

U.S. BIATHLON RIFLE SAFETY RULES & PRACTICES

Biathlon rifle safety is of paramount importance, starting with these three rules to keep the sport safe for all:

- ❖ Always point the muzzle of the rifle in a safe direction.
- ❖ Always keep the bolt open (to the rear) and the rifle unloaded until ready to use.
- ❖ Always keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

There are additional rules and practices to pay close attention to:

- ❖ Always treat a rifle as if it were loaded.
- ❖ Keep the rifle bolt open unless the rifle is on your back or you are in position and ready to shoot.
- ❖ Do not take your rifle off your back before you are stopped at the shooting point.
- ❖ Don't load your rifle until you are in position with the rifle pointed in the direction of the target (down range).
- ❖ Never leave the shooting point with a loaded rifle, that is, a live round in the chamber or in an inserted magazine.
- ❖ On the command "Cease Fire", immediately stop shooting, open the bolt, and unload the rifle (open the bolt and remove the magazine). Listen for further instructions.
- ❖ Unless the range has been declared "OPEN", or "HOT", by the Range Safety Officer (RSO) in charge, the rifle should be in the rack or properly harnessed on your back.
- ❖ If you should need to move to another shooting point, the rifle must be completely unloaded (including removing the loaded magazine) and properly harnessed on your back before departing the shooting point.
- ❖ Never handle a rifle on the shooting point when someone is down range.
- ❖ When dry firing, only point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- ❖ The rifle should be carried by the barrel (or forestock) pointed towards the sky when being transported without the use of a harness.
- ❖ Always be sure of your target and what lies beyond it.
- ❖ Give verbal confirmation when taking control of a rifle and check that the bolt is open and chamber is clear.
- ❖ Never accept a firearm unless you know the chamber is clear and you understand its operation.
- ❖ Never aim or fire the rifle unless on the range and you have confirmed the "range is open" and there is nothing/nobody down range. In short, make sure it is safe to shoot!
- ❖ Do not attempt to open a snow cover on the front sight when the bolt is closed or a round is chambered. The bolt must be open, and no magazine in the magazine well, before opening the front site snow cover.
- ❖ No horseplay on the range.
- ❖ If you see an unsafe act, bring it to the attention of the individual involved and the RSO.
- ❖ Do not leave your rifle unattended.
- ❖ Store your rifle and ammunition separately out of reach of the public.
- ❖ The muzzle of the rifle must be over the firing line during any shooting or dryfire exercises.
- ❖ Reaching over the firing line while the range is OPEN is forbidden. A magazine, ski pole, sunglasses, or other item may fall over the firing line, but they must remain in place until the RSO closes the range.
- ❖ It is USBA policy that the rifle bolt is to be open (bolt handle completely to the rear) once the rifle is removed from its carrying case or unharnessed. This includes any time the rifle is left unattended in the rifle rack or lying on the shooting mat. (USBA strongly encourages using a rifle bag/cover that provides a window that allows a clear view of the rifle bolt).
- ❖ At the end of training, racing, or any shooting session, biathletes must perform a safety check before leaving the shooting range by opening the bolt and removing the inserted magazine. Athletes must also remove all ammunition from both the stock and all the magazines before leaving the shooting range.