

The background of the text is a photograph of an outdoor shooting range. A wooden structure with a corrugated metal roof serves as a backdrop. Several white target sheets are hanging from a horizontal bar across the structure. In the foreground, there is a grassy area with two red plastic bins on either side of a small table and chairs. A line of bare trees is visible in the background under an overcast sky.

Membership and Range Rules for Rifle & Pistol

MEMBERSHIP AND RANGE RULES FOR RIFLE AND PISTOL



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1. Membership of the Rifle and Pistol Club

Courtclough Shooting Club (“**Courtclough**”) is intended to provide its Members with a safe place in which to use rifles and pistols which such Members are lawfully entitled to possess, use and carry in accordance with the Firearms Acts for the purposes of target shooting. Courtclough Shooting Grounds Limited (the “**Management**”) provides a Pistol Range and two Rifle Ranges on which rifles or pistols can be lawfully discharged.

1.1 Categories of Membership: Provisional and Full

- 1.1.1. Admission to membership of Courtclough is at the absolute discretion of the Management. Applications must be made on the prescribed form which is available from the Shop at Courtclough.
- 1.1.2. When membership is granted it is provisional for a period of no less than 3 months. During this time, all provisional Members must:-
 - Complete the Firearms’ Competency Course
 - Complete two Inductions (Rifle members only)
 - Conduct them themselves satisfactorily on at least 6 visits within that minimum 3 month period. Rifle Members may count their Inductions towards their total number of visits.
- 1.1.3. Persons admitted as Provisional Members may not in any circumstances use the Ranges until such time as they have completed satisfactorily a Courtclough Firearms’ Competency Course.
- 1.1.4. Membership of Courtclough is also subject to these Range Rules and such other the rules and regulations as are from time to time posted on the Management’s website. These Range Rules shall apply until such time as they are amended by Management.

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- 1.1.5.** Full Membership will only be granted where the Management are satisfied, in their absolute discretion, that the Member is competent in the use of rifle and, or in the alternative, a pistol, and poses no danger to either the Member or any other person, and has satisfactorily completed all requirements set out at **1.1.2.**
- 1.1.6.** Where a Provisional Member is not made a full member, he or she shall not be refunded his or her membership fee and the Management may notify the Garda Siochana that the person has ceased to be a member of Courtlough.
- 1.1.7.** With effect from 1 January 2021, all existing members of Courtlough Rifle and Pistol Club are deemed to be Provisional Members, unless either:
- (a) they have been a member for the previous 12 months or
 - (b) unless they are expressly advised in writing (including email) by Management that they are deemed to be Full Members.

1.2 Restrictions applicable to provisional members

- 1.2.1** Provisional members may not use the Benchrest Rifle Range until they have satisfactorily completed the Firearms' Competency Course and two Inductions.
- 1.2.2** Provisional members may not use the Pistol Range until they have satisfactorily completed the Firearms Competency Course and must be accompanied on the Pistol Range at all times by a recognised Range Safety Officer (**RSO**), until such time as they have been authorised as a Recognised Range Safety Officer themselves. It is not sufficient for a Provisional Member to be accompanied by a Provisional Range Officer (**PRSO**).
- 1.2.3** In all circumstances, without exception, Provisional members:
- (a) are not permitted to use holsters to carry their firearm;
 - (b) are not permitted to invite or accompany non-members to the Range.

1.3 Sanction for breach of Membership or Range Rules

- 1.3.1** The failure by a Member (whether a Full Member or a Provisional Member) to comply with all or any of the foregoing restrictions or any of the other rules set out in this document may result in the suspension and, upon further investigation, expulsion of a member.
- 1.3.2** Members must also comply with all lawful directions issued by recognised Range Safety Officers and employees of Courtlough.
- 1.3.3** Suspension and expulsion may be directed in the absolute discretion of the Management.

2. The Ranges

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2.1 The Pistol Range

There is only one licenced pistol range in Courtlough. It is located on the first left hand turn into Courtlough, immediately adjacent to the lower Skeet Shooting Grounds.

Pistols may not be discharged in any other location in Courtlough. Discharging a pistol in any other location may result in the suspension and, upon further investigation, expulsion of a member in accordance with Rule 1.3.

