



SAGA SNIPPETS

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Amnesty, Licences, the CFR and the Portfolio Committee



By Damian Enslin
SAGA Chairperson

Second Firearm Amnesty: 1 August 2020 - 31 January 2021

The Second Firearm Amnesty came to an end on the 31 January 2021 and, similar to the previous amnesty, was plagued with numerous issues and problems. In the main these being lack of SAPS staff; poor communication from SAPS to the general public about the Firearm Amnesty; multiple and contradictory Directives from SAPS Head Office; and poor communication within SAPS itself to its personnel on the implementation of the various Directives.

And of course COVID 19 had a huge impact on not just the general public's access to SAPS, but on SAPS itself, with many police officers being off on sick leave or stations closing or partially closing because of COVID 19. All of which created major problems for those firearm owners who were in possession of firearms with an expired licence and who wished to take advantage of the Firearm Amnesty.

As a result of all these issues, SAGA has written to the Minister of Police to request a further Firearm Amnesty and we are waiting for a response from the Minister.

Should any firearm owner who wished to utilise the Firearm Amnesty but was unable to do so because of issues with access to SAPS stations or any other related issue, please email the SAGA head office on:
saga@saga.org.za.

The "Green Card / Licence" Debate

In previous SAGA snippets, bulletins and articles, SAGA has dealt quite extensively with the "green card issue" – where a member only possesses a green or old licence in terms of the Arms and Ammunition Act, and not where a member has transitioned to the white cards or the Firearms Control Act (FCA). In SAGA's opinion, the amnesty was not a solution for the "green license" issue. These firearms are possessed legally, and the licenses are deemed valid, as still per the June 2009 Judgment of Judge Prinsloo.

As previously reported, SA Hunters and the State Attorneys Office held discussions late last year concerning the court case, with a view to possible settlement, and we will report back to our members in due course once we hear further.

The Portfolio Committee on Police (PCoP)

On the 16th February 2021, via a virtual meeting, The Deputy Minister of Police Mr Cassel Mathale, the National Commissioner of Police General K Sitole and Major General M Mamotheti (FLASH Commander), appeared before the Portfolio Committee on Police (PCoP) to report back on the two Firearm Amnesties.

SAPS were lambasted for a number of reasons, in the main being the inaccurate and contradictory statistics with respect to the number of firearms that were surrendered, and the PCoP pointed out a number of inaccuracies in the presentation from SAPS on the two amnes-



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ties. The PCoP also wanted to know how many “illegal” firearms had been surrendered.

As a result of all the issues brought up by the PCoP, the Chairperson suspended the meeting and it was agreed that a further meeting would be held, with SAPS undertaking to answer the various questions and submit a more detailed and accurate presentation.

CFR Maladministration

At the same PCoP meeting on the 16th February 2021, the PCoP brought up the major concerns that they had with CFR and their capacity and ability to process applications.

The PCoP wanted to know how long licence applications were taking, and what was being done to deal with the backlog with applications. There were specific concerns about how long the renewal of licences were taking.

Processing of Licence Applications – from 90 to 120 working days

On about the 15th February 2021, the SAPS announced, that because of various issues, but in the main COVID 19, that the processing of licence applications would now take 120 working days.

SAGA is deeply concerned about the capacity and the ability of SAPS to deal with the firearm licence system, and things seem to be getting worse and not better, with a serious lack of accountability within SAPS as well as the recent corruption issues.

SAGA shall continue to put pressure on the SAPS and CFR to ensure that they deliver at reasonable service levels.

Why Being a Young Competitive Shooter Rocks

by Kristen Voss
16 February 2021

With technology literally hovering over our shoulders, it's no surprise that the shooting sports might not interest Millennials as much as that cool drone or video game that just came out. We're young adults trying to find our place in this world, and we're all about instant gratification. We want things fast, and we want to have fun while doing them. And standing for an hour in the same position, concentrating on your breath in order to get that perfect shot might not sound exciting or fun for that matter. I get it. However, I don't necessarily agree.

