

NRA Gun Safety Rules

Safety must be your first concern when handling, using, or storing any firearm. These safety rules must always be followed:

1. Point the Gun in a Safe Direction

Whether a gun is loaded or not, it should always be pointed in a safe direction. This means away from people and other objects. The key is to maintain control of where the muzzle or barrel is pointing at all times, according to the NRA. Something else to keep in mind: Point the gun in a direction so that even if it does accidentally go off, it will not harm anyone or anything.

2. Finger Off the Trigger

Place your trigger finger on the side of the gun, on the trigger guard, or somewhere else away from the trigger until you are ready to shoot. You should only put your finger on the trigger when you plan to shoot the gun.

3. Keep it Unloaded

Guns should be kept unloaded until you are ready to shoot them. Each time you pick up a gun, make sure it does not have cartridges inside. This can be done by removing the magazine if there is one, and opening the action and looking in the chamber.

4. Keep the Safety On

The safety device on the gun should be engaged until you are ready to shoot. The safety is a switch that is located on a gun near the trigger or grip. Keep in mind that safeties can fail, so just because the safety is on does not mean you can be careless with where you are pointing the gun.

5. Be Aware of Your Target

Before you pull the trigger, be absolutely sure of what you are shooting at. In addition, you should know what is behind your target, just in case you miss it. "Think first. Shoot second," according to the NRA.

6. Handling a Gun While Impaired is a No-No

You should not handle guns in any circumstance in which you have consumed alcohol or are under the influence of mind- or body-altering drugs, even if they are legal. You do not want your judgment impaired when you are handling a gun.

7. Keep the Gun Clean

Each time after you shoot your gun, clean it to keep it in safe operating condition. Grease or dirt deposits can impair the shooting ability of the gun. Check the owner's manual of the gun before cleaning it, and make sure your gun is unloaded.

8. Store Guns Safely

There are a variety of storage options for guns. They can be kept in lockable cases designed specifically for guns. Also, there are devices available that render a trigger inoperable. If these devices are used, you still should be sure to keep your gun in a safe place so that kids, or any others unauthorized or unfamiliar with how to operate a gun, do not have access to it.

9. Use the Correct Ammunition

Gun barrels are designed to work with specific ammunition. Using any other ammunition can be extremely dangerous and cause a gun to misfire, or worse. The correct type of ammunition should be stamped on the side of the gun barrel, and boxes of ammunition you purchase will have identification on them.

10. Protect Eyes & Ears

Always wear eye and ear protection when shooting. Guns are loud, which can hurt your ears, and also can emit debris or gas, which can hurt your eyes.