2.2 The Rifle Ranges

There is only one licenced Benchrest range in Courtlough. It is located on the left side of the main tunnel (Green Mile). Only rifles chambered in .22lr may be discharged on the range. Discharging any other calibre may result in the suspension and, upon further investigation, expulsion of a member in accordance with Rule 1.3.

2.3 Requirement to book time on the Ranges

Subject to the following provisions, Members must book a session on the Ranges through the Courtlough Members' website. Bookings are transferrable – meaning if a member books a session but cannot make it, he or she may allow another member to shoot that session instead of them.

Ordinarily, no more than six (6) persons may shoot at the same time on the Pistol Range.

No more than seven (7) persons may shoot on the Benchrest Range.

2.4 Visitors: Shooting and Visiting the Ranges

Subject to the exceptions set out below, no visitors i.e. persons who are not current Members, may shoot at the Ranges.

Members of Courtlough may, with the prior consent of Management invite a person who is a member in good standing of another rifle or pistol club to shoot at the Ranges. Any such person must be booked for a session at the Ranges by the inviting Member of Courtlough. And any such person must have a valid firearms' licence and insurance or else they must be accompanied by an RSO or employee of Courtlough.

By exception, the Management may permit a Full Member to bring a person who is not a member, to accompany the Full Member to visit the Ranges under the personal supervision of the Full Member.

3. Compliance with the Firearms Acts

It is the personal and individual responsibility of all members to comply with all provisions of the Firearms Acts, as from time to time amended. This includes adhering to all conditions attaching to Members' firearms' licences and the regulations concerning safe storage and transport of firearms and ammunition. Neither the Management, Members or Range Safety Officers are responsible for

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other Members' compliance with the Firearms Acts. The Management, however, may report suspected breaches of the Firearms Acts to an Garda Síochána.

In accordance with the Firearms Acts, Members may only shoot at authorised targets. Authorised targets are those used by National and International shooting associations for competition and practice, commercially available paper targets for practice and zeroing. If in doubt, please refer to an RSO.

4. Range Safety Officers (Pistol Range only)

4.1 Requirement for all Pistol Members to become Range Safety Officers (RSO)

The Management is committed to the safe operation of firearms. Accordingly, it requires all members to complete a Firearms' Competency Course and such other induction courses as it may from time to time determine. The Management also requires all Pistol Members to qualify as Range Safety Officers,

The Management may from time to time and anytime, deem a particular course to become an RSO to be acceptable to meet the Management's requirements.

4.2 Provisional Range Safety Officers (PRSO)

Upon a Member completing an RSO course which is recognised by Management, and qualifying as an RSO, notwithstanding, he or she all be considered to be a provisional RSO for the purposes of these Rules.

A Member who becomes an RSO shall be a Provisional RSO for a minimum period of 6 weeks, during which time they must complete 6 hours of range visits under the supervision of a Recognised Range Safety Officer.

A PRSO shall, at all times when he or she acts as a PRSO, wear a hi-vis jacket which designates him or her as a PRSO by use of the words "PROVISIONAL RANGE SAFETY OFFICER".

A provisional RSO may only shoot in the presence of a recognised RSO.

4.3 Recognised Range Safety Officers (RSO)

A Member who becomes a provisional RSO, shall only become a Recognised RSO after they have satisfactorily conducted themselves on at least 6 occasions over a minimum 6 week period (under the supervision of a recognised RSO), and where at least two Senior Range Safety Officers support his or her application to become a Recognised RSO, and the Management consents and communicates that fact to the Member.

An RSO shall, at all times when he or she acts as an RSO, wear a hi-vis jacket which designates him or her as an RSO by use of the words "RANGE SAFETY OFFICER".

4.4 The authority of PRSOs and RSOs on the Pistol Range

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A PRSO may not supervise other Members using the Pistol Range save where he or she is acting under the supervision and direction of an RSO, who is also present.

Subject to a RSO agreeing otherwise, he or she, shall have seniority of authority over a PRSO and all other persons, on the Ranges.

All Members must obey the lawful directions, commands and instructions of an RSO. Any such directions, commands or instructions may be appealed to Management after the event, but **MUST IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES BE OBEYED ON THE RANGE**. The failure to obey the directions, commands or instructions of an RSO or an SRSO can result in the suspension or, on further investigation, expulsion of a Member.

5. The Fundamental Rules of Pistol and Rifle Range Safety

Courtclough Pistol and Rifle Ranges operate to five fundamental or golden rules. The contravention of any of these five fundamental rules can result in the immediate suspension and/or, on following due process, the expulsion of a Member.

