of the essence. Business people prefer game farms with landing strips so that they can use their private or company aircraft, also because for them, time is money.

Over the years I have been inundated with enquiries about passengers being detained by the police at airports when one or a few rounds of ammunition were found in their luggage. This is nothing strange for hunters and sport shooters, since it is easy to dump or forget a cartridge or a dud cartridge or even empty cases in your bags. Unfortunately, this makes police or security personnel at check-in points at airports very nervous. Before flying anywhere make sure that there are NO such items in your luggage or hand luggage. Also ensure that you do not have sound moderators and magazines in your hand luggage.

SAA used to have an excellent firearms-handling system, in terms of which you would, prior to boarding your flight, hand in any licensed firearm and ammunition, and collect it at the airport of des-

tinuation. The same applied to international flights, provided you had the requisite export permit.

Currently some domestic scheduled airlines provide a firearm transport service, at a fee, on local and international routes, provided the passenger is in possession of a valid firearm licence and, for international travel, also an export permit for the firearm. In addition to the firearm transport service, some airlines also provide a safe-keeping service, although there are strict time limitations on how long the firearms may be stored.

Airlines also require the passengers to make prior booking and confirmation arrangements with them prior to arriving at the airport.

The firearm transport service and restrictions are item and route specific and therefore persons intending to make use of the firearm transport service should check beforehand with the airline.

Airlines mostly only allow hunting rifles and shotguns. Air rifles are handled the same way as rifles. Most airlines seem to not permit the carriage of handguns and modern sporting rifles (so-called assault rifles). No loaded firearms are permitted.

Because of weight restrictions on aircraft, you should also check with your airline if there is a restriction on the number of firearms per passenger. Most airlines restrict the number of firearms to a maximum of three per person. Remember, the limita-



tions on the maximum amount of ammunition per passenger remains at 5Kg (gross weight) per passenger notwithstanding the number of firearms handed in.

Note that only loaded ammunition is permitted. Ammunition with explosive or incendiary projectiles, separate containers with black powder, smokeless powder, primers, percussion caps, homemade powder, and ball loads for muzzle loading firearms, are not permitted.

Ammunition/cartridges are regarded as dangerous goods and are subject to the dangerous goods regulations. A maximum of 5kg (gross weight) of cartridges per passenger is permitted provided the ammunition is securely packed. Ammunition is not permitted to be packed loose and ammunition belonging to someone else may not be packaged in the same container.



Continued...Flying with Firearms

Firearms need to be packed in lockable metal, moulded leather, oak and leather or a hard plastic firearm case. Soft slip cases (leather or canvas) are not allowed. If the airline is not satisfied that the firearm case can be securely locked, or that the case will not suitably protect the firearm, it has the right to refuse acceptance. Ammunition must be transported separately from the firearm, also in a hard case. Airlines will usually permit up to three rifles and/or shotguns, either separately or in one hard case.

On arrival at the airport, firearms must be handed in at the Firearm Desk. Check for the Firearm Desk signs or ask for directions at the information kiosks.

Firearm owners (passengers) will be required to produce a valid licence, temporary import or export permit, when applicable, for the firearm(s) and ammunition. He or she will also be required to make and declare the firearm(s) safe for carriage. A hunting or sport shooting firearm should in any event be safe and it will be only a matter of proving that it is safe. When doing so, ensure that the firearm is NOT pointed at the official or at any member of the public.

Security personnel at the Firearm Desk will request the owner to open his/her container to verify that any ammunition is securely packed and that the total weight of ammunition per passenger does not exceed 5kg. The passenger will be required to provide personal information by completing the firearm register for the hand-

over to the security personnel. Once this is done the owner will lock the case securely and the security personnel will take charge thereof. Although some countries allow ammunition in checked baggage, most airlines will not allow it, and in South Africa, the airline will not accept baggage containing ammunition.

It is always a good idea to have certified copies and soft copies of permits and licences available should documentation or licenses get lost during your travel.

