

How to declare the RANGE IS SAFE 1998

In discussing safety matters in the last few months (and the last many years!) it has been suggested that we need a universal range command suitable for ALL disciplines which unambiguously tells everybody on the range that

EITHER

The pistol(s) being used have been shown to be unloaded and are in a safe, non-fireable condition and it is therefore safe to go forward and do whatever is needed to the targets

OR

Everyone who went in front of the firing line to do whatever it was has returned, the targets are ready to be shot on, and it is safe to start doing so.

Currently a variety of commands is used. While individual ROs will tend to use the same command consistently, this is most probably different to what another RO on the same range might use! Many ROs use no specific command for this purpose.

We have little guidance from the rulebooks. I asked the National Range Officers to choose from a number of possibilities I suggested, or to come up with something else. In the end it is just a matter of making a decision and publishing it and asking everyone to use it, and hopefully there will be little argument. However, we might as well get it as near to right in the first place as we can. I think it is difficult to argue about the need for a standard pair of commands since we have been talking about it for at least 20 years!

The responses I got, and my own thoughts produced two fairly clear sentiments –

- We should use a recognisably different command for each of the above situations; this will give much less chance of confusing the two situations, which does happen now.
- We should add a supplementary command to tell people what to actually do next; after shooting this is generally to do with scoring and repairing targets; before shooting it is generally to do with loading or making ready to shoot.

The only rulebook to give any guidance that I can find is in the IPSC rulebook where it says that after clearing the shooter's pistol, the RO should give the command "Range Clear". We might as well follow this, since IPSC ROs should already be using it.

Putting all this together, I therefore propose the following:

After the pistol(s) have been cleared the command

"Range is Clear" is given followed by

- "Score and patch targets" (IPSC)
- "Score and repair/patch/change targets" (UIT & ML)
- "Change/paint targets" (NRA)
- "Reset targets" (HMS & Bowling pins)
- "Paint targets" (Steel)

After the targets have been repaired or reset and the RO has checked that there is no-one in front of the firing line (if necessary by inspecting behind props or counting staff) the command

"Range in Use" is given followed by

- "Load and Make Ready" (IPSC/ NRA/ Steel)
- "Load (for --- series)" (UIT/ ML/Service)
- "Shooters to the Line – Load" (HMS)

Unless anyone can come up with a really good objection, I would ask all Range Officers to start using these commands as soon as possible, and to start as soon as possible.

Stuart Hayman

Director – Safety and Technical Committee – May 1998