



# HARDHOLDER

Volume 6, issue 7

Summer 2019

## How to use a fire extinguisher.

Fire extinguishers are designed to put out fires in the incipient stage. How do you know if the fire is still in the incipient stage?

Just give the flame the once over to see if it's taller than you.

It is? Hightail it out of there and call 911. Your fire extinguisher will likely be no match for the flames.

You're still taller than the fire? Proceed to **PASS**.

To employ the extinguisher with proper technique, just remember the acronym "**PASS**."

**P**ull the pin.

**A**im the nozzle at the base of the fire. Hitting the tops of the flame with the extinguisher won't be effective. You got to smother the fire at its base.

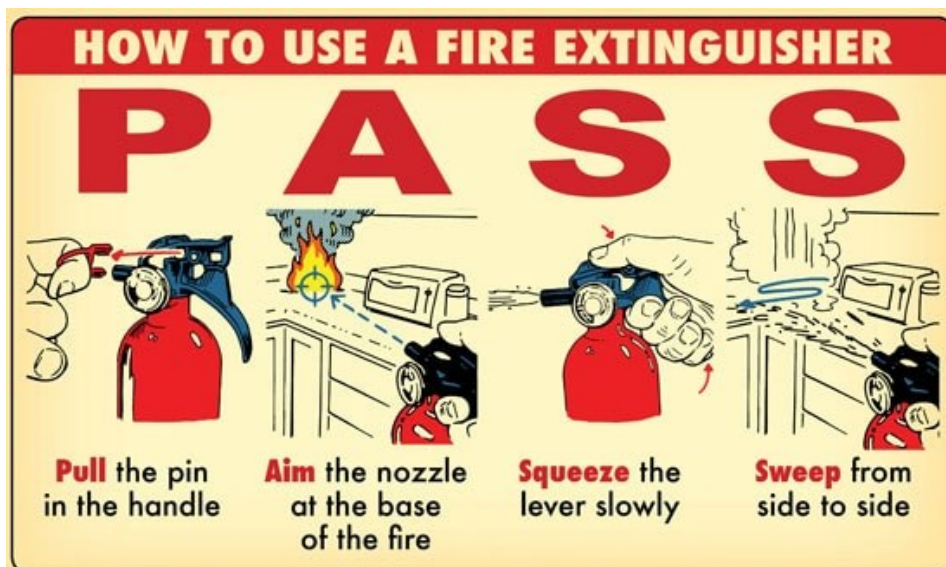
**S**queeze the trigger. In a controlled manner, squeeze the trigger to release the agent.

**S**weep from side to side. Sweep the nozzle from side to side until the fire is put out. Keep aiming at the base while you do so. Most extinguishers will give you about 10-20 seconds of discharge time.

Slowly back away. Even if the fire appears to be extinguished, don't turn your back on it. There might be unseen hot spots or hidden fires that can ignite into a large flame at any moment. You want to be on guard for that.

*"This place is amazing! I have been a member for a year now and for the money you won't find a better deal! It's all outdoors and they even have a 600 yard range; not going to find that at your fancy indoor club."*

*- Adam Hosman*



## In This Issue

- How to use a Fire Extinguisher.
- What You Need to Know prior to competitive shooting!

# What You Need to Know prior to Competitive Shooting

Competitive shooting is a wonderful way to improve shooting proficiency, have fun, and enjoy camaraderie of other gun enthusiasts. You will find most shooters are friendly and welcoming to new competitors and like talking about the sport, guns, holsters, belts, ammunition, etc.

There are a few things to be aware of as you prepare for the course and for a day of shooting. Most importantly, new shooters are not expected to know all the rules but are expected to be safe.

**Safety is always #1.** Ranges that host matches will always be a “cold range” meaning that guns must be unloaded and holstered or bagged *at all times*. Some ranges have different rules about when and where firearms may be handled. If traveling to an unfamiliar range, it is always best to leave firearms unloaded, cased (or bagged) in your car, and first ask the location of the designated safe areas.

Firearms must be unloaded (no ammo or magazine in the firearm), bagged, cased or holstered until the shooter is on the line and instructed to load by the Safety Officer. DO NOT remove firearm from the holster or case for ANY reason, without the direction of a Safety Officer or in a Safe Area.

Before coming to a match, know how to run your pistol. Know how the safety works, know how to load, and unload, show clear, and clear malfunctions while keeping the muzzle safely pointed down range.

## Essential items

**Water bottle:** Insulated stainless steel bottles are nice to keep liquids cold or warm, but plastic works also. Bring extra water during hotter weather. Often ranges do not have water available.

