

Introducing New People to Shooting during Covid 19 – 2/12/20

Most clubs are quite used to introducing new members into the sport who have not shot before. Coaches and instructors are quite familiar with the methods of getting people to shoot safely and get reasonable results even at their first session. From then on we help them and monitor their progress, as appropriate to the individual, until they are competent to “fly solo” and operate under the normal safety rules that we all follow.

During the current Covid 19 Pandemic, the club must first find out whether it is even possible to introduce new people to the sport. Various National and Local Government regulations have rules that must be followed according to the National Alert Level that the club and participants come under. The Government, National and NSRA Guidance will help ascertain if introducing new members is possible and detail any special restrictions that are in place.

Following on from this, whether introduction is done as a formal course or by individual mentoring there are several common issues that need to be addressed during the current Covid 19 pandemic to avoid transmitting the virus:

- The new shooter handling club firearms. The beginner will not have their own equipment and will need to use communal club guns and other equipment. Before and after shooting:
 - Clean the rifle - sanitise with alcohol, dry off and wipe with oil/silicon cloth. This should be done wearing a mask and with clean hands that have been washed/sanitised..
 - Sanitise the firing point /targets etc. as per the Clubs normal Covid procedures.
 - Avoid using equipment that cannot be sanitised. For example, when introducing prone shooting instead of using jacket, glove and sling use a forend rest. It must be noted that any equipment that can't be sanitised has to be quarantined for a min of 72hrs (3 days).
 - Issue and use disposable earplugs instead of shared ear defenders when possible.
 - Clean any shooting mats and other shooting equipment with the appropriate sanitiser
 - Handling and distribution of targets and other consumables need to be considered. Sanitise hands before and after and limit access and handling of consumables.
- Demonstration using club firearms – this is often done using the same gun that the shooter is using. Clearly there is a risk of passing the virus during this process.
 - If possible, the coach should demonstrate using a different gun.
 - If only one gun is available, the gun must be sanitised before passing the gun between shooter and coach.
- Standing closer than 2m or even 1m. It is almost inevitable that, for technical or safety reasons, the coach will have to step in close to the shooter. Maintaining social distancing is not always possible if a new shooter inadvertently points the gun in an inappropriate direction and must be prevented from doing so. There are several things we can do to mitigate the risks:
 - More dry holding/firing before live shooting – get them used to handling the firearm and doing appropriate dry training drills before live fire will reduce the need to “step in” when on the range.
 - The shooter must wear a mask.
 - The coach must wear a mask and visor.
 - The coach must wash/sanitise their hands before working with a shooter. Also, the shooter should wash their hands before a supervised shooting session. This is to cover the eventuality where the coach must move or otherwise handle the shooters gun. The coach must wash/sanitise their hands before working with the next shooter.

Coaches should have their own mask, visor and other PPE. It is a good idea to provide disposable masks for shooters or encourage them to bring their own PPE. If a new shooter cannot wear a mask (and an alternative visor cannot be used e.g. when shooting a rifle) then they cannot take part.

- “Classroom sessions” – sometimes a part of the induction is done in the club room either individually or as a group. As well as the normal Covid system used by the club, in the clubroom take particular care over:
 - Where possible training groups should be kept separate. Keep any groups to less than 6 people.
 - Ensure 2m spacing, but, if not possible (say when demonstrating or handling equipment), enforce the use of face coverings for coach and shooter (as when on the range).
 - Tables and chairs will need to be sanitised before use and at the end of each session.
 - Provide enough hand-outs, manuals and other literature to avoid sharing.

A club wishing to introduce new members needs to produce a specific risk assessment for the activity. The club will need to use this, together with the measures to mitigate the risks, within their general Covid Risk Assessment. This must be used whenever new shooters are taking part to ensure their safety and that of the other members. Make sure the shooters understand this process and any coaches involved in these sessions understand their duties. Whilst this is not an exhaustive list, it covers some of the main points to consider when introducing new members. Make sure you log in all new shooters for track and trace purposes and direct them to the club QR code if available. These measures are to be used alongside any Government, local or NSRA guidance that is in place.