

#### Exercise 4- Safe Zone-of-Fire for Indoor Setting

Objective: Students will learn what a safe zone of fire is, how to find it and how it applies to different hunting situations.

Time Allotted: 15-20 minutes

Materials: 3 firearms or dummy guns, surveyors tape, masking tape, laser pointer or collimator flashlight or strong flashlight with snoot to narrow and focus beam, 3 chairs, Note: Could use nerf balls, socks tied in a knot or another object instead of laser pointer or flashlight.

Preparation: Place three chairs in a row with roughly five feet of space between each chair and 6 feet opposite a wall. Tape strips of surveyors tape to wall and corners of chair back to create safe shooting zones. Note zones of fire will overlap. Once zones are set, mark where each chair is to position each shooter in that spot once the chair is removed. Detach surveyor tape from the chairs, leave the surveyors tape attached to and hanging down from the wall. Remove the chairs. When needed the configuration can quickly be set up. (See diagram below)

Introduction: Ask students to define a safe zone of fire. Lead a discussion to properly define a safe zone of fire as an area in which a hunter can safely shoot. Generally, it is between 10 and 2 o'clock from an individual hunter's position. Or the students can extend their arms to their sides at shoulder height with thumbs up and bring their arms together until they can see both thumbs in their peripheral vision. However, a safe zone of fire can change. (If using Power point, go to these slides)

Presentation: Put chairs back in place facing the wall via marks on the floor. Have three students each choose a firearm and assume a position behind each of the chairs. Have each student shoulder their firearm and declare their safe zone of fire. After they do, attach surveyors tape from wall to the chairs. This will give the students a constant visualization of the zones of fire and serve as points of reference. Remind the students that the two-handed, ready carry is the best when in a zone of fire.

Activity: Instruct the students in actual hunting situations that require safe zones of firearm, such as, quail, pheasant, dove, waterfowl, etc. Using one of the species as an example, instruct the students to swing on game but respect their safe zone of fire. Use the laser pointer/flash light or other object to simulate the flight of a game bird across the wall, left to right, then right to left. Discuss merits of passing up unsafe shots, i.e. one more bird not worth the risk to companions. Praise proper acts, correct mistakes.

Switch students to simulate new hunters. Ask each new hunter to show their safe zone of fire. Again use the laser pointer/flash light or other object to simulate a game bird, but that rises in a different direction and maybe over the heads of the 'hunters'. Discuss engaging/disengaging target. Continue switching out students to be hunters and simulating different types of game birds flying from different directions. Discuss safe zones of fire during each and the merits of passing on unsafe shots presenting behind the group. Discuss the ethics of zones of fire, i.e. when a bird is two people's zone of fire, "whose shot is it?"

Discuss with students how safe zones of fire apply or change for hunting rabbits or on stands for a deer drive. The light source can be run on the floor to simulate game moving on ground.

Evaluation: Assess each student in their role as hunter. Watch for safe muzzle control, two-handed carry, fingers outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot, staying within their safe zone of fire and passing up questionable shots. Ensure that students communicate with each other and transfer the firearms safely from one person to the other, as in Exercise 2 – Firearm Handling.

Summary: Reiterate that it does not matter kind of terrain you are in when you are hunting and whatever game you may be hunting, safe zones of fire always apply. Reinforce the need for good communication. Stress the need to know where all the hunters are before taking a shot. Hunter orange should be worn when appropriate, especially when quail and pheasant hunting. Discuss the number of hunters and how they should move during different hunting situations, ever more than three when walking abreast, two is best with third acting as group leader. In a duck blind 2 shooters is best, with third acting as duck caller, spotter and shot caller (“take ‘em).

