

Exercise 3- Safe Field Carries

Objective: Students will learn the six ways to safely carry a firearm while in the field and when they are most appropriate.

Time Allotted: 15 minutes

Materials: Dummy firearms (2 or more), one with a sling and one a break over.

Introduction: Have the students estimate the average weight of a firearm. Instruct them that to hold one in one specific carry for long periods of time would be tiresome. You can pick up the firearm with the sling, and with the muzzle in a safe direction you can hold the middle of the sling with gun hanging down to your side, like a suitcase. Ask class if this is safe way to carry a firearm? Why not? Instruct the class that they will learn six different carries and safety considerations of each.

Presentation: Instruct the students that carry selection is determined by safe muzzle direction and the terrain they are moving through. Show the students each type of carry, via power point and instruct them on which page in their manual they can find the different types. Demonstrate each carry with a firearm for the students.

Activity: Ask for a volunteer to come up to demonstrate of each carry. As the student demonstrates each carry instruct the class on when it is best use this carry, safety considerations of the carry and the type of terrain in which it is appropriate.

Two handed carry- The bottom hand holds grip, finger outside the trigger guard, top hand holds forearm of stock. Provides the best muzzle control. It can become tiresome when held for long periods of time. Also called the "ready carry," why? Easy to shoulder firearm for a shot.

- 1) Shoulder Carry- The mid-point of firearm rest on shoulder, muzzle points back. Firearm is controlled by hand on butt or on grip, finger is off trigger. Good in waist high cover, don't use if someone is behind you.
- 2) Trail carry- The firearm is carried in one hand at mid-point, usually just in front of action. It leaves a hand free for balance, but don't use when debris can get in barrel. And don't use when someone is in front of you.
- 3) Cradle carry - The firearm is held across belly, mid-point resting across forearm and crook of elbow, muzzle points to side. Comfortable, secure and reduces arm fatigue.
- 4) Elbow or side carry
 - a. The firearm is held to the side of body, under arm, the mid-point rests across the forearm at crook of elbow, muzzle points forward. Comfortable but gives the least amount of muzzle control
 - b. With a break action firearm, when the action is open it balances nicely on forearm, muzzle points even farther down. Another plus is that others can see at a glance that action is open and the firearm is safe.
- 5) Sling carry- The arm placed through sling, firearm carried on back shoulder blade. The shoulder will bear most of the weight of the firearm where the sling rests. The hand on the carry side

reaches up to hold sling for snug fit. This is an easy carry for long walks through open country, however in heavy cover muzzle can snag on branches.

Evaluation: Ask for four new volunteers. Have each student carry a firearm. Arrange the students in a single file line where they can point muzzle in at least one safe direction. Have everyone start with a two-handed carry. Then ask each student from front to back of the line which carries are safe for them to use. You can call up four more students and have them face the class in a line (as if they were quail or pheasant hunting) and ask them which carries were safe for them to use. You could also arrange people in a small group to simulate a group of hunters standing around talking and ask them to demonstrate the safe carries. Observe how the students obey instruction, mind their muzzles (in relation to each other and class) and keep fingers off trigger. Give praise throughout and also at the conclusion to the entire group. (I would combine the activity of Exercise 4 into the evaluation of exercise 3. I would not make it two separate activities.)

Summary: Because using the two-handed carry can make a hunter tired, it is good to know the different types of carry. A hunter must also know, for safety reasons which carry is safest for the situation in which they are hunting.

Reinforce to the group that the two handed carry is by far the safest. Muzzle "awareness" is a must, no matter the carry type.