There are many rules which govern the handling of firearms but the Management considers the following five (5) rules to be fundamental to the safe operation of firearms. By “down range” is meant towards the targets, with the muzzle parallel to the ground.

KEEP THE ACTION OPEN AND THE GUN UNLOADED until ready to shoot at your target. Whenever you pick up your gun or any gun, immediately open the action and check to see that the chamber is unloaded.

Fundamental Gun Handling Rules: (Common across all firearms)

- 1) Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction
- 2) Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use
- 3) Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot
- 4) Firearms must not be handled whilst any person is down range
- 5) Firearms must be shown clear and locked open or flagged, before being set down or cased.

5.1 The muzzle of a loaded or an unloaded firearm must always be pointed at the target.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE MUZZLE OF A FIREARM (LOADED OR UNLOADED) BE POINTED IN ANY DIRECTION OTHER THAN AT THE TARGETS. This fundamental rule means that when boxing or unboxing a firearm, or holstering or unholstering a pistol (where permitted), or handling a firearm for any purpose, its muzzle (i.e. barrel) cannot be pointed in any direction other than down range at the targets. Members should be aware that this is an onerous rule which could be inadvertently breached by careless handling. In

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most cases, moving the muzzle of the firearm by more than 15-20 degrees can result in the firearm being pointed in an unauthorised direction. Pointing a pistol or rifle in the air is unsafe and prohibited.

The intentional pointing of a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded, in any direction other than at the targets can result in the immediate suspension or expulsion of a Member.



5.2 Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use

Never load your firearm until ready to use, or in the case of the Pistol Range, until the supervising RSO has given permission for you to load and make ready.



5.3 Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot



5.4 Firearms shall not be handled while any person is down range

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A FIREARM BE HANDLED WHILE ANY PERSON IS DOWN RANGE. When a person is down range (e.g. putting up targets, marking scores, patching targets or doing anything else) or when an RSO has called a cease fire and has declared the range safe, it is completely prohibited to handle (i.e. touch, pick up, point etc) a firearm. This includes taking a firearm out of a box, holstering a firearm or even touching a firearm.

5.5 Firearms must be shown clear and locked open or flagged before being set down or cased.

Pistols and Rifles should never be set down with their actions closed. It should be obvious that the firearm is not loaded and the best way to show that is to either have the breech open or to have a red plastic flag protruding from the breech, as this means there cannot be a round in the chamber. The use of red flags is now mandatory in Courtlough.

More Detailed Rules for using the Pistol Range

6.1 Arriving at the Pistol Range: starting or joining a line

Before arriving on the Range, you must have made a prior booking. This can be done by calling the office on 018413096 or emailing info@courtlough.ie. You can also book online at www.courtlough/book-now, via the Members and Licenced Shooters section.

On arriving at the Pistol Range and finding there are no other Members present, Members may take up their desired shooting distance (e.g. 10m, etc). Members may move the shooting tables to their desired distance and set out their boxed equipment on the table. Ensuring that there are no other persons around, Members can proceed to set up targets. Under no circumstances may targets be set up anywhere other than the designated target frames.

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Under no circumstances may Members shoot at different distances. All Members must shoot at the same distance. If on arriving at the Pistol Range there are already Members present and set or setting up at a particular shooting distance, the first wishes of the first Member shall take precedence. However, at all times the distance or distances to be shot during a booked session shall be that chosen by a majority of the Members present and shooting. In the event of a tie, the acting RSO shall decide the distance for shooting.

If on arriving at the Pistol Range there are already Members shooting, the Member arriving should wait until hearing the supervising RSO indicates that it is safe to go down range. At that point the member wishing to join the line should ask the RSO if there is a position free to take up.

The number of persons shooting is limited to **six (6 persons)**. In addition, remember you must book a session. If you do not book a session, you have no right to join the line ahead of anyone who has booked. If a Member who has no booking joins a line he or she must give way if a Member who has booked arrives during the booked session.

Firearms cannot be brought to the Pistol Range other than in a box. Members cannot have firearms in bags or in holsters when arriving at the Pistol Range. Either the box the firearm came with or some other suitable box (e.g. a hard Peli type case or a soft zipped case) must be used to transport the firearm to the Pistol Range. Magazines should not be in firearms when they are in their boxes.

