

CDTSA Holster Training

Training Objectives

The primary focus of this training is safety.

The acts of drawing and re-holstering the handgun are potentially dangerous if done incorrectly. Individuals who successfully complete this training will not pose a safety threat to themselves or others if they continue to apply, develop, and enhance the principles taught in this course.

Following this training session, the participants will have a clear understanding of how to safely draw their handgun from their holster as well as how to safely re-holster the handgun.

Glossary

The following terms are used in this document.

- **Ammunition** means loaded cartridges, dummy cartridges, empty cases, and snap caps
- **CRFSC** means the Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course
- **Dominant Hand** means the hand which the shooter relies upon to draw and discharge the firearm
- **Holster** is a device that safely stores and retains the firearm at or near the shooter's waist, on the same side of the body as the shooter's Dominant Hand. The holster design must allow the firearm to be drawn and returned to the holster safely
- **RSO** means Range Safety Officer, the individual in control of the range
- **Safety Area** is a location at the range which is designated for shooters to prepare their firearms for use at the range and to prepare the firearms for transportation from the range
 - No ammunition, as described above, is allowed in the Safety Area
- **Support Hand** refers to the shooter's hand that is used to support the grip of the Dominant Hand, and to retrieve reloading devices

Range Commands

The Range is Active

- This command indicates the range is active and live firing of firearms can be expected immediately
- The visual signal for an active range is a red flag, or a red light
- Eye and Ear protection must be worn while the range is active
- Nobody can advance past the firing point while the range is active

The Range is No Longer Active

- This command indicates there will be no discharging of firearms on the range
- The visual signal for an inactive range is a green flag or green light
- People can safely move to any part of the range

Cease Fire

- All shooting must stop immediately
- All firearms must be unloaded and holstered (or put into racks if long guns)
- Firearms cannot be handled once they have been made safe during a ceasefire

Load and Make Ready

- This is the command from the RSO to prepare to shoot the handgun during that stage of the training or competition
- The handgun will be removed from the holster and be pointed downrange until re-holstered
- The firearm will be loaded, and any safety devices will be applied
- The firearm will be re-holstered

Unload and Show Clear

- At the end of the training or competition stage, the RSO will direct the shooter to unload the firearm
- The shooter will remove the magazine from the firearm, remove the round from the chamber and lock the slide to the rear
- In the case of a revolver, the shooter will open the cylinder, remove the ammunition from the cylinder and hold the cylinder open
- Once the RSO has determined the firearm is unloaded, the following command will be issued

Hammer Down and Holster

- The shooter will allow the slide to move forward into battery
- The shooter will point the firearm down range and press the trigger to drop the hammer or release the striker
- The firearm, now in the “fired” position, is holstered
- In the case of a revolver, the command will be altered slightly to be, “Close the cylinder and holster”

Course Essentials

Required:

- Hearing and eye protection
- Handgun in good working order
- Suitable holster
- Sturdy belt
- At least three magazines (or six moon clips/four speed loaders)
- Suitable, sturdy footwear (Nothing open toed)
- 200 rounds of ammunition

Advisable:

- Magazine (or moon clip) loading tools
- Ball cap

Course outline

1. Introductions
2. Safety protocols
3. Questions, and discussion
4. Firearms inspection
5. All firearms checked to confirm they are unloaded by the RSO
 - a. Cross-checked by students
6. Firearm Retention Test
7. Fundamentals of the draw (firearm unloaded)
8. Re-Holstering the loaded firearm (unloaded firearm)
9. Clearing and re-Holstering the firearm (firearm unloaded)
10. Drawing and engaging the target (Live fire portion)
 - a. Drawing and shooting dominant hand
 - b. Drawing and shooting with two hands
 - c. Drawing and shooting support hand
11. Movement
 - a. Movement and Drawing
 - b. Drawing and Movement

Conduct of the course

This training should be completed in 90 minutes.

The course will begin with an examination of the firearms, ammunition, and the holsters of the course participants. A discussion of the various features, benefits and potential drawbacks of each holster will be held. All firearm/holster combinations will be tested to ensure it meets the minimum retention requirements. If the holster fails the retention test, but is not otherwise unsafe, the student will be allowed to continue with the training, but they will be informed that their holster is not likely going to meet competition requirements.

Once the equipment of the participants has been determined to be suitable, the participants will begin to practice drawing and re-holstering their unloaded firearm. Once the group has reached a level of proficiency that will allow the use of live ammunition, the process will transition into a live-fire exercise.

Safety Considerations

From the moment contact is made with the handgun, safety must be in the forefront of everyone's mind. Muzzle awareness and discipline are absolutely essential for the safe handling of all firearms, and particularly so with a handgun. The firearm must be kept pointing downrange at all times except when unholstering or holstering. Even when inserting the handgun into or removing it from the holster, muzzle discipline must be maintained, meaning the muzzle must not point in an unsafe direction, at any time. Pointing the firearm in an unsafe direction includes pointing the firearm at yourself. This is most likely to happen early in the draw or late in the re-holstering process.

Eye and hearing protection are mandatory. Ladies should wear a top with a close-fitting collar. A turtleneck is perfect. If a piece of brass goes directly from the ejection port down your shirt, re-holster your firearm and raise your support hand. Remain on the line, facing downrange.

If there is an issue while on the firing line, raise your support hand and wait for the RSO. When speaking with the RSO, do not turn around to continue the conversation - keep facing downrange.

There will be a designated safety area for handling of firearms. Firearms can only be removed from their cases and holstered in this designated area. Live ammunition, dummy rounds, snap caps, and empty cases are prohibited from this safety area. Ammunition handling and magazine/speed loader/moon clip loading will be done in another designated area.

