



# **NRA CLUB OFFICERS' GUIDE**

**THIRD EDITION**

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY**





# **NRA**

Third Edition – April 2013

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# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your election as a club officer, and welcome to the National Rifle Association! We hope that this *NRA Club Officers' Guide* will help make your term in office both productive and enjoyable. This guide is designed to provide you with a current reference for the successful operation of your club. Remember, that it is only a guide: effective operation of your club depends upon your leadership efforts.

You are now part of an administrative team. Your team will have its own special goals, style, and particular impact on shooting in your community. You will be working closely with fellow officers, committee chairmen, and directors to formulate and carry out programs that advance your club objectives. Remember, flexibility and compromise will sometimes be required to bring the whole leadership group into focus on agenda goals.

One of your first responsibilities is to review your club bylaws. The bylaws should set forth the objectives and purposes of the club, and outline the procedures for conducting official business. By becoming thoroughly familiar with the bylaws, you can carry out your duties with the assurance that you are proceeding with proper authority. The bylaws should also be read to determine if they are up-to-date and workable for present and proposed club activities. We suggest that you also review any special club rules or regulations, recent committee reports, newsletters, and important correspondence to become familiar with pending issues and the manner in which your predecessors in office carried out their duties.

Delegate duties as much as you can. Give members an opportunity to take an active part in the club by serving on committees. Whenever you delegate responsibilities, however, follow up with the members concerned to help them over hurdles.

In addition to administrative functions, you also have a responsibility for your club's shooting programs, social activities, ranges, clubhouse, finances, and promotion efforts. Collectively, you and your officers must decide:

- Which of these important items is in greatest need of attention?
- Which offers the best potential for increasing the strength and vitality of the club?
- Which lends itself best to your capabilities and the office you hold?

The National Rifle Association wishes your club every success! We hope that the guidelines in this handbook stimulate greater activity in your club by standardizing the activities that facilitate a successful club and by providing a sound and defined basis for better understanding in interclub discussions and communications. For help with club issues or problems, do not hesitate to contact the appropriate NRA Headquarters Division. We are here to serve you.

# CAPSULE HISTORY OF THE NRA

The National Rifle Association of America was organized as a non-profit membership corporation by a small group of National Guard Officers in the state of New York in November 1871. The objectives for its formation were "the improvement of its members in marksmanship, and to promote the introduction of the system of aiming drill and rifle practice as part of the military drill of the National Guard of this and other states, and for those purposes to provide a suitable range or ranges in the vicinity of the City of New York." In 1877, the organization's name was changed to the National Rifle Association of America.

Today, the NRA represents and promotes the best interests of gun owners, sportsmen, and competitive shooters. It supports their belief in the ideals of the United States of America and its way of life. It is dedicated to firearm safety education as a public service, marksmanship training as a contribution to individual preparedness for personal and national defense, and the sports of shooting and hunting as wholesome forms of recreation. It stands squarely behind the premise that the lawful ownership of firearms must not be denied American citizens of good repute.



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# CHAPTER 1: ORGANIZING A CLUB

Starting a shooting club is like beginning any other organization. First, form a group of interested persons. NRA clubs originate within many existing organizations. For example, they may come from a veteran's organization, such as VFW or The American Legion. They may be shooters in a large sportsmen's or conservation club. Labor unions, churches, military and police units, civic service clubs, and industrial and municipal recreation departments are just some of the groups represented by active NRA shooting clubs. In many communities, prospective club members can be located with the cooperation of local sporting goods storeowners.

Once a group of prospective members is gathered, certain questions will arise. What are the basic interests of these people? NRA has a place for all groups as long as their interests involve firearms. If you decide to form a shooting club, what type of shooting club can be anticipated? Will it be .22 caliber rifle, high power rifle, pistol, or all types? Where will you shoot? How will you attract new members? Some investigation and preliminary meetings will help decide the answers to these questions.

