



## Range Etiquette

### The most common phrases and their meanings include:

- **Ceasefire:** ceasefire is a phrase people use on the shooting range to get all shooters to stop shooting immediately. You should unload your magazine and leave the chamber open. After doing so, you should step back from the firing line.
- **Commence fire:** when you feel ready, you may begin shooting.
- **The range is hot:** when someone says the range is hot, it means you can commence firing. When the range is hot, you cannot step past the firing line.
- **The range is cold:** all firearms have stopped firing, and shooters have stepped away from their firearms and the firing line.
- **Cold Range:** A range command meaning there's no live fire and guns should be unloaded and/or unaimed. Also called a "Closed Range" or a "Cease Firing" command.
- **Clear:** This means the range is physically clear of any potential safety issues and no one is downrange. Do NOT resume shooting until the Range Safety Officer tells you.
- **Downrange:** The end of a gun range where targets are hung/placed. Shooters will cease firing when someone is walking or standing downrange.
- **Firing Lane:** The designated area shooters are allowed to aim and fire in. Typically includes a shooting bench and/or booth and a target post. Ranges have multiple lanes running parallel to one another, and you're expected to stay in your own lane.
- **Firing Line:** The line where you position yourself to get ready to shoot. These lines are either visibly marked on the ground or clarified as a specific location by the Range Safety Officer. In firing lanes, this line is usually just the shooting bench. Only shooters and safeties are allowed on the firing line.
- **Hot Range:** A range command meaning shooters are allowed to start firing and moving loaded firearms to or from the firing line. Also called an "Open Range" or a "Commence Firing" command.
- **Range Safety Officer (RSO):** The range staff member responsible for supervising shooters, enforcing the range's rules and procedures, and handling any problems that occur. They often yell out range commands. Also called "Aufsichtspersonnen" in German.
- **Misfire:** When a bullet cartridge fails to eject when firing the gun. If unresolved, this problem can lead to an accidental discharge, which can be deadly.

When you arrive at the range, check in with the range officer. After their approval, you can begin setting up to shoot.

Introduce yourself to the staff and let them know if it's your first time at a shooting range. They are there to help you with whatever you need, and they'll likely appreciate your consideration.

While checking in, you should leave your firearm in your vehicle. By doing so, you're following the safety standards of most gun ranges.

Read and follow the range safety rules and procedures.

### **Respect the Range Safety Officer**

**Let them know if you're new.** They'll help you get started.

**Follow Instructions.** When you're on the range, it's essential to follow the safety officers' instructions. They are in charge on the range. Listen carefully for commands since they may result in life-or-death injury.

**Ask questions.** Clearing your confusions increases your safety. More than anything, don't be afraid to err on the side of "better safe than sorry."

### **No Arguing on the Firing Line**

#### **Respect Other Shooters**

First, you need to respect the other shooters' space. The range assigns everyone a set space. Don't invade another shooter's space, even when you're walking by.

The other type of respect is mental. Shooting takes concentration and mental fortitude. Don't distract shooters by trying to talk to them while at the firing line—wait until you're both enjoying a coffee.

Stay in the lane you've been assigned. It's rude (and unsafe) to intrude on other shooters' space.

NEVER aim a firearm anywhere other than toward the target area and only shoot at your own targets.

If you're a regular shooter, do *not* assume someone wants/needs your help. If they want advice, they'll ask.

**Clean Up After Yourself.** This is common courtesy! Don't leave any trash or gear behind.

Collect all the bullet casings. These often fly several feet away from your firing station, so be sure to collect as many as you can when the supervisor tells you the range is cold.

You also need to retrieve any targets you used during shooting. During firing, you may have ripped some of these to shreds. To maintain a clean shooting range, try to collect as many pieces of the target as you can.

#### **Dress Appropriately**

You don't have to *dress up*, but you want to make sure you're covering sensitive areas for safety reasons. Appropriate range attire includes:

- Higher necklines
- Closed-toed shoes (v. sandals)
- Pants (v. shorts)
- Hats (optional, but helpful when visiting outdoor ranges)

#### **What To Do During Cease-Fires**

At any time during a session, the RSO can call for a cease-fire. This means every shooter has to stop, unload their gun, lock the slide or cylinder open, place it on the bench and step behind the firing line.

Before you step back, be sure you have everything you need for the break because you can't return to the line until the RSO allows you. These rules are put in place to ensure everyone's protection.

Cease-fires allow shooters and staff to walk downrange to check equipment or targets, do range maintenance or set new targets up. Those who venture down the lanes are trusting the shooters to keep them safe. Passing the line or touching any gun during a cease-fire is prohibited.

If anyone notices a problem, like a gun malfunction or a person wandering downrange, they can also call for a ceasefire. The command will then be repeated by the RSO to ensure everyone hears and heeds the call.

As long as you are behind the firing line, you can take the time to relax. Take the opportunity to socialize with your neighbors and get to know a few of the regulars. Respond to text messages or read a few emails while you wait or rehydrate and clear your mind before resetting your focus.

Once no one is downrange and everyone is prepared to continue, the RSO will call the command to commence firing, after which you may step to the line and handle your firearm.