Foreign hunters visiting South Africa can apply for a temporary import permit for their firearm/s on arrival. Once they have landed in South Africa and immediately after clearing immigration, all foreign nationals arriving with firearms must report to the SAPS Firearm office, where SAPS officials will check whether the foreigner has a valid import permit. Firearms can be collected at the Firearm Desk just after immigration.

If you are a hunting outfitter or professional hunter, you should explain to your visiting hunters about firearm legalities in South Africa and what procedure will be followed upon arrival and again upon departure from SA. Some foreign hunters are often overjoyed with the outfitter or professional hunter and want to leave them a lasting memory, often a rifle or shotgun. Unlike in the past, this cannot happen unless a section 21 permit is issued pending the licence application by the outfitter or professional hunter or unless the firearm is checked in



with a dealer who may keep it in their storage register pending the licence. Upon departure there needs to be a valid explanation why the imported firearm is not being exported. Also ensure that foreigners know that firearms and ammunition may neither be in checked or hand luggage. Hunting and other knives may be in checked luggage but not in hand luggage or on the person.

SAGA members and others who wish to transport firearms and ammunition on commercial airlines are advised to make the necessary enquiries when they make their bookings. At the same time, make sure about the terms and conditions, and the costs, since the information above is generic and not airline specific.

When traveling abroad, also make sure that you double check the requirements of the airline and country you are traveling to, as well as all the countries you are transiting through, as requirements can be different for each country.

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Family Home Defense

by Sheriff Jim Wilson

21 April 2021

Very few would argue that having a home-defense plan is not an important thing. Unfortunately, most folks limit the scope of their thinking unnecessarily when considering home defense. Home defense is not just about using a firearm to defend against a violent criminal attack. It is also about defending the home and family against fire, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and any other situation, man-made or not, that places the family in danger.

Another major mistake is for the man of the house to think that he alone should devise a plan that will protect everyone. In a criminal attack, the man of the house may be the first one to fall. If that happens, what exactly is the rest of the family supposed to do? Who knows what tools to use and how to use them? Who knows who to call for help? Home-defense has to be the task of the entire family. And the entire family should be involved in the planning.

As painful as it may sound, it really wouldn't hurt to turn the TV off for an hour or so and have an old-fashioned family meeting. This family discussion should begin by listing the various dangers that are possible in your area.

Once the list begins to take shape, subsequent family meetings should work on developing a plan to deal with each situation. Lists of equipment and supplies that will be needed should be made, as well as deciding who is going to be responsible for taking care of those supplies and operating the equipment.

I think it is extremely important that the children in a family should also be a part of these planning sessions. During our frontier days, the entire family was involved in



defending against the threat of attacks. Those who weren't shooting were busy reloading the guns for those who were. Children who were too young to do any shooting were involved in molding bullets and carrying food and water to the defenders. In short, the frontier family faced the threat as a unified family unit with each having an important task to contribute. That is the same sort of attitude that will protect today's families who have to deal with serious problems that threaten their existence.

Parents must be the judge of their children's maturity and ability to handle assignments. They just shouldn't short-change their kids when it comes to evaluating their skills and abilities. Kids are often far more observant and capable than we sometimes think.

In assigning tasks to the children of the family, it is often fairly easy to come up with assignments that are important but do not place the child in danger. For example, when you wake up to the smell of smoke in the house, your five-year-old's job may be simply to escape through the bedroom window and run to the neighbor's house for help. (This is assuming, of course, that one knows the neighbors and has made prior arrangements with them.)

When firearms are a part of your home-defense plan, the entire

family should be part of a firearms program that begins with gun safety.

Some years ago, I had a group of my hunting buddies over to the house. They were all out in the den and I was in the kitchen arranging refreshments when I heard my 5-year-old son say, "Don't touch that gun without my dad's permission!"

It turned out that one of the guys had opened my gun case to show a new rifle to the rest of the group. When I stepped out to admonish my son, the friend spoke up, "Don't say a word to that boy. He is exactly right and I should have asked permission." Kids can and do learn.

