

## Exercise 2- Safe Firearm Handling

Objective: Students will safely pass a firearm from themselves to another person.

Materials: Dummy firearms and dummy ammunition, unused mousetrap\* and rat trap\* for icebreaker.

Time: 15 minutes

Preparation: If you are concerned about the mousetrap accidentally 'firing' and hurting someone you can adjust the trip mechanism or catch. Bending the catch further over the catch lever will require that more force is needed before the hammer is released.

Introduction: Set the hammer on the mousetrap, tell students that they are going to be passing firearms to each other and they need to practice being careful by passing the mousetrap, i.e. firearm, around the room. If they don't want to handle it, it's okay to pass. After mousetrap has circulated the class, disarm the hammer. Take out rat trap and tell them you're going to "Up the ante." When setting the catch lever (CAREFULLY) let the hammer slip a couple of times so the rat trap goes "off." Set the hammer and then ask "Who wants it?" If somebody wants to accept, on the way over to them drop the trap on the floor. Hopefully it will go "off." Now ask the class, "What if that was a loaded gun?" Ask: "Was that safe to pass a loaded 'firearm'? What could have been done differently?" If people passed congratulate them on a wise decision. Ask students, "If this is a loaded firearm that you are not familiar with, is it ok to accept it without knowing if it is loaded? What if the safety is on? Should you accept it then?" No, because a safety is a mechanical device that can fail.

Presentation: Ask for student to volunteer for a demonstration (different person from earlier exercises), take a dummy firearm and say to student, "Here, hold this." If student tries to accept the firearm don't give it to them and ask, "Was that safe?"

(Variation- have gun loaded with dummy ammo round, keep grasp of gun and don't let volunteer have it. Take back and eject round)

Say, "We will demonstrate the best way of passing a firearm from one person to another."

1. Place the safety on and open the action of the firearm. Hold the firearms in a two handed carry with action open and one hand covering the trigger guard. Always point muzzle in a safe direction.
2. Ask the student, "What do you want to know about this firearm?" The answer is, "Is it loaded?" Instructor should say, "No". You can also ask your students to say, "show me". Show them or demonstrate that the firearm is unloaded.
3. Have the student accept the firearm with two hands, however do not let go yet, so both you and the student are holding onto the firearm. Ask the student, "When someone gives you something what is the polite thing to say?" The answer is "thank you". Or they may say "got it" if you want to be less formal. Say, "Your welcome", and let go of the firearm. Tell the class that when the person says, "Thank you", that means they have control of the firearm. And when you say, "Your welcome," you are releasing control of the firearm.
4. Throughout entire demonstration the muzzle should be pointed in a safe direction.
5. Remember to reverse the demonstration when you accept the firearm back from the student, this reinforces the demonstration. Additionally, use this method of passing firearms throughout the course.

Activity: Students can pass firearms to each other in small groups. Or students can pass one firearm down a line from student to student. Make sure each pass is monitored by an instructor that will help prompt the students to communicate and pass the firearm safely.

Evaluation: Assess students as they pass the firearms to each other. Watch for safe muzzle control, communication about status of the firearm (loaded/unloaded) and that the firearm is safely passed. Continue to assess students passing firearms for the duration of the course, pay special attention to how they pass firearms on the hunter skills trail if one is used.

Summary: Have the rat trap unsprung and hammer release. Dangle the rat trap showing the students it is 'unloaded'. Now hand it off to a student and say, "Don't you feel much better (less anxious) about passing this now?" Students should agree that rat trap does not seem dangerous now. Say to students, "You have seen the best way to pass a firearm. Take it upon yourself to only accept a firearm if you know it is unloaded. If you don't know say, 'show me'. Once you know a firearm is unloaded then you can safely begin to learn about and/or use that firearm."