

# Firearms Fundamentals: A Course for New Target Shooters

**Course Title:** Introduction to Handgun Safety & Marksmanship

**Course Goal:** To provide new shooters with the fundamental knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary to safely handle and operate a handgun for recreational target shooting. Upon completion, students will be able to demonstrate firearm safety, understand their firearm's operation, and apply the core principles of marksmanship.

**Target Audience:** Individuals with no prior shooting experience or those seeking a comprehensive refresher on firearm fundamentals.

**Estimated Duration:** 4 hours (Classroom Instruction)

## Module 1: Firearm Safety - The Foundation (60 Minutes)

- **1.1. Introduction & Course Overview**
  - Instructor and student introductions.
  - Course objectives and expectations.
  - Emphasis on a positive and responsible mindset.
- **1.2. The Four Universal Rules of Firearm Safety**
  - **Rule 1:** Treat all guns as if they are always loaded.
  - **Rule 2:** Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy. (Muzzle Discipline)
  - **Rule 3:** Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on the target and you have made the decision to shoot. (Trigger Discipline)
  - **Rule 4:** Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.
  - *Interactive discussion and scenario-based examples for each rule.*
- **1.3. Additional Range Safety Protocols**
  - Understanding range commands (e.g., "Cease Fire," "Range is Hot," "Range is Cold").
  - Proper use of eye and ear protection.

[Image of safety glasses and hearing protection](#)

\* Rules for handling firearms at the firing line versus behind the line.

\* Uncasing and casing firearms safely.

## Module 2: Understanding Your Handgun & Ammunition (60 Minutes)

- **2.1. Anatomy of a Handgun**
  - **Semi-Automatic Pistol:** Key components (Frame, Slide, Barrel, Sights, Trigger, Magazine Release, Slide Stop).
  - **Revolver:** Key components (Frame, Cylinder, Barrel, Sights, Hammer, Trigger, Cylinder Release).
  - *Hands-on demonstration with inert training firearms (dummy guns).*
- **2.2. Basic Firearm Operation**
  - The Cycle of Operation for a semi-automatic pistol.
  - How a double-action/single-action revolver functions.
  - Demonstration of loading and unloading procedures.
- **2.3. Understanding Ammunition**
  - Components of a cartridge (Case, Primer, Powder, Bullet).
  - Understanding caliber and how to select the correct ammunition.

- Identifying and handling misfires (dud rounds).
- **2.4. Common Malfunctions**
  - Recognizing and safely clearing common stoppages (e.g., Failure to Feed, Stovepipe, Double Feed).
  - *Instructor demonstration on how to clear malfunctions safely.*

## **Module 3: The Fundamentals of Marksmanship (75 Minutes)**

- **3.1. Dominant Eye**
  - Explanation of ocular dominance.
  - *Practical exercise to help each student determine their dominant eye.*
- **3.2. The Seven Core Fundamentals**
  - **Stance:** Establishing a stable and balanced shooting platform (Isosceles/Modified Isosceles).
  - **Grip:** Achieving a firm, high, and consistent two-handed grip.
  - **Sight Alignment:** The relationship between the front and rear sights.
  - **Sight Picture:** The relationship of the aligned sights to the target.
  - **Breathing Control:** How to breathe correctly for precision shots.
  - **Trigger Control:** The most critical fundamental. A smooth, continuous press without disturbing the sights.
  - **Follow-Through:** Maintaining all fundamentals through the shot and recoil.
- **3.3. Dry-Fire Practice**
  - Introduction to the concept and importance of dry firing.
  - *Guided dry-fire practice session in the classroom using dummy rounds or training firearms.*

## **Module 4: Firearm Ownership & Next Steps (45 Minutes)**

- **4.1. Firearm Cleaning & Maintenance**
  - Importance of a clean and properly lubricated firearm.
  - Overview of cleaning equipment and solvents.
  - Demonstration of basic field stripping and cleaning.
- **4.2. Safe Storage Practices**
  - Secure storage options: Gun safes, lockboxes, and cable locks.
  - Legal and ethical responsibilities of securing firearms from unauthorized persons.
- **4.3. Continuing Your Training**
  - Preview of the live-fire range session.
  - Suggestions for practice drills and skill development.



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Information on further training opportunities.

#### •4.4. Final Review & Q&A

Recap of key safety rules and fundamentals.

Open forum for student questions.

***Disclaimer:*** This course outline provides general firearm safety and marksmanship information. All handling of firearms should be done under the supervision of a certified instructor. Always know and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding firearm ownership, transportation, and use.