

# Getting Started

## Equipment

### Handguns

It should be emphasized that complex and expensive modifications are not needed to start IPSC shooting. Most pistols out-of-the-box are quite adequate and most shooters strive to reach the limits of even a out-of-the-box standard pistol.

Changes and modifications can always be made as you need them. Don't let yourself get caught up by the current fads and fashion. Competitors may enter any one of five

Divisions depending on the style of firearm they use.

Nothing is as important as reliability. A reliable government model 1911 with standard sights and a standard trigger pull that functions 100% will win every time over a full-house race gun that doesn't work. If the handgun functions correctly with your ammo then all is well. If not, your first concern is to make the handgun reliable.

Modifications which improve accuracy are good sights and a good trigger. Modifications which increase comfort, control, handling, and speed are items like beavertails, extended magazine releases, checkering, extended thumb safeties, oversized magazine wells, etc.

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### Holsters

The holster must cover the trigger and should allow the second finger to be placed on the stock when the shooter grasps the pistol as part of the draw. The trigger being covered is important. It is also important for revolvers.

The holster should be such that the shooter can get a firm grip on the pistol with the strong hand without moving the pistol in the holster, and should not have to change the grip after the pistol has started to move.

The holster should be placed on the belt so that once the hand is dropped onto the pistol, a firm firing grip may be obtained. The pistol should fit snugly into the holster so that no movement within the holster occurs. The holster should hold the pistol firmly.

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### Magazine Requirements

At least 4 magazines, and probably more, are required for most courses of fire. The magazines should drop easily when the magazine catch is depressed.

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## Magazine Pouches

Pouches should be cut low enough to ensure that the shooter can get a proper grip on the magazine. The front of all magazines should be facing forward. A minimum of three pouches are required. Magazine pouches should expose half or so of the magazine for easy grip and should have adequate retention yet release on demand.

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## Gun Belt

The belt should be 1.75 inches wide and must be of sufficient strength and stiffness to hold the holster in the same position at all times. The holster should not be able to slide on the belt and the belt and holster loops should be the same size as the belt.

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## Safety and Responsibility

It must be emphasized that the standards for safety and safe gun-handling are very high and are rigorously enforced. The excellent safety record of IPSC is no accident. It is a direct result of these high standards.

### Basic Firearm Safety Rules

1. All firearms are always considered to be loaded.
  2. The muzzle must always be pointed down range and in a safe direction - never allow the muzzle to cover anything you are not willing to shoot.
  3. Keep your finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard, except when actually shooting at targets.
  4. Be sure of where the bullet is going to end up.
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### Range Safety and Safety Areas

In addition to the four basic safety rules, there are further rules for safety. These procedural safety rules involve safe gun-handling and common sense.

- Once holstered, handguns may not, under any circumstances, be handled in any fashion outside the Safety Area without the express authorization of a Range Officer.
- The uncasing and casing of the firearm must always take place at the Safety Area.
- The handling of ammunition in any Safety Area is strictly prohibited.

- Pistols are carried in the holster from stage to stage. They are always , unloaded, with the hammer down, and no magazine inserted.
  - Eye and ear protection must be worn at all times while on the range whether shooting or not.
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## Range Commands and Procedures

The following are the basic commands and procedures for loading and unloading.

- "Load and make ready"
- "If you are finished, unload and show clear"
- "If clear, hammer down, holster"
- "Range is clear"

### **"Load and Make Ready"**

On the command of the range officer "Load and Make Ready" the shooter is on the firing line facing downrange:

- Unholsters the pistol.
- Immediately points it down range with the strong hand on the grip, and the trigger finger well outside the trigger guard.
- Inserts a magazine containing only one round with the weak hand.
- Locks the elbow, with the arm extended, muzzle pointed downrange.
- Turns the pistol slightly horizontal (toward the weak side).
- Pinches the slide between the thumb of the weak hand and index finger using the rearmost slide serrations.
- With a push/pull motion assertively pulls back the slide all the way and releases it so that the cartridge in the magazine is chambered, always pointing down range.
- Immediately applies the safety.
- Removes the empty magazine and stores in a pocket or drops it (it really shouldn't be put back in a magazine pouch where it could be later grabbed by mistake).
- Inserts a fully charged magazine, all the time keeping the trigger finger well outside the trigger guard.
- Holsters the pistol, always with the safety applied.

The shooter now has a pistol in the holster which is cocked and locked with the safety on and loaded to full capacity (at all times the trigger finger is kept out of the trigger guard).

### **"If You are Finished, Unload and Show Clear"**

Following the command of the range officer "If You are Finished, Unload and Show Clear" the shooter will:

**With a self loader:**

- Point the pistol down range with the strong hand and the trigger finger well outside of the trigger guard.
- Remove the magazine.

- Drop the magazine or put it somewhere other than a magazine pouch. Do not try to hold the magazine in the other hand.
- Move the safety off.
- Extend the arm, pointing the pistol always down range.
- With the other hand, pinch the rear slide serrations with thumb and first finger.
- Pull the slide back sharply to eject the chambered live round onto the ground.
- Hold the slide open until range officer inspects the firearm by locking slide back, as follows:
- Turn slightly sideways and with the pistol always pointing down range, cup the weak hand on the slide, making sure never to pass the hand in front of the muzzle, then shift the right hand so that the thumb is under the slide-lock and exerting a slight upward pressure, rack the slide rearwards with a push/pull movement until the slide locks back into position.
- The shooter then stands for inspection, facing down range with pistol pointing down range, the trigger finger always well outside the trigger guard, magazine out, slide locked back, and chamber exposed to view for Range Officer inspection.

