

PENNSYLVANIA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION



Volume 5, Issue 5

Spring 2007

WEAR THE LOGO AND SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!

Enclosed with your Newsletter is the Official Product Line Catalog for the Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association.

These high quality products are embroidered or sealed with the registered logo of the Association and are only available through the Philip Levin Company.

When you place your order with the Philip Levin Company, you are continuing your support of the Sheriffs of Pennsylvania and this Association.

Our products make great gifts for any occasion!

NEWS YOU CAN USE

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SAFE GUN HANDLING

There are over 580,000 current licenses to carry that have been issued in the state of Pennsylvania. Owning and using a firearm is an awesome responsibility. Any and all firearms must be handled with care, caution, and respect.

- **First Commandment—Always Keep the Muzzle Pointed in a Safe Direction**

This is the most important gun safety rule. A “safe direction” is one in which an accidental discharge will not cause injury to yourself or others. NEVER point your muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.

Be especially careful when you are unloading and loading, and make it a habit to know where your muzzle is pointed at all times. Treat every gun as if it were loaded.

- **Second Commandment— Firearms Should be Unloaded When Not Actually In Use**

Load your firearm only when you are in the field, or on the target range and ready to fire. NEVER let a loaded gun out of your sight or out of your hands. Unload it as soon as you are finished shooting *before* you bring it into your car, truck, camp, or home.

Before handling a firearm, or passing it on to someone else, visually check the chamber, receiver and magazine to be certain it does not contain ammunition. Always keep the gun's action open when not in use.

NEVER assume a gun is unloaded.

Use common sense in the storage of your firearms. NEVER store loaded guns. Keep guns and ammunition in separate and secure places so they can't be touched without your knowledge, particularly by children.

- **Third Commandment—Don't Rely on Your Gun's “Safety”**

Treat every gun as though it can fire at any time—whether or not there is pressure on the trigger. Remember that a gun's safety is a mechanical device, and like any mechanical device, it could fail.

In addition, the safety is not a substitute for common sense. It is only a supplement to your proper handling of the firearm. *Don't touch the trigger on a firearm until you are ready to shoot.* Keep your fingers away from the trigger while loading and unloading; and don't pull the trigger with the safety engaged or positioned anywhere between “safe” and “fire”. The gun could go off at any time.

- **Fourth Commandment—Be Sure of Your Target and What's Beyond**

You can't stop a shot in mid-air, *so don't fire unless you know exactly where your shot is going and what it will strike.* Never fire at a sound, a movement, or a patch of color. Never shoot without being absolutely sure of what you're shooting at and what is behind it. Before you pull the trigger, be absolutely certain that (continued on page 2)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SAFE

your shot has a backstop—such as a hillside, or dense material like sand. Remember, bullets can travel great distances with tremendous velocity—know how far your shot will go if you miss your target or the bullet ricochets.

- **Fifth Commandment—Use Correct Ammunition**

Every firearm is designed to use a certain caliber or gauge of ammunition. Using the wrong ammunition, or mixing ammunition, can destroy your firearm and expose you or bystanders to serious personal injury.

Make sure the ammunition you use exactly matches the gauge and chamber length of your gun. Refer to your owner's manual to find out about the specific requirements of your gun and always read and heed the instructions on ammunition boxes.

Check all ammunition (continued on page 2) before you load it to be sure that it matches. If a 20-gauge shell is loaded into a 12-gauge shotgun, it will probably lodge in the bore. If a 12-gauge shell is fired behind the 20-gauge, the two will slam together and can cause the barrel to explode, possibly resulting in serious personal injury or death.

If you are a reloader, you must make certain that the loads and components of your ammunition meet your gun's factory tested standards. Firearms are designed, manufactured and proof tested to standards based on factory-loaded ammunition. Hand loaded or reloaded ammunition that deviates from load or component recommendations can be very dangerous.

Observe all possible safety precautions and practices related to the proper handling of explosives. The first rule of reloading is to follow the powder or bullet manufacturer's instructions for the components you are using. Today's modern powders and primers can lead to higher pressures. Don't mix or substitute powders or primers, because the firearm could explode. Don't use unknown or substandard components. Use only suitable components that have been factory tested by reputable ammunition, powder and bullet manufacturers. If you don't follow the manufacturer's recommended exact recipe when reloading, dangerously high pressure can occur and lead to an explosion that results in serious injury or even death to the shooter and others.

And don't use reloaded ammunition made by someone else,

unless you know it comes from a reliable source. Don't use reloads that feel "off" in any way—for example, too heavy or too light, or that don't look as if they've been carefully made. Defective ammunition is not always detectable by visual inspection. If you have any doubts about the quality of reloaded ammunition (yours or someone else's), get rid of it safely. It is better to discard possibly good ammunition than to chamber possibly bad ammunition.

- **Sixth Commandment: If Your Gun Fails To Fire When the Trigger is Pulled, Handle With Care!**

If for some reason the ammunition doesn't fire when you pull the trigger stop and remember the First Commandment of Safe Gun Handling: *always point the muzzle in a safe direction.*

Keep your face away from the breech, open the action, unload the firearm and dispose of the cartridge safely. Remember, any time there is a shell in the chamber, your gun is loaded and ready to use—even if you tried to shoot and it didn't fire. It could still discharge.