The firearm should be cleared using the ACTS/PROVE procedures described in the CRFSC before being holstered

All firearms are to be unloaded and remain holstered unless directed to do otherwise by the RSO. If a firearm is dropped or falls from a holster, it must not be picked up by anyone other than the RSO. The only time a firearm can be out of the holster is under the direction and supervision of the RSO or in the safety area. The only time a firearm can be loaded is under the direction and supervision of the RSO.

If the firearm is equipped with a tactical light, the position of the switch should be evaluated, and recommendations made to the owner of the firearm. What will be looked at will be the position of the switch for the light – if the switch is activated by the base of the trigger finger, the student will be asked to consider repositioning the switch to a location where it can be activated by the support hand.

Particular care must be taken when manipulating the firearm, such as clearing a stoppage, chambering a round, clearing the pistol, applying safeties or any other activity undertaken while handling a loaded firearm, as it is easy to lose awareness of where the muzzle is pointed.

Draw

The fundamentals of drawing a holstered firearm are:

- Dominant hand to the firearm to establish the proper (“first and final” - no re-adjustment) grip,
- Support hand to the abdomen,
- If required, release any restraint devices on the holster,
- Remove the firearm from the holster, trigger finger on the frame, away from the trigger,
- As soon as the muzzle is clear of the holster, push the muzzle toward the target
- If shooting with two hands, bring the Support Hand to the firearm as soon as it is safe to do so,
- Disengage any safety device on the firearm,
- Bring the handgun to the firing position, and
- Only when the firearm is on the target does the trigger finger move from the frame to the trigger

Important:

If your handgun slips from your hand, DO NOT TRY AND CATCH IT - rather let it fall and raise your non-shooting hand. The RSO will determine when it is safe to retrieve it

If you are shooting in a stage that requires you to use your Support hand only, consider the two following methods for drawing your pistol:

- With the Dominant Hand, grasp the butt of the grip with the forefinger, index finger and thumb, and withdraw the firearm from the holster
- Move the firearm toward the target and across your body, transferring the firearm from your Dominant Hand to your Support Hand
- Bring your Dominant Hand, either flat or clenched into a fist, to your abdomen or chest

Or

- With the Dominant Hand, grasp the firearm as you normally would, with the web of your Dominant Hand high up into the grip, but do not wrap your thumb around the grip as you withdraw the firearm from the holster
- Holding the firearm with your fingers of your Dominant Hand and the heel of your Dominant Hand, move the firearm toward the target and across your body, transferring the firearm from your Dominant Hand to your Support Hand
- Bring your Dominant Hand, either flat or clenched into a fist, to your abdomen or chest

Re-holstering

There are essentially two scenarios in which the firearm may be holstered, and the shooter needs to clearly understand the distinction between the two. The first, in which the firearm may be immediately required, such as holstering the firearm during a stage in a competitive event, can be fraught with danger if done incorrectly. The second scenario is when the firearm is no longer required, and it is made safe.

The first step in holstering a firearm is to remove the trigger finger from the trigger and ensure it is outside the trigger guard.

Scenario One – the Firearm may be immediately required

In this scenario the firearm must be rendered safe before it can be holstered. This scenario is encountered at the beginning of a stage in a competitive event, and less frequently, may be required during the stage. Depending on the firearm, a safety may have to be applied, or a decocking mechanism activated. On other firearms, the firearm is simply holstered.

Depending on the circumstances, it may be advisable to reload the firearm before holstering, in anticipation of the next stage of the event.

The fundamentals of holstering a loaded firearm are:

- Remove trigger finger from the trigger and rest it on the frame,
- Engage any safety device on the firearm,
- Bring the firearm close to the body,
- If shooting with two hands, release the grip of the Support Hand, bring the support hand to the abdomen, and
- Insert the handgun into the holster
 - Ensuring the muzzle enters the holster and is not encountering any resistance (it is not a race to holster)
 - Forcing the firearm into a holster with an obstruction may result in a ND
- Use the thumb to ensure the slide is in battery before releasing the pistol

Scenario Two – the firearm is no longer required

This scenario is encountered at the end of a stage in a competitive event when the shooter has no expectation of any further shooting at that particular stage. After the shooter has completed engaging the targets, the Range Officer will instruct the shooter to “Unload and Show Clear”.

Clearing the Firearm

When you are to holster an unloaded firearm, the following procedure will be utilized, without exception. On the command, "Unload and show clear", the shooter will do the following:

For automatic pistols:

- Pointed downrange, finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard, remove the magazine from the firearm,
- Keeping the firearm pointed downrange, and finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard, remove the round from the chamber of the pistol and lock the slide to the rear with the slide lock/release,
- Hold the pistol in such a manner that the RSO can look over (or around) the shoulder of the shooter and visually inspect the chamber of the pistol,
- On the command, "Hammer down and holster", release the slide and allow it to move forward, point the firearm downrange and press the trigger to release the firing mechanism,
 - If the firearm is equipped with a decocking device, it is not to be used in this instance – the trigger must be pressed, and the hammer/striker released
- Re-holster the firearm

For revolvers:

- Pointed down range, finger off the trigger and outside of the trigger guard, release the cylinder lock and swing the cylinder to the open position,
- Keeping the firearm pointed downrange, and finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard, using the ejector rod, remove the ammunition from the cylinder,
- Hold the firearm in such a manner that the RSO can look over the shoulder and visually inspect the cylinder of the revolver,
- On the command, "Close the cylinder and holster", close the cylinder, and
- Re-holster the firearm