**FIREARM SAFETY**

**Five Primary Rules of Firearm Safety** Remember – **TREAT, NEVER, KEEP, KEEP, KNOW.**

**Rule 1: TREAT every weapon as if it were loaded.**

Rule number one is the most important rule, which is to treat every weapon as if it were loaded. A rifle is a tool for killing the enemy, plain and simple. The first rule of weapons safety ensures that the rifle and every firearm are treated with the appropriate respect. This means when you pick up a weapon, you always check to see if the weapon is loaded and if there is a round in the chamber.

It means never taking a fellow Marine’s word that their weapon is unloaded. Even if the commandant himself hands you a rifle, it is a Marine’s duty to check the weapon and ensure it is loaded or unloaded like the Marine said it is. Once the rifle is in your hands, it is your responsibility, whether they handed you a hot weapon or not.

**Rule 2: NEVER point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot.**

This goes hand in hand with rule number one. Never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to shoot. Oftentimes, in the Fleet Marine Force, you will hear it as “never point a weapon at anything you do not intend to kill.” This rule means keeping the muzzle of your rifle always pointed in a safe direction, regardless of whether it is loaded or not.

**Rule 3: KEEP your finger straight and off the trigger until you’re ready to fire.**

This rule is another way to ensure that while handling your weapon, you do not unintentionally pull the trigger. While on patrol or moving in and out of vehicles or tight spaces, it’s possible for your weapon safety switch to get hung up on gear. This rule prevents negligent discharges by ensuring that you keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire your weapon.

**Rule 4: KEEP the weapon on safe until you intend to fire.**

This weapons safety rule means waiting until the last second to flip your weapon on “kill” and fire a shot. At the rifle range, this means that when you’ve been given the go-ahead and the range is “hot”, you still have the weapon on safe until you fully intend on taking the shot. It is the last barrier between your rifle and its target.

**Rule 5: KNOW your target and what is beyond it.**

This rule is known as the “5th and unspoken rule” but it is not less important than the other 4 weapons safety rules. Knowing your target means that you have positive identification or PID, that the target is a threat, and you are cleared to legally engage them. Positive identification is usually set in the rules of engagement for a particular area of operations, but someone pointing a weapon at you generally qualifies across the board.