**Food:** Some matches can last several hours. Bring lunch or a snack.

**Backpack or Range Bag** to carry essentials

**Sunblock** and lip sunscreen.

**Extra ammo:** If the match calls for 100 rounds, bring 150-200.

**Hat:** Extra protection from weather, hot brass, shrapnel, insects, etc.

**Concealment Garment:** In IDPA shooters are required to wear a concealment garment – a loose over garment that conceals the handgun in the holster. For local matches this can be any vest, light weight coat, or unbuttoned shirt over a regular shirt. For sanctioned matches there are strict requirements for concealment garments.

**Eye protection is REQUIRED** for both shooters and spectators. Expensive eyewear is not necessary. There are safety glasses/sunglasses for less than \$10 that are ANSI rated and made with polycarbonate that is UV protective.

**Ear protection is REQUIRED** for both shooters and spectators. Expensive ear protection is not necessary. Below are several types of ear protection to consider.

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Photo Caption

## What you need to know prior to Competitive Shooting – Continued.

### Essential Gear

The essential items are eye and ear protection, a firearm and extra magazines, a holster and belt, and ammunition. Below is a discussion of each of the essentials.

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**Electronic ear muffs** are a regular ear muff, with a microphone on the outside, and a speaker on the inside. The advantage is being able to carry on conversations on the range with relative ease, as well as hearing Safety Officer commands. The Howard Leight Impact Sport muffs are good value and popular. Pro Ears are a popular high-end option.

**Custom Molded Ear Protection** (with or without electronics). Pros – comfortable and custom fit. Cons – Expensive, takes time to get fitted.

## What you need to know prior to Competitive Shooting –Continued.

### Choosing a Firearm Do your homework, go shopping, test fire, and then decide.

One of the most important considerations to make when getting started in competition shooting is choosing a firearm with which to compete. Some of the factors to be considered are which competitive sport, which division, which action type (semi-automatic or revolver), availability of holsters, price, and how comfortable the gun is to shoot.

A factory firearm, made by a quality manufacturer is a good place to start. As shooters gain experience and confidence, their interests may evolve. Shooters may find they enjoy several different disciplines, so finding a firearm that is legal for several different shooting sports is essential. Many competitions require a 9mm or larger in a semi-automatic, and .38 special or larger in a revolver. Other competitions such as Steel Challenge or .22 Bench Rest have rimfire divisions.

Generally, something like a Glock 17, Smith and Wesson M&P®9, or Springfield XD are some popular options to get started in most competitions.

**Magazine Capacity:** Most competitive sports have some limits on the capacity or rounds for specific divisions. For example, a Glock 34 holds 17 rounds in the magazine, but IDPA only allows 10 rounds in a magazine. Seventeen round magazines can be used when loaded with 10 rounds. Three magazines are required for IDPA. Magazine carriers for the belt are required for IDPA but not essential for Steel Challenge. Having extra magazines is expedient during a match.

**Size:** Will the firearm (handgun) fit in 'the test box' for IDPA and USPSA?

Both IDPA, and USPSA Production require handguns to fit into a test box of exact proportions to be competition legal. The proportions of the boxes are available and generally a regular duty type pistol will fit in the test box.

**Action type:** Certain divisions in competitions like IDPA split up guns into different divisions based on the action type. For example, IDPA Stock Service Pistol (SSP) requires handguns to be double action. Striker fire handguns such as Glock, M&P®9, or Springfield XD fit into this division. Enhanced Service Pistol (ESP) and Custom Defensive Pistol (CDP) are for the single action pistols like the 1911.

**Holsters and Holster availability:** A good, standard style (paddle or regular belt attached) holster is necessary for competitive shooting. Bladeteck and Comp-Tac are quality options and popular brand choices.

Before purchasing a handgun, consider holster availability. Most of the common handguns have various holster options available. Some of the more obscure handguns may not have a lot of companies making quality holsters or magazine carriers for them.

Consider these questions when purchasing a holster.

Does it take two hands to draw the pistol?

Does it take two hands to re-holster the pistol?

When re-holstering will the pistol point at any body parts?

**If the answer to any of the above questions is affirmative, the holster is not right for competitive shooting.**

## What you need to know prior to Competitive Shooting -

Continued.

**Budget Options:** There are many inexpensive options. Below are some links to get you started.

Uncle Mike's Tactical Kydex Open Top Holster with Paddle

Blackhawk Sportster

Bladetech Revolution

**Holsters to avoid:**

**Nylon.** Nylon holsters with a retention strap do not work for competitive shooting. These holsters are problematic for drawing and re-holstering.

**Blackhawk SERPA.** Many ranges do not allow this holster due to the unsafe nature of operation.

**Leather Inside the Waistband (IWB) holsters.** Unsupported leather IWB holsters collapse after the pistol is drawn, making re-holstering unsafe. Quality re-enforced IWB holsters like a Milt Sparks can be safely used.

**Appendix, cross-draw, shoulder rigs, and pocket holsters** are not allowed in competitive shooting.

**Ammunition:** Test fire any new ammunition before going to a match. Know the round count for the match and take at least 50% more than needed.

By Dean Barr and Mary Castang

## Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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