

Gun Safety Essential to Gun Rights

Gun rights, like all natural human rights, are a foundation of a functional society. And every right comes with an equally important responsibility. You must handle and use your gun so that you don't harm anyone who doesn't deserve to be harmed.

Gun safety is more than important; it is essential.

Contrary to what some people insist, gun accidents do happen. Once a tiny sliver of wood flaked off the inside of a black powder gun I was using and lodged in a bad spot. As soon as I pulled the hammer back and released it, the gun fired even though nothing was touching the trigger. Because I was following the rules of safe gun handling, the only casualty was my nerves.

However, most so-called gun "accidents" aren't accidents at all, but are negligence; someone not observing the rules of safe gun handling.

Col. Jeff Cooper standardized and popularized the rules of gun safety, which I'll paraphrase as follows:

- Rule 1: All guns are always loaded, even when you're sure they aren't.
- Rule 2: Never let the gun point toward anything you're not willing to destroy.
- Rule 3: Keep your finger off the trigger and out of the trigger guard until the gun is aimed where you want the bullet to go.
- Rule 4: Be sure of your target and what lies behind your target. Don't shoot on a hunch, and don't forget to look beyond the target.

It's also not a good idea to handle a gun when your mind is dulled.

People who hate or fear guns won't change their minds just because you are a safe and responsible gun owner. Those who are undecided about guns can be pushed off the fence onto the anti-gun side by the publicity surrounding tragedies. Don't be the one who gives them a push.

I prefer a universally armed society. Any rules that seek to keep guns out of the "wrong hands" will inevitably do more to keep them out of the right hands, because those "wrong hands" won't follow the rules anyway.

This doesn't mean I trust everyone to be armed. I don't. But I don't trust those who would decide who gets to be armed, and who doesn't, either. I'd rather there be armed bad guys than government employees rationing natural human rights. After all, the good guys vastly outnumber the bad guys; otherwise society would be impossible.

Be responsible. A negligent shot is precious ammunition for the anti-gun activists. Don't give them this coveted gift.