I am a Millennial and the shooting sports have been a big part of my life. From learning how to shoot at the age of 12, to joining a competitive shooting team in college, the shooting sports have helped shape my life academically and professionally. Through my experience, they taught me life lessons that most Millennials don't have the privilege or desire to experience. And yet, Millennials would benefit from such involvement. I know, because from the first day I walked onto the rifle team in college, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I thought it was going to be more of a hobby or activity just for fun after classes. Little did I know that it would become my passion over the course of those four years.

Competitive shooting is a way of life for a lot of people. It's more than just aiming at the target and pulling the trigger. Rather, it's a right—one that encompasses every emotion, goal and desire that we as humans possess. And I slowly learned this as I progressed from a tiny scared freshman to an experienced, and let's face it, still scared senior. (Because who isn't scared about

graduating college and going into the real world?) But my time on the NCAA Rifle team were some of the best experiences I've had, because of the many things I learned.

The shooting sports taught me drive, focus, perseverance, dedication, responsibility, time management, failure, disappointment, pride, overcoming obstacles, being humble, managing stress, staying healthy and being patient. (Yes, I did say patience...for all those Baby Boomers and Generation X'ers who say Millennials don't have any.) By having the responsibility of taking care of a firearm, showing up to practice on time, keeping track of my progress and having some healthy competition, I was able to learn how to succeed in various ways. I discovered what I had to sacrifice in order to succeed. Which is exactly what life is about. But knowing that ahead of time helped me perform well academically as well as prepare for what lay ahead in the professional world. There will be good days and there will be bad days, but it's how you handle them that define you.

Now some of you might be thinking, well you can learn all those things by doing other sports or activities. And that may be true, but the shooting sports are different because you have to have a specific mentality knowing that the equipment you use for the sport is not something to be taken lightly. It's different than holding a basketball in your hands. It's a firearm that has to be handled safely and should be respected, not only for yourself, but also for those around you. Learning this in itself is a lesson in responsibility and safety that other sports might not teach as well, and which can be carried on through the rest of your life. You respect yourself and others by respecting the firearm that you shoot and take care of.

These lessons learned through the shooting sports don't come easily or quickly, but rather are gained through the journey. You have to push through blood, sweat and tears. You'll have to sacrifice (Oh, there's that word again!) not going out on that Friday night when the rest of your friends are partying and then sleeping in till noon, while you get a little extra trigger time in for that match you have the next day. And for some, that's not an easy task...especially when you're 20 years old. But what they don't realize is that by sacrificing a little now, it puts you much farther ahead of the rest of the crowd on that road to success.

You have to embrace the process in order to see results. It's all a mental game you have to overcome, and if you try looking for results too early, you'll most likely not see what you want to see. Just like when you take a shot, you have to follow through. If you don't follow through and instead immediately look at the screen to see if you got that 10.9*, you'll be extremely disappointed because you didn't finish the process.

In the end, we all want to see that 10.9* appear on the screen at a match. And that 10.9* means so much more than a number. Rather, it signifies all the lessons you've learned while participating in the shooting sports that later come in handy when you're shooting for success in another arena. I know it has for me.

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2021/2/16/why-being-a-young-competitive-shooter-rocks>

5 Rookie Gun Handling Mistakes That "Old Hands" Make

By Frank Melloni
Friday, February 19, 2021

As a career firearms instructor and gun writer, I have shared the firing line with hundreds of thousands of shooters, both new and experienced. Throughout the years I've compiled some of the most common errors that I've witnessed. Here are five rookie mistakes...that even some experienced shooters make.

1. Leave that scope alone!

While scopes are built to fine specifications, these measurements pale in comparison to the tiny bit of drift (none really) that they can take before they experience a change in zero. I've seen shooters take scopes off of their rifles just to get them into a case, or even to "protect" them from airline travel. There are some mounting systems that are meant for this, but not your everyday scope rings. One unfortunate told us that he was taking his scope off so the airline luggage carriers couldn't be rough with it. He planned on landing in Africa, slapping it back on his rifle and being ready for whatever the bush threw his way. We haven't seen him on the range since that day... rumor is he was eaten by a Cape buffalo.