While it might be wrong to call these family defense sessions fun, it is amazing to find how they will become interesting and pull the family together. Each member begins to take pride in having a part, however small, in the welfare of the family unit. Having a plan helps keep their natural fear under control. Family members learn not only what their duties will be, but what the rest are tasked with, too.

In time, these family meetings may become a weekly affair, discussing the issues that you are faced with and how to best deal with them. Home defense is really family defense and the whole family should be involved. Besides, it will give the TV a much-needed rest.

Extracted from:

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2021/4/21/family-home-defense/>

5 Tips To Improve Your Match Scores In Any Shooting Discipline

by Frank Melloni
Monday, April 19, 2021

Competition is about gauging your skill level, enjoying an organized shoot, spending time with range buddies and above all else—improvement. Sure, these events are tremendous fun, but if you don't see changes for the better, eventually the novelty of shooting a match wears off and you are stuck in stagnation. This is never a good place to be in any area of life and competition is no different. Early on, we must decide if we want to continue with a certain style of shooting, or abandon it and perhaps try something else.

Regardless of the discipline or league you shoot in, there are a few pointers that are helpful to move up the leaderboard.

1. Listen to the better shooters.

The competitor that smoked you on that last stage likely isn't a bad person—just a better shooter. Most top shooters have an open personality. Heck, half of the reason they got to where they are is at some point, they weren't shy when it came to spending time with better shooters. That same open nature usually works the other way too, and many are happy to talk about a given hurdle and how they've overcome it.

Often, I sit with my friends and share what I've picked up over the years with those looking for advice. Conversely, I have spent numerous nights around a campfire listening to a group of far better long-range shooters explain to me what I'm doing wrong. At the range, when the topic of forums comes up I always like to say "my squad is my forum." These are the folks who have not only survived their woes, but mastered them. Most are aching to tell you how they did it. All it takes is the courage to ask.

2. Read as much as you can.

That dreaded four-letter word. You might not fall into this category. While a top-level competitive shooter may not have time to talk, quite a few have published their stories—especially online. Whatever discipline you fancy, it's nearly certain that at least one world champion has a few volumes on what you seek to improve. If they haven't written a book, they have at least penned a few articles. Search bars are your friends.

Besides help from the pros, don't be afraid to give the rulebook a thorough review. You may find something completely legal that you haven't been taking advantage of. It might be a better start position, or even gear that is going to help speed you up or shoot tighter groups.



3. Research all available gear.

Read gun reviews, because news-worthy firearms could possibly give you—the competitive shooter—an edge. Is there a reticle for your PRS scope that you wish existed? How about a "lefty" version of a popular AR-15 that might make your reloads a tad faster? Search bars are great for this, but don't forget the wonder of walking around a gun show or convention to get a little touch and feel in as well.

4. Practice what you hate.

Over time, we can find ourselves in a vicious cycle with things that we aren't good at. Some will shy away from the one thing that gives them trouble during a match because it's frustrating. But, by skipping it in practice you will never get better at it. A shot of self-discipline is all it takes to break the redundant loop as you dive headfirst into whatever you're lacking.

So be sure to spend plenty of time shooting off your weak side, or in that position that hurts a little. You'll see your biggest gains from these areas.

5. Shoot more matches.

The number one apprehension to competing that I hear is, "I'm not good enough to shoot a match." To this, I lovingly reply, "That's not true, you're just not good enough to win. If you want to improve enough to win, you need to shoot a few first." The vast majority of first-time competitors do not win their first match, so you might as well get it out of the way. In time, you'll have more failures and more opportunities to learn and improve.

The only way to experience the rigors of match competition is to actually compete. Sure, outside practice is a big piece of the puzzle too, but unless you spend time on the clock with someone else keeping score it's just not the same. If you want to improve your match performance, one of the easiest things you can do is just simply show up more.