The next step is the organizational meeting. Be sure to reach all possible prospective members. Post bulletins, advise sporting goods dealers, and contact the sports editor of your paper. Explain that you plan to hold a general meeting of all persons in the community who are interested in organizing an NRA club.

A temporary chairman should call the meeting to order at the designated time. A temporary secretary should be appointed to record the minutes. Members of the planning group should explain the purposes of the club, what has been done concerning finding a place to shoot or hunt, and the possible cost to the club for the use of these facilities. Discussion among those present may disclose additional alternatives. The temporary chairman should explain the need to organize as a club and the advantages of NRA affiliation. If the group is small and all members are well known to each other, the club officers can be nominated and elected at the first meeting. An alternative would be to call another meeting at which the officers will be elected, a club name selected, and bylaws adopted.

# CHAPTER 2: CLUB NAME AND BYLAWS

## NAMING THE CLUB

Your club's name should bond the group to the community. Using the name of the town or city may be appropriate. Keep the name short and easy to remember. A name can also be chosen that identifies your club's special interests or activities and should be based on:

- Community focus
- Discipline
- Interest and community focus
- Discipline and community focus

## BYLAWS

A Bylaws Committee should be appointed to prepare and present the club bylaws to members. Bylaws are not required for NRA Club Affiliation. However, the NRA recommends that you adopt bylaws or rules and regulations for the group to avoid conflicts or confusion. Additional information can be obtained by consulting your local NRA State Association, local club or by contacting an attorney in your state. Contact NRA Clubs at (800) 672-2582 or [clubs@nrahq.org](mailto:clubs@nrahq.org) to obtain contact information for the NRA State Association and local clubs in your area, and/or an NRA Attorney Referral List.



# CHAPTER 3: CLUB OFFICERS

Election of the best-qualified members as officers will help advance club goals and service to the community. Club officers should address themselves to the growth of membership, building the enthusiasm and support of the community for the club's programs and activities, and above all, service to the needs of the members. The officers should be leaders who will pursue projects and activities that produce the maximum benefits to the club.

The following examples of typical duties of club officers are offered as idea starters:

## **PRESIDENT**

The president should be an individual who has prestige in the community, holds the respect of club members, and can properly conduct club meetings. He or she presides over all club meetings, including meetings of the Board of Directors and other governing bodies. The president is an ex-officio member of all committees, and performs such duties as formulating and carrying out programs, organizing support for programs that offer the best potential for increasing the strength and vitality of the club, and other duties that usually pertain to this office.

## **VICE PRESIDENT**

The vice president should be qualified to succeed to the presidency, and performs the duties of the president in case of his or her absence or at his or her request. In clubs having more than one vice president, a senior or first vice president should be designated as being responsible in the president's absence.

Some clubs have individual vice presidents as chairmen of the major committees, while others specify that the vice presidents direct and coordinate a group of related club programs or committees.

## **SECRETARY**

The secretary should be a member who takes a keen interest in getting things done and who keeps records in an orderly manner. The secretary is custodian of the club charter, articles of incorporation, bylaws, and documents that pertain to the original organizing activity. It is customary to print extra copies of bylaws (including amendments) for distribution to all members so that they will be acquainted with the objectives, purposes, and policies of the club.

The secretary takes minutes of all meetings of the members and the Board of Directors. In recording minutes, special attention should be given to all formal motions made and their disposition. Subjects discussed in depth that result in a consensus without a formal vote should also be noted. A file of all committee reports is maintained by the club secretary to be used as a reference and as a record of business transacted.

Other records maintained by a club secretary are files of newsletters and bulletins, a club correspondence file, the Club Officers' Guide, and the club library. The nucleus of a club library can be a complete set of NRA handbooks, reprints, and manuals.

## **TREASURER**

The club treasurer prepares periodic statements of the club's financial condition and statements of income and expense. A simplified bookkeeping system can be used to furnish this information.

Every club, regardless of size, should have a checking account for recording income and expenses, and for controlling expenditures from the club treasury. A common practice is to require the signatures of two officers on checks.

The club treasurer should maintain other records relating to the financial condition of the club, such as property records, inventory of supplies, and club investments.