2. Shoulder width isn't the splits

I've seen some ridiculous excuses for a pistol stance. A couple of special mentions would include a shooter who crossed their legs because they said it helps to brace themselves, to a dude who would do his best Charlie's An-



gels impressions before firing each shot. When it comes to foot spacing you really don't want your feet too far outside of shoulder width. Once you feel your calves or your quads starting to burn you are no longer building a physically relaxed position, and it certainly isn't natural. Before I hand a student a pistol I have them stop and look at the way they are standing while they listen to me speak; they shouldn't be departing too far from an everyday upright position. In other words, the biggest issue shooters have with building a pistol stance is that they go out of their way to build a pistol stance.

3. Speaking of shoulders...

"Pull 'er real tight into yer shoulda!" For those not familiar with this statement, it's the sage advice typically uttered after a 13-year-old girl bruises her shoulder from the 12-gauge shotgun that is fitted to her 6'1" father. It seems like good advice, because when a gun bruises a shoulder it's because it was allowed to travel just a half-inch or so and smack the contact area.

The problem is that pulling the gun hard into your shoulder won't work if the gun is too big. That's because the "contact area" of your body won't be in the right place, and there will be a gap between the gun's buttstock and the shoulder. Where did that gap come from, you ask? It was created when the body relaxed, just a split second before the recoil started. The harder you are pulling the gun into your shoulder, the more dramatic that relaxation is going to be and the wider the gap and subsequent thump.

If you want to reduce the pain of recoil get a gun that fits you correctly and just maintain consistent contact against your shoulder. The gun should never be aggressively pressed against your body.

4. Cater your party, not your cross-dominant eye

From my records, about one in seven shooters seems to be cross-dominant. All that means is that a right-handed person's dominant eye is the left one, or a left-handed person whose dominant eye is the right one. That's a problem, but it's easy to fix with pistol shooting...and not too tough with shotgun shooting either. However, rifle owners tend to get a bit creative. The worst advice I hear on the range is "you need higher rings."

This advice is geared towards allowing the shooter to shoot with their cheek resting on top of the stock so that they can get the incorrect eye partially to the optic. The result is improper mounting, a bad cheek weld and a whole lot

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Continued...5 Rookie Gun Handling Mistakes

of neck pain. The solution is as simple as blocking out the dominant eye with a post-it so that the eye closest to the stock can take over, or simply learning how to shoot off of the other shoulder.

5. It's called a resizing die for a reason

This last one only happened once, but it's too good to leave out. After watching a father belittle his son for not being able to sight-in his .50 BMG at 300 yards (true story), we noticed that he was frantically catching the brass every time the kid cycled the bolt. When one finally made it to the ground we found out why he was doing his best river dance as he berated the boy one last time before we walked away. His words of wisdom were, and I quote "We can't reload them if they hit the ground!" First, it's doubtful that that monstrous case is going to take so much as a ding

when it hits the ground. Second, during the reloading process, each case is set back to spec in one simple stroke through a resizing die.

With more than 10 years under my belt as an instructor and nearly that long evaluating guns and ammunition, this is a much-abbreviated list of some of the craziness that I have experienced on the range. While the stories themselves are interesting, nothing is more interesting than the common denominator that they all share and that is: "I do it that way because I was told that's correct." All I ask is that they give my advice the same consideration they gave Grandpa's 40 years ago... because sometimes what you think you know just isn't so.

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2021/2/19/5-rookie-gun-handling-mistakes-that-old-hands-make>

How to Avoid Negligent Discharges

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2021/2/8/how-to-avoid-negligent-discharges>

by Sheriff Jim Wilson
Monday, February 8, 2021

For the second time that morning, I had admonished the student to keep his finger straight and off the trigger, unless his sights were on the target.

Once again, I explained to him why it was important and he told me he understood. As I turned to walk down the shooting line, the student holstered his striker-fired pistol and shot himself in the thigh. Fortunately, it was not a serious injury, only an 8-inch gouge. His first words to me as I began giving first aid, were, "I'm sorry. It was an accident."

Recently, a group of guys were filming a music video. For some reason, one of them decided he would put an "unloaded" gun to his head and pull the trigger. He shot himself in the head and was dead on the spot. In reporting this tragedy, the news referred to it as a "shooting accident."