Extracted from:

<https://www.ssusa.org/articles/2021/4/19/5-tips-to-improve-your-match-scores-in-any-shooting-discipline>

Improving Draw Stroke

Practice Matters!

<https://www.ssusa.org/articles/2021/4/21/improving-draw-stroke>

by Dick Jones
Wednesday, April 21, 2021

We live in stressful times. With much of the country operating in low-contact mode, thanks to COVID-19, it's easy for frustration and boredom to set in. Many shooting ranges have been forced to cancel matches and formal events. Combine this with the current ammunition shortage, and the stress for gun owners becomes even worse. Why not spend some of this time working on shooting skills?

While it isn't always possible to shoot on a range, you can certainly upgrade your skills at home by improving your gear manipulation skills — specifically your draw. Repetition is the mother of skill-building and repetition of your draw pays off, making you faster, safer and more precise. A cleaner and faster draw will not only cut time off your scores, it also improves your chances in a deadly force event and enhances your conditioned responses as a safer gun handler.

In my classes, I remind students of the scene in *Taxi Driver* when the character, Travis Bickle, stands in front of a mirror and asks the proverbial question, "You talkin' to me?" Okay, so the movie was a bit creepy, and Travis wasn't exactly a role model, but the point is that repetition builds speed and skill. The object is to self-critique your draw and eliminate issues that slow you down or are unsafe. Standing in front of a mirror may help you in this. The idea is to build a proper draw that's safe and gets the gun to horizontal and

then develop speed. Before training, remove the magazine, check for a clear

chamber at least three times, holster and conceal — if that's your goal.

Traditionally, the draw is taught as a four-point combat draw stroke, but it should be one continuous smooth and fast motion. All points of the four-point method are crossed, but the goal is for fluid and fast motion. At the beginning of the draw from concealment, the support hand clears the cover garment as the strong hand grasps the gun. The strong hand's grip must be established with first contact to assure a proper grip at completion of the draw. Grip should be firmly on the gun from the time it leaves the holster. Otherwise, there's an opportunity to fumble as an adjustment is made. Care should be taken to not sweep the muzzle with the support hand. As the gun clears the holster, the barrel should be rotated to horizontal. As the gun rises to upper chest level, the support hand joins the grip with the gun maintaining horizontal attitude. Once the gun is at eye level, the gun is pressed forward into a full shooting position while the sight picture is acquired.

Keeping the gun horizontal allows firing a shot at any point after the gun clears the holster, if needed, in a defensive situation. At no point should the barrel of the gun come above the horizontal plane. While the gun could be utilized once it clears the holster, the object is to get the gun to line of sight as fast as possible.

Initially, critique your grip, getting and keeping the gun horizontal and being aware of how the support hand meets with the rising gun. Pay attention to the attitude of the gun and keep it hori-

zontal. Many shooters incorrectly raise the muzzle in late stages of the draw, imitating the early cowboy movies. When the gun is horizontal, you can begin forming the sight picture as the gun is pressed out. In early stages of this, speed isn't as important as establishing neuro pathways that repeat the same way every time you draw. Think in terms of your movements running on rails, following the same path every time.

The current draw should be exactly like the last one and the next one the same. If you begin the draw with a sloppy grip, focus on that part of the process until you get it right. Do the same thing if you're not keeping the gun horizontal or connecting with your support hand. When you're hitting all the points, begin to work on speed. If you have a timer, set it for a random beep and yell "Bang" when you complete the draw and are on target with the sights. If you don't have a timer, there are multiple shot timer apps available for your smartphone.

When you start your car, you find the key in your pocket, orient the key to fit into the key slot, insert the key and start the car. Do you have to think about this? You've repeated that process thousands of times and you don't have to think about it. It just happens. It happens without thought because of repetition. You should develop your draw the same way. Imagine the value of a fast and consistent draw that requires no conscious thought in a deadly force event or at the beginning of a complicated stage in an IDPA or USPSA match. Success comes with attention to details and developing skills through repetition.