

## GUNSITE FIREARMS SAFETY RULES



1. **All** guns are *always* loaded.
2. **Never** let the muzzle cover anything which you are not willing to destroy.
3. Keep your finger **OFF** the trigger until your sights are *on the target*.
4. **Always** be sure of your target.

Gunsite Academy, Inc.  
www.gunsite.com

# Safety

Gunsite wisely posts these four rules of gun safety at prominent locations all over its facility. As a matter of fact, it even has them hung in the latrine, visible whether you're sitting on the throne or facing it. Burn them into your brain!

What does firearm safety have to do with "Skills Check?" Everything! Safety is the most important skill of all.

Humans are on their best behavior when they are around strangers. We drive better on unknown roads, and we are always cautious the first time we use some new and wickedly sharp power tool.

Familiarity leads to unsafe acts like pointing a handgun at your big toe, or forgetting to notice your significant other's new haircut, shoes, earrings or perfume. Familiarity is a dangerous thing.

A friend once told me there are only two types of motorcycle riders: those who have wrecked and those who are going to. He's right, and I believe there are similarly only two types of gun owners—those who have had a negligent discharge and those who will have one eventually. The law of averages will finally catch up, and the curse of familiarity will strike; you will pull the trigger when you should not.

The key to surviving a negligent discharge is to always follow Gunsite's Rule No. 2: Do not let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy. Follow this rule, and if and when you negligently discharge your firearm, a bruised ego will hopefully be the only injury.

If you don't believe familiarity can be dangerous, consider three police chiefs who worked in my home county. All unintentionally shot themselves during

their careers. One was trying to holster his handgun while seated in his cruiser, another was showing a handgun to a friend and the third was on the range with a shooting buddy. Call these mistakes accidental, negligent or stupid, it doesn't matter. They all broke Rule 2.

Then there is Rule No. 1: All guns are always loaded. My firearms instructor at the police academy said there used to be a wall clock in the squad room. Surrounding the clock were a half-dozen bullet holes that got there when officers pulled the trigger on "unloaded" guns pointed at it. From a safety standpoint this is quite disturbing, but the instructor said what bothered him most was that the clock did not have any holes in it.

Rules 3 and 4 are added precautions, like air bags in a car. Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you are ready to shoot, and always be sure of your target and what is beyond it.

Study the rules of gun safety. Commit them to memory, and recite them every time you pick up a firearm. If you cannot recall these rules, don't pick up the gun. I've had my negligent discharge, and every day I work to make sure it is the only one I will ever have. Maybe you can beat the odds. S