Let's be really clear about this: For our purposes, an accident is something that occurs, usually resulting in damage or injury, and is completely beyond our control. Being struck by lightning, for example, might qualify as an accident. Negligence, on the other hand, is an incident within our control that often causes damage or injury, but it could have been avoided had we been paying attention.

Both of the incidents I cited above are examples of gross negligence—not accidents. In fact, most cases of a firearm discharging unintentionally are properly called a "negligent discharge," although I suspect people prefer to use the term accident because

it somehow implies no one was really at fault. It also opens the door to being able to claim there was probably something wrong with the gun. In fact, this sort of thinking is no different than the anti-gun crowd blaming an object, instead of a person, for a crime. Fortunately, negligent discharges don't occur often, but that is not much consolation if you are the victim of the negligence.



I suspect the main reason novice shooters experience negligent discharges is because they try to do too much, too fast. They buy a gun they don't really understand and they immediately set out to start handling it the same way they see some experienced shooter performing on TV. In my younger days, cowboy fast draw was all the rage, and it was not uncommon to hear of some neophyte whose trigger finger was faster than his draw. This generally resulted in a bullet hole somewhere in the lower part of his anatomy. When dealing with loaded firearms, instant gratification should not be a goal.

The second pitfall for new shooters is the failure to get professional training. Folks have a tendency

to assume we should learn to shoot the same way our dads and granddads did—by doing it. After all, this is America, isn't it? While there are a number of excellent firearms training facilities around the country, some folks think they are just too expensive. Often overlooked are the excellent classes offered by the National Rifle Association that can be taken at a very reasonable cost. Professional gun training is a shortcut to efficient, safe gun handling, usually without the expense of stitches, Band-Aids and potential hospital bills.

Just to be fair, we have to realize experienced shooters can also be guilty of negligent discharges. It is the rare police station that doesn't have a hole or two in the ceiling, a wall or some other place where bullet holes should not be. The same can be said for some shooting ranges and hunting lodges.

I think the main reason negligent discharges occur with experienced shooters is because the shooter has handled guns for so long, he no longer truly believes they are dangerous. It is the same sort of complacency that causes farmers to get hurt with chain saws and tractors, or ranchers to get gored by their cattle or kicked by that gentle horse. A little bit of fear is a good thing.

Years ago, Col. Jeff Cooper became concerned about the wide variety of gun-safety rules. He also felt some lists of rules were so long, a person couldn't possibly memorize them. With this in mind, he set out to develop a list of gun-safety rules that was not only short, but extremely easy to remember. New shooters should memorize them and take them to heart. In fact, all shooters should review them on a regular basis just to remind themselves how easy it is to avoid a negligent discharge.

Continued...How to Avoid Negligent Discharges

There are four, and they are simple.

1. All guns are always loaded. Notice this doesn't say "treat all guns as if they are loaded." If the music video guy took this rule to heart, there is no way he would have pulled the trigger while the gun was pointed at his head. In fact, he wouldn't have pointed it at his head at all.

2. Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy. I once watched a gun "expert" reviewing a new handgun for a TV show. During the 2-minute segment, he pointed the gun at some part of his body eight times. He believed it was unloaded and, in fact, it probably was. But what sort of example was he setting for viewers?

3. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target. This was a tough one for all of us lawmen who came up during the revolver days. We learned your finger went to the trigger as an integral part of gripping the pistol in the holster. Well, the simple fact is if you keep your finger off the trigger, it's nearly impossible for the gun to go off unintentionally. In reality, violation of this rule is probably responsible for most negligent discharges involving handguns.

4. Be sure of your target and what is beyond. I was once called as an expert witness in a case where two men were turkey hunting. Making their stalk, the two split up and one hunter got a shot at a tom. He missed, but his bullet struck his partner in the femoral artery. Needless to say, the resulting death wasn't an accident, it was negligence.

Gun owners and shooters need to live by these four simple rules. They are easy to remember, and I don't really care if you can repeat them in order. Know them, live by them and demand those around you to do the same. And, for goodness sake, remember an unintentional discharge isn't an accident, it is a negligent discharge.