- **Seventh Commandment: Always Wear Eye and Ear Protection When Shooting**

Your sight and hearing risk injury from shooting, and should be protected at all times. Serious damage to your eyes, including loss of sight, can result if the barrel of your gun bursts for any reason. Wear shooting glasses to guard against such injury, as well as falling shot, clay target chips, powder residue and twigs in the field.

Continued exposure to shooting noise can damage your hearing. Use the maximum protection of a headset on the range, where shooting volume is the loudest. Learn to use earplugs in the field—especially in confined locations like duck blinds.

- **Eighth Commandment: Be Sure the Barrel is Clear of Obstructions Before Shooting**

Before loading your gun, open the action and make sure there is no ammunition in the chamber or

GUN HANDLING (continued)

magazine. Check to see that there is no debris of any kind in the barrel. Even a small amount of snow, mud, excess lubricant or grease in the bore can dangerously increase pressure and cause the barrel to bulge or burst in firing.

Use a cleaning rod and patch to wipe away anti-rust compounds or any other residues in the gun. NEVER try to remove an object from the barrel by loading another shell and firing. When firing, trust your instincts— if the noise or recoil on firing seems “off”, stop everything and be sure nothing is lodged in the barrel.

- **Ninth Commandment: Don't Alter or Modify Your Gun, and Have Guns Serviced Regularly**

Never alter or modify your firearm in any way. Your firearm has been designed to operate according to certain factory specifications. You will jeopardize your own safety or that of others by attempting to alter its trigger, safety or other mechanisms.

Your gun is subject to wear and must be maintained and periodically serviced to assure optimum safety and performance. Don't allow anyone to service, repair, or modify your firearm except a service facility recommended or approved by the gun's manufacturer.

Proper cleaning and lubrication of all parts of your gun are also critical to gun maintenance, and are necessary to assure accuracy, safety and reliability. Clean your gun before and after long term storage, and no less frequently than once a year. Your firearm should also be cleaned whenever it has been exposed to adverse conditions, such as dirt, mud, rain, snow, sleet, or in saltwater areas.

Carefully inspect the trigger assembly to be sure it is clean and free of debris and residue build-up. Use recommended lubricants on

your gun and take care not to over-lubricate. Excessive use of a non-recommended lubricant could cause serious functional problems that might result in accidental firing.

- **Tenth Commandment: Learn the Mechanical and Handling Characteristics of the Firearm You are Using**

Not all guns are alike. They have different mechanical characteristics that dictate how you should carry and handle them. Anyone that plans to use a firearm should first become totally familiar with the type of gun it is and the safe handling requirements for loading, unloading, carrying, shooting, and storage.

- **A Final Thought**

There is one other rule you must follow when handling firearms. In fact, respect for this rule is necessary in order to effectively practice the ten commandments of safety.

The rule is, shoot sober.

Alcohol, drugs, and guns are a deadly combination. NEVER consume anything that will even mildly impair your judgment or physical coordination when you are using a firearm.

In order to obtain a License To Carry in Pennsylvania, you need to contact your county Sheriff. (In Philadelphia, you must contact the Philadelphia Police Department).

For additional information and applicable fees, please contact your county Sheriff's Office.

Our website is in the process of being revised and updated.

You will be able to view the complete Sheriffs of Pennsylvania directory, download our Product line brochure, see the history of the Office of Sheriff, click on individual counties to view pertinent data for that county and link to other sites from our site.

May 15th is National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week containing May 15th is National Police Week. We urge you to honor all fallen Peace Officers by lowering your flag to half-staff on that date.

PENNSYLVANIA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

P O BOX 61857
HARRISBURG, PA 17106

Phone: 717-236-7336
Fax: 717-236-7332

We're on the web
www.pasheriffs.org

Firearm Reciprocity Agreements

In 1995, the Pennsylvania General Assembly gave the Attorney General the authority to enter into reciprocity agreements with other states.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania currently has reciprocity agreements with several states that recognize a valid license to carry firearms issued to a Pennsylvania resident. In return, Pennsylvania recognizes valid firearm carry permits from the following states.

Alaska	North Carolina
Florida	Oklahoma
Georgia	South Dakota
Kentucky	Tennessee
Michigan	Texas
Missouri	Virginia
New Hampshire	Wyoming

Although the right to carry a firearm in Pennsylvania is limited to residents carrying a concealed weapon permit from the states listed above, **Idaho, Indiana,**

Montana, Oklahoma and Utah do allow any out of state resident with a valid concealed weapons permit from their home state to carry a weapon while in those respective states. Therefore, Pennsylvania residents with a valid concealed weapon permit may carry a firearm while in Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oklahoma and Utah. These states also require a person to have the actual permit and a photo ID on their person while carrying the weapon.

At this time, Pennsylvania does not yet have a reciprocity agreement with these states. Therefore residents of these states and any other state without a Pennsylvania reciprocity agreement **MAY NOT** carry a firearm while in Pennsylvania.

To read firearm laws for those states with which we have firearm reciprocity and also those states that allow Pennsylvania residents with valid permits to carry within a state, you can go online to www.attorneygeneral.com, click on the CRIME tab, and in the drop down, click on Firearms Reciprocity.

If you do not have access to a computer or need more information on Pennsylvania's reciprocity agreements, contact the Attorney General's Office of Legislative Affairs:

Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General
Office of Legislative Affairs
16th Floor, Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-783-3085