On joining the line, the Member should **NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNBOX A FIREARM** without the direction of an acting RSO and this applies even if there are no Members down range. On joining a line with existing Members shooting the First Fundamental Rule (**Firearms not to be handled when any person is down range**) must always be remembered and respected.

Firearms should remain boxed until the RSO supervises their removal and 'clears' them by inspecting the firearm to ensure that there is no magazine in place or any round in the breech (or cylinder). Semi-automatics should be left on the table or box with the breech open and with a plastic breech flag in place, Revolvers should have the cylinder left open. Breech flags are now mandatory in Courtlough.

When unboxing a firearm it is vital to also remember the Second Fundamental Rule: (**The muzzle of a firearm must always point down range towards where the targets are located**). Ideally, firearms boxes should bear an indication of the direction the muzzle is pointed. In this way, even before the box or case is opened, the RSO should be aware that the muzzle will be pointed downrange.

On joining a line it will usually be acceptable to load magazines with rounds of ammunition but it is forbidden to load the firearm with the magazines until the RSO gives permission to do so.

Summary:

- Sessions on the Ranges must be booked.
- In the absence of agreement, the distance to be shot shall be decided by the majority of members present, the acting RSO to have a casting vote.

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- No more than six (6) people can shoot the Pistol Range and not more than seven (7) people can shoot the Benchrest Range.
- Firearms must be transported to and from the Ranges in boxes or cases.
- The use of breech flags is mandatory in Courtlough on all Ranges.
- On joining the line, the Member should **NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES UNBOX A FIREARM** without the direction of an acting RSO

6.2 Identifying the Range Safety Officer for the Booked Session and obeying all lawful commands

On arriving at the Pistol Range, it is vital to identify who the acting RSO is to be for the booked session. RSOs should be recognised by wearing a hi-vis jacket which indicates that they are RSOs. It is the responsibility of the Member joining a line on arriving at the Pistol Range to establish who the acting RSO is. The RSO should indicate whether they have any particular concerns or requirements of the Member joining the line.

Remember: Members must always obey all lawful directions, orders and commands of the RSO. If you do not agree with the RSO, that is fine; take it up with Management later, but while on the Range, you must obey the RSO. Additionally, avoid arguing with the RSO. If you are convinced the RSO is wrong, leave the Range (after following the appropriate procedures set out here) and go to the Management for a ruling.

Summary:

- On the Ranges, all directions of the acting RSO are final.
- If you think the RSO is wrong, complain to Management.

6.3 Determining the course of fire

As noted at 6.1, Members using the Pistol Range at the same time must agree on what distance they are to shoot. The Member or members first in time at a booked session shall have precedence; however, at all times the distance or distances to be shot during a booked session shall be that chosen by a majority of the Members present and shooting.

6.4 The use of holsters, boxes and breech flags

Holstering of pistols is generally not permitted, save with the express permission of Management and subject to any conditions the acting recognised RSO imposes. Under no circumstances may a loaded firearm be holstered. Where permitted, only holsters fixed to a belt are permitted (i.e. no shoulder holsters).

When pistols are not being fired, they should be returned to the table in front of the Member:

- Slide back and locked open (or in the case of a revolver cylinder open);
- Magazines removed;

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- Chamber empty with breech flag installed;
- And either:
 - Returned to their box and the box closed when the acting RSO has confirmed the firearm is clear and flagged.
 - If set down, a breech flag must be in place which makes it clear to the acting RSO and everyone else that the firearm is clear and safe.

6.5 The Requirement for Eyes and Ears

At Courtlough, safety is paramount and under no circumstances may Members or spectators enter the ranges without appropriate ear defenders and ballistic or shooting glasses. Standard prescription glasses are not acceptable as eye protection on the pistol range. Anyone without appropriate safety equipment will be asked to leave the range.

6.6 Stoppages and Malfunctions

Where stoppages or malfunctions occur and Members are able to clear the stoppage or remedy the malfunction, he or she may do so. If the Member has any concerns as to his or her ability to clear a stoppage or remedy a malfunction, he or she should seek the assistance of the RSO supervising the shooting session. He or she should raise their non-shooting hand to attract the RSO's attention, whilst always keeping the firearm pointed in a safe direction down range.

6.7 Range commands

These Range Rules do not set out all of the range commands that Members may encounter when shooting at the Pistol Range. Those Rules are to be found in the Manual that accompanies the Range Safety Officer's course.

It is important, however, that Members who are not an RSO understand the commands that are likely to be given and have it explained what those commands mean.

When the course of fire has been agreed and before pistols may be discharged, Members should expect the RSO to issue the following basic commands. Note, depending upon circumstances of the line course of fire these may vary and Members must obey the commands issued by the RSO.

- **Eyes and Ears the Range is going live** – this is the first command you will hear to ensure everyone is wearing appropriate eye and ear protection. This applies to everyone on range, RSOs and spectators.
- **"The Range is Live!"**
Signals that the range is live, and all individuals including spectators must expect live fire to commence.
- **Load and make ready** – This is the only stage where a shooter handle the firearm. Shooters may insert their magazines and load and make ready.

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- **Commence fire/Shooters may commence firing.**
- **Cease Fire, unload and show clear** – Should the RSO call upon the line to cease fire, you should immediately unload and show clear. Under no circumstances should a Member discharge his or her firearm after the cease fire command has been given. Shooters should remain in place, remove the magazine and lock the firearm open for inspection. During inspection, the shooter must point the firearm in a safe direction down range at all times until cleared.

(Note that any person on the range can call a cease fire at any time if they perceive an immediate danger e.g. if a person or animal strays onto the range the first person to see the danger should call CEASE FIRE)

The RSO will then visually inspect all firearms to ensure they are clear and safe before proceeding to declare

- **The line is clear, you may go forward, patch and score** – The RSO will invite members to proceed forward to the targets to score and patch the targets / replace the targets etc.

Members are once more reminded of the first fundamental rule of pistol range safety: **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A FIREARM BE HANDLED WHILE ANY PERSON IS DOWN RANGE.**

6.8 Clearing firearms before leaving the Range

At the end of a shooting session, it is good practice to ask the RSO to clear your firearm before casing. Common commands you will hear after visual inspection will be,

Slide forward, hammer down and case OR just Slide forward and case.

There can be variations here depending upon the formality of the line and type of firearm. It is at the RSO's determination of what is safe in the circumstances and the competencies of the Members.

6.9 Sweeping up used brass shells, etc

While a range is declared safe, members should sweep up brass shells and put them in the designated barrel, take down used targets and place them in the paper bin and generally tidy up after themselves.

6.10 Emergencies

In the event of an emergency contact the supervising RSO on the Range and bring to the urgent attention of Management. A First Aid station and Defibrillator is located in reception.

7 More Detailed Rules for using the Rifle Range

7.1 Arriving at the Range: starting or joining a line

Before arriving on the Range, you must have made a prior booking. This can be done by calling the office on 018413096 or emailing info@courtlough.ie. You can also book online at www.courtlough/book-now, via the Members and Licenced Shooters section.

On arriving at the Range, and finding there are no other persons present, Members may pick their desired lane (e.g. 50m etc). The first Member on the Range should press start on all the buttons, and then wait 30 seconds. Once you have ensured there are no other persons around, Members can proceed to place their targets on the board. Under no circumstances may targets be set anywhere but the boards, and only paper targets are permitted. The use of any other type of target is strictly prohibited.

If on arriving at the Range, other Members are present, you should notify them of your presence. Before proceeding down Range to place your targets on the board, you must first ensure that all other shooters have ceased fire, and placed down their Firearms, with muzzles facing down Range. Magazines must be removed with bolts back or chambers open, and a breech flag in place.

7.2 The use of bags, boxes and flags

All Firearms must be transported in either a gun-bag or box when moving around the grounds. When removing a Firearm from either slip or case, the muzzle must face down Range at all times. Breech flags are required for all Firearms.

7.3 The Requirement for Eyes and Ears

Eye and Ear protection must be worn on every Range, without exception.

7.4 Clearing firearms before moving shooting position or leaving the Range

All Firearms must be cleared i.e. emptied of all ammunition and magazines, before moving shooting position and/or leaving the Range. All Firearms must have a breech flag in place to show they are empty.

7.5 Sweeping up used brass shells, etc

Ranges must be kept tidy at all times. Shooters are responsible for clearing up their own spent casings, cardboard or plastic boxes and used targets. There are separate bins provided for the disposal of plastic, cardboard and brass. Please ensure you use the correct bins.

7.6 Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, please bring to the urgent attention of Management. A First Aid station and Defibrillator is located in reception.