#### **With a revolver:**

- Take the finger out of the trigger guard.
- Press the cylinder latch, open, and dump the cartridges on the ground.
- Continue to face down range with the cylinder open for inspection, always with the trigger finger well outside the trigger guard. The muzzle always pointed downrange.

#### **"If Clear, Hammer Down, Holster"**

This is the command after the range officer inspects the firearm making sure that there is no magazine in the magazine well and no cartridge in the chamber.

- Always with the trigger finger well outside the trigger guard.
- With the slide locked back, extend the pistol to arms length and apply the pinch grip at the back of the slide.
- Let the slide down easily, retaining the pinch grip until the action is closed.
- With the pistol always pointing down range and into the backstop, press the trigger so that the hammer falls. If, through inadvertence, there is a cartridge in the chamber, there will be a discharge down range in a safe direction which will immediately draw attention to the inadvertence without danger. It should be stressed that the hammer must be dropped by pressing the trigger so that if there is a cartridge in the chamber, it will discharge. This will ensure that there is no possibility the pistol will be holstered with a live cartridge in the chamber.
- Holster an empty pistol (always be careful with muzzle direction, never point the muzzle back to find the holster). Keep the muzzle down range and bring the pistol back until the muzzle will drop into the holster in a forward motion and insert into the holster.

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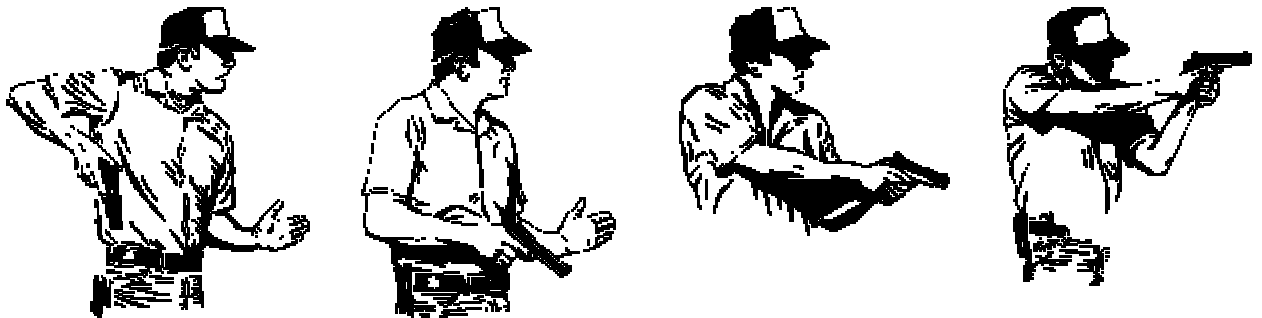
## **Shooting Basics**

## The Stance

Should be standing relaxed, natural and comfortable. Many people feel more stable and comfortable with strong side foot dropped back a few inches in a slight boxing type of stance. Experiment, find the stance that feels natural and without conscious effort. This will allow you to achieve consistency in your draw.

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## The Grip and the Draw



This is the sequence of events from the pistol in the holster to the first shot fired. It is best described in a step-by-step sequence.

### The Grip

The shooter's strong hand grasps the grip of the pistol by coming up from the bottom. The second, third and fourth fingers come up on the stock with the trigger finger well away from the trigger guard. The thumb should rest on top of the safety. The safety remains on at all times during the draw.

The other hand moves forward of the center of the stomach with the fingers extended and together and the palm vertical. The palm is about 6" to 8" out from the stomach. The position of the weak hand is in line with the push of the pistol towards the target.

### Clearing the Holster

The pistol is drawn from the holster, always with the safety on and the trigger finger well clear of the trigger guard. When the muzzle clears the holster, it should immediately be pointing downrange.

### The Push

The shooter commences to push the pistol toward the target where the two hands come together onto the grip. The hands come together with the weak hand fingers over the strong hand gripping the stock. The weak hand thumb on top or along side the strong hand thumb. After the two hands come together on the way to the target the safety is wiped off with the strong hand thumb. The trigger finger is always outside of the trigger guard.

### The Sight

The push out to the target continues. The trigger finger comes into the trigger guard and the shooter is still looking at the target.

The movement to the target is continued to the line of sight. The finger comes onto the trigger. The shooter changes focus from the target onto the front sight for the flash sight picture, presses the trigger for the surprise break always focusing on the front sight.

When these steps are put together smoothly the result is a definite push out from the holster to the target, not an upwards swinging motion which would go up past the target. With practice, the shooter will have the sights on target and will only have to confirm this as the trigger is pressed.

The strong arm should be fully extended but slightly unlocked at the elbow. Try for it to be in same position every time. The head and shoulders should remain erect and motionless. The support arm should be slightly more bent at the elbow with a slight pulling back effect.

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## **Sight Alignment and Trigger Control**

As in any type of shooting, sight alignment and trigger control play a major role in accuracy. Because of the element of speed, IPSC shooters must learn and understand the concept of the acceptable sight picture for the shot required.

A five yard sight picture is much different from a twenty-five yard sight picture. The shooter must learn through practice what is an acceptable sight picture for each type of shot.

Good trigger control is keeping the trigger finger independent of grip. The power of the grip should be in your weak hand to allow the strong hand to press the trigger easier. The best place on the trigger is the center of pad on first joint on trigger, and the press should be straight back. The best way to learn good trigger control is by dry firing without any magazine or ammo and removing the firing pin is recommended.