

Negligent Discharges Can Ruin More Than Your Day

Safety first, safety always.



Whenever we handle firearms, safety should be our main concern. Whenever I teach classes, one of the first things I tell the students is that they are all range safety officers. And, as much as I hate clichés, I tell them, “If you see something, say something.” Based upon my experience, I believe that there are two major causes of negligent discharges: lack of attention, and lack of knowledge.

Anytime we handle a firearm we ought to focus our full attention on handling it safely. And this even includes when we have unloaded it and are cleaning or otherwise maintaining it. In this way, we create habits of always maintaining trigger control and muzzle control, and we create the habit of focusing on the task at hand.

I know people who are really good at multi-tasking, and I am jealous because I am not one of them. But, when handling a firearm, multi-tasking is not a good idea. Unfortunately, you can find videos online of people experiencing negligent discharges and, watching them closely, you will see that almost invariably the individual is not paying attention to the most important task at hand. He/she is may not be paying close attention to holstering slowly and safely, or maybe they aren’t giving due attention to muzzle control or trigger control. Carelessness can be a killer.

The other prime cause of negligent discharges is lack of knowledge. The individual may be new to shooting and simply not understand how to operate a firearm safely. Or they may have just bought a new gun and not know the safe manual of arms for that particular firearm. We see this in handgun classes all the time, but at least they have come to a class to get the training and that is sure a good thing. It should go without saying that reading the instructions that came in the box with that gun is always a good idea.

Frankly, carelessness and lack of knowledge are not good excuses for having a negligent discharge. If this sounds like I am preaching to you then you are absolutely correct. And in turn, you have every right to preach gun safety to me because none of us are immune from it. We remind ourselves and each other to stay focused on the task at hand whenever we are handling a firearm and be willing to seek training in how to operate a particular gun properly and safely.

Lawful American gun owners enjoy a God-given right that many people in this world will never know. We are family and we should take care of family. Preach gun safety.