## **EXECUTIVE OFFICER/HUNTMASTER**

The club executive officer (or huntmaster in a hunting club) is responsible for the shooting programs of the club. He or she oversees the preparation of the results bulletins for all shooting events. It is helpful for the executive officer to have a shooting history card for each member of the club. This record can be used to show: classifications and qualifications earned; local, state, or national records won; instructor ratings; club championship awards; and other special achievements.

Shooting supplies (such as ammunition and targets) that are owned by the club for subsequent sale to, or use by members, are often put in custody of the executive officer. Supplies issued should be recorded and the information turned over to the treasurer as needed.

## **REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

At the annual meeting, the president, secretary, and treasurer should submit an annual report to the club members. This annual report is a formal account of the proceedings of the club. A written report gives members information that they can refer to after they return home. It is also a valuable historical record for the club.

Annual reports may include information such as a description of events sponsored during the year, the club's financial condition, or an indication of plans for the future. Information for the annual report can be summarized from minutes of meetings, match bulletins, financial records, committee reports, and club newsletters.

The factual data contained in these annual reports can help an organization to spend its money wisely, comply with existing laws, observe club traditions and customs, and service its members properly. Up-to-date records will also contribute to the growth and success of the club. These annual reports will also assist newly elected officers in reviewing the club activities of previous years. It is vital to the success of a club that outgoing officers turn their records over to newly elected officers.

# CHAPTER 4: CLUB COMMITTEES

Successful clubs operate with a strong base of support from an active and dedicated group of committees. Club bylaws frequently specify how many standing (permanent) committees the organization will have. These committees are called *standing* committees because their work in a successful club is continuous.

Examples of typical standing committees are outlined below, although there is no limit to the number of committees a club may have. There may be as many standing committees as there are important policies to be made and functions to be performed. Clubs can utilize the committee system to get much of their work done and to keep long discussions on the details of operation to a minimum during club meetings. It will lessen the burden on the club secretary if all committee reports are made in writing, even though the reports will be read at club meetings. This practice is also conducive to accuracy.

## APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The president usually has the prerogative of appointing committee members. A questionnaire carried in the club newsletter can be useful in finding out members' interests, capabilities, and accomplishments. With this knowledge, the president can appoint the appropriate members to committees where they will be able to make a contribution to the club. The president should be careful to spread out responsibilities and duties as much as possible. If only a certain few members seem to wind up being appointed to all committees, the rest of the members may lose interest, and the cooperative and enthusiastic atmosphere essential to the club's success will be lost.

Unless a club consists of only a few members, committees should be made up of more than one person. The committee chairperson will need other members to help gather information, formulate recommendations, and carry out those recommendations that are approved.

It is also a good idea to have one or more club officers assigned as unofficial members of each committee. They can assist the committee chairperson in presenting an overall view of club objectives and activities during committee deliberations.

## COMMITTEE RECORDS AND REPORTS

Each committee should keep written records of its meetings and recommendations so that the information it develops can be passed along to subsequent committee members. A committee member or recording secretary should take notes at each meeting. These notes can be used to write the minutes of the meeting. Minutes should contain significant statements, motions (and who made them), and whether the motion won or lost.

Committees should make reports to the membership or Board of Directors as determined by the governing body. No recommendation should be made to the members or directors unless the majority of the committee members have voted in favor of it.

Reports presented at an annual meeting or to the Board of Directors should not contain all of the details recorded in the minutes. The reports need only summarize the work of the committee and present any recommendations for action.

Copies of committee records should be retained by the recording secretary and made available to the chairperson. These records should be passed along to the next chairperson and secretary when new committee leaders are appointed. Distribution of minutes and other information reports to all committee members will help maintain interest and keep members active.

## **EXAMPLES OF CLUB COMMITTEES**

### **Membership Committee**

The campaign for club membership is a continuous task and should be carried out vigorously. The Membership Committee is charged with recruiting new members and screening applicants for acceptance according to the club bylaws. This committee should also act as a welcoming committee for new members in order to properly familiarize them with the club's benefits and facilities.

### **Range Committee**

Every club needs a place to shoot. The Range Committee is responsible for range location, maintenance, and improvements, and may even carry out some of the mechanics involved in construction. The committee may also be called upon to develop policies for the utilization of the club range.

### **Hunting Committee**

Hunting is a popular addition to shooting club activities, and will attract many new members. This committee is responsible for establishing sound landowner/sportsman programs in your area. It should also seek to establish and maintain a good relationship with fish and game department officials.

The committee can provide members with useful information on hunting opportunities, and organize hunting-related activities such as National Hunting and Fishing Day, an annual Sighting-In Day, a hunter safety education program, conservation programs, and other programs connected with the hunting and shooting sports.

### **Women's Committee**

An asset to any club is a committee that is established for the purpose of attracting more women as members and encouraging women to participate in shooting activities. Conducting workshops for women on firearm safety, personal defense, hunting, and/or target shooting will provide more women with the opportunity to learn about firearms and the shooting sports. Many women may want to become involved in the programs and activities of the club.

### **Junior Committee**

The Junior Committee of an adult (senior) club promotes shooting activities for young people in the community. The Junior Committee may act as the sponsoring committee required for affiliation of a Youth Shooting Club with the NRA.

New shooters are important to a club and its future growth. Youth training activities also provide a valuable community service. This committee should address itself to teaching range discipline, respect for equipment, shooting skills, and sportsmanship. Information on organizing a Junior

Club is available from the NRA by contacting NRA Clubs at (800) 672-2582 or by email at clubs@nrahq.org.

### **Training Committee**

The Training Committee assists the executive officer and instructors in organizing and conducting basic marksmanship classes. Hunter safety training can also fall within the activities of a Training Committee.

### **Audit Committee**

Depending upon the size of the club, the Audit Committee can be either a permanent committee or a short-term committee. Its primary function is to prepare official verification of club expenditures with an audit of the account books. If a club has many expenditures, the Audit Committee may meet more frequently to compile reports. More often, the committee functions annually to audit the books prior to the annual meeting. Either way, this committee is vital in overseeing the financial operations of the club.

### **Short-Term Committees**

Short-term committees are formed to work on special events or programs. Examples include an awards committee, a nominating committee, a bylaws committee, special program committees, or any other committee that is designed for a special purpose.

# **CHAPTER 5: GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AND PLANNING CLUB MEETINGS**

The primary purpose of a club meeting (usually held monthly or quarterly) is to transact club business. Such business may include holding elections, amending bylaws, establishing club rules, or acting on committee reports. The success of a meeting depends on how well it is planned. Club meetings should be organized to allow members to express their views and to help determine club programs. By listening to these views, club officers can estimate the success potential of a scheduled event or activity.

Club meetings also help open up communication between club members, thus stimulating enthusiasm for club programs and giving the group an opportunity to recognize and honor club members. All members will benefit by assisting club officers in conducting interesting and productive meetings.

## **PLANNING THE MEETING**

Three basic steps for conducting a successful club meeting are:

1. Preparing a meeting agenda that contains a good balance of reports, discussion, and social activities.
2. Notifying the members in plenty of time so that they can arrange to be present.
3. Conducting the meeting according to the agenda.

Attendance at meetings is greater when the members know why they are coming and how they can participate. Always state the purpose of the meeting. If it is an annual meeting, it will likely include the minutes, officer and committee reports, old business, new business, and the election of officers. If it is a monthly meeting, subjects appropriate for the season and type of club will best interest the members.

Notices of the meeting should be mailed out to members at least 1 to 2 weeks ahead of the meeting date. (The mailing of the club newsletter can be timed to serve this purpose.) Include in these notices the agenda of the meeting and information about the business of the meeting.

Some form of social activity or entertainment at the close of the business period will help attendance. Depending on the club budget, meetings may include entertainment, speakers, and/or refreshments. Some members may have photos from hunting trips or competitive events that could be the basis of an entertaining program. Conservation officials or local dignitaries can also be invited to speak. Reloading demonstrations, antique firearm displays, and talks on hunting or target shooting events are other ideas. Some clubs conduct one or more open house meetings to give prospective members the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the club in a relaxed social atmosphere. These open house meetings could induce your guests to become active members.

## CONDUCTING THE MEETING

The best meetings start and end on time. A balance must be struck between moving the meeting along at a reasonable pace and allowing the members to participate fully in the discussions and decisions. Committees can best pursue many of the details necessary for good club operation with only the results being reported at the meeting. When matters of extraordinary importance are to be acted upon (large expenditures of funds or major amendments to the bylaws), time should be allotted for every member to express his or her views fully.

The president should plan to meet separately with club officers and committee chairpersons prior to the meeting in order to talk over the agenda and request advice on various types of situations that might arise. The meeting should be called to order as close to the published time as possible. The president generally opens the meeting with remarks about the agenda and what he or she expects to accomplish. It is wise to schedule all guest speakers to make their presentations *before* the business portion of the meeting begins. Such scheduling allows speakers to deliver their presentations and then leave, if they wish, without being required to attend the entire meeting.

Following are suggested guidelines for the order of business at a typical club meeting:

1. Roll call.
2. Review of Minutes of last meeting.
3. Officers Reports.
4. Committee reports.
5. Old Business.
6. New Business.
7. Announcement of the next meeting.
8. Adjournment.

Be sure that the club secretary takes accurate and useful notes of the meeting (including writing out all motions completely, specifying by name the maker and seconder of all motions, and recording the action taken on the motions).

## RULES OF ORDER

Not every individual who is elected or appointed to a club office is familiar with parliamentary procedure. However, depending on the formality of club meetings and the number of members attending, every meeting should be conducted as an orderly assembly.

It is also a good idea for the club to have a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order*. The president should have a copy within reach during a meeting because there is always the chance of a dispute on parliamentary procedure. Such disputes could stall a productive meeting and turn off or confuse the members in attendance.

# CHAPTER 6: CLUB FINANCES

Club operations depend on a steady income. Financial planning and promotion are vital considerations for club officers. A meeting should be held to decide which programs will be conducted during the year and how much each activity will cost.

After this meeting, an operating budget should be prepared. When preparing a budget, attention should be given to the clubhouse and range, equipment, insurance, maintenance, printing, office supplies, and fees. In addition, promotional efforts are required for membership maintenance, meeting attendance, and program participation. The use of club funds for newsletters, bulletins, post cards, Web sites, and phone calls will keep members aware of the progress of the club and enlist their support. It is also important that funds be allocated for the cost of obtaining new members and the expense of sending renewal notices to existing members.

Be sure to see the **Taxes** section below concerning taxes on club income.

## DUES

After the operating budget has been planned, the dues structure can be established. In many clubs, the main source of income is from membership dues. Funding club operations by establishing dues that are too low is no favor to club members. Most shooters have invested hundreds of dollars in equipment. This investment is negated if the club does not make adequate provisions for its members. By the same token, if the club is making a determined effort to provide the club with the best possible facilities and programs, it should receive the necessary support from the dues structure.

Large shooting clubs often have a graduated scale of membership dues, such as 2, 3 and 5year memberships, as well as life memberships. Other clubs have voting and non-voting memberships in which higher fees are charged to voting members. Still others sell stock in the club in addition to annual fees. You must consult your accountant and attorney in regard to these matters because they have serious tax consequences. Your dues structure will depend on the size of your club's membership, its legal structure, and its bylaws.

## NON-DUES INCOME

Other sources of income for a club can include sales of various items, food and beverage concessions, advertising, raffles, turkey shoots, match fees, sighting-in days, range fees, and contributions. (Remember to budget for all expenses related to fund-raising activities. Again, you should consult your accountant and attorney before undertaking these activities as they may have serious tax consequences.)

Suggestions for some of these activities are listed below:

### **Sales**

Selling selected items to members as a fund-raising activity is often profitable. Attractively designed club brassards and decals, T-shirts, jackets, and other club items will appeal to



all members. Other items that can add income are specialty items such as jewelry, coffee mugs, and novelty pieces.

Because ammunition can often be purchased at a significant discount in large quantities, club income can be derived by selling it to members at a price slightly higher than your cost, but less than full retail. You should also check with a knowledgeable local attorney about applicable state and local laws and regulations, including licensing requirements, zoning restrictions, storage regulations included in the local fire code, and so forth.

## **Concessions**

Leasing club food concessions to a local caterer or to an organization composed of members will not only relieve food service problems, but can produce significant income. The same arrangement can be made for club social activities. Charges must be such that the club will derive income after all caterer's fees have been paid.

The installation of food and soft-drink vending machines in the clubhouse and on ranges can also yield income. The amount of income will vary according to contractual agreements and how much the members use the facilities. It is advisable to contact several vending contractors to compare prices.

## **Raffles**

The raffling of guns and shooting equipment several times a year is an excellent method of raising funds. Raffles can be easily promoted at meetings and in the club newsletter. When using a mail campaign, send every member several books of tickets, urging the member to either donate his or her own funds or have friends donate funds. Information on obtaining additional tickets should also be included. Distribution of tickets and promotional posters to local gun and sporting goods dealers is also wise. Suitable recognition of the person who markets the most tickets will aid in the promotion of your next raffle.

You must consult with an attorney licensed to practice law in your state to determine whether your club may legally undertake a raffle and to comply with any federal, state, local laws and regulations before planning a raffle.

## **Range Fees and Assessments**

Range maintenance and improvements can be partially financed by fees charged for range use. Range fees should be sufficient to show an operating profit, but not so high that costs will discourage members from practicing. Equitable fees should also be charged for range use by non-members. Some clubs prefer not to charge junior groups, or charge juniors less than the usual fees. You should consult your tax advisor about these matters because the practice of charging different groups of members different fees may have tax consequences.

One method of obtaining fees in advance is to offer the use of the range to club members for a flat yearly fee. To make the offer attractive, the yearly fee should be based on taking the average number of times members use the range during the year, and then making the yearly fee slightly less than the total they would be paying if they paid an hourly rate each time they fire.

Leasing club facilities to other organizations or clubs for their matches can raise additional income. Such leasing can be done on a flat-fee lease basis or in return for a percentage of the entry fees.

Major building programs can often be effectively financed through member assessments. Assessments should be approached with caution when the club is considering costly construction or improvements, and a vote of the members should be required before an assessment is imposed. In order to be equitable, assessments should be extended through the life of the original financing arrangement, rather than seeking a large one-time payment. These extended payments will help eliminate any hardships that the members might have in paying off an assessment. In regard to these matters, you must also comply with your club's articles of incorporation and bylaws, if applicable.

It is beneficial to publish in the club newsletter a running total of the assessments collected and the amount paid on the financing. Your members need to be kept informed as to how their money is being used for their benefit. Announcements at meetings are also effective in reminding members of dues payments and for reporting progress in completing financing arrangements.

## **Contributions**

Contributions of money, materials, and property are often overlooked in fund raising activities. Many persons are reluctant to request contributions because they feel that it places the stigma of begging on the club. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many members will contribute funds if properly approached and adequately recognized. By approaching leading businessmen in the area in person or by mail, you will find that many of them will be willing to contribute in some manner to your activities. Such willingness is especially true for perpetual trophies or awards for marksmanship.

Establish memorials, such as a yearly match, in the name of a person, organization, or business as recognition of major contributions to the club. In many instances, business firms and individuals will be willing to contribute annually for matches named in their honor.

Approach donors about specific contributions. If they are unable to contribute money, they may be able to donate merchandise, such as equipment for junior shooters, furniture for the clubhouse, or other useful items.

Contributions are essential to club operations. Help received from any person, business, or organization should always be appreciated and publicly recognized.

Before requesting