

APPENDIX D

RANGE SAFETY

This appendix recommends safety precautions for the ranges described in this manual, but it does not replace AR 385-63 or local regulations. Range safety requirements vary because of the different requirements of the courses of fire.

D-1. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The following safety precautions must be observed during all marksmanship training.

- Display a red flag (red light for night firing) at the entrance to the range or in some other prominent location on the range during firing.
- Always assume that weapons are loaded until they have been thoroughly examined and found to contain no ammunition and barrel is clear.
- Mark firing limits with red-and-white-striped poles that are visible to all firers.
- Never place obstructions in the muzzles of weapons about to be fired.
- Keep all weapons in a prescribed area with proper safeguards when not in use.
- Do not permit smoking near ammunition, explosives, or flammables.
- Wear hearing protection devices during firing.

D-2. RANGE PROCEDURES

The range can be a dangerous place, especially if safety procedures are not followed. Everyone must stay alert and adhere to the following precautions.

a. Before Firing.

- (1) Close all prescribed roadblocks and barriers, and post necessary guards.
- (2) Check all weapons to ensure that they are clear of ammunition and obstructions, and that the cover feed mechanism assemblies are UP to show they are cleared.
- (3) Brief all personnel on the firing limits of the range and firing lanes.
- (4) Obtain range clearance from the installation range-control office.

(5) Check the downrange area before firing to ensure that all personnel and equipment are clear of the area.

(6) Keep a complete first-aid kit on the range.

(7) Locate medical personnel on or near the range where they can be contacted quickly.

(8) Have all weapons checked by an officer or noncommissioned officer to ensure that they are operational.

(9) Do not handle weapons except on command from the tower operator or the officer in charge.

(10) Draw ammunition and issue it only on command of the officer in charge. When two or more lots of ammunition are used for firing, the officer in charge must ensure that the lots are separated and properly identified so that identification can be made by lot numbers in case of an accident or malfunction.

(11) Protect all ammunition from the direct rays of the sun.

(12) Do not allow anyone to move forward of the firing line without permission of the tower operator, safety officer, or officer in charge.

b. During Firing.

(1) Immediately order CEASE FIRE if an unsafe condition is noted during firing. Do not resume firing until directed to by the officer in charge.

(2) During firing, all personnel on the range must be aware of the danger in moving forward of the firing line to score their targets. Before the firing line is clear and anyone is allowed forward, the officer in charge or the safety officer will clear all M249s.

(3) In clearing the M249, the safety officer or NCO will inspect each weapon that was fired on the firing line by making sure the bolt is locked to the rear and the safety is on. He makes sure each barrel is clear by running a cleaning rod through the barrel until he can see the end of the rod in the receiver. He performs the five-point safety check. Then, he eases the bolt forward and raises the feed cover and checks behind the bolt.

c. When Firing During Darkness.

(1) Check the downrange area before firing to ensure that all personnel and equipment are clear of the area. This will be done by asking three times over a public address system IS THERE ANYONE DOWNRANGE? Pause each time long enough to permit a response.

(2) Use a blinking red light in addition to the red flag. Display it at the entrance to the range or at some other prominent location.

(3) Mount two red lights on the striped poles marking the limits of fire. They must be visible to all firers.

(4) Do not allow anyone to move from his position until told to do so by the officer in charge.

d. After Firing.

(1) Have safety personnel inspect all weapons to ensure that they are clear and check to determine if the soldiers have any brass, links, or live ammunition.

(2) When weapons have been cleared, keep them in a prescribed area with the bolt forward, safety on the SAFE position, and the feed cover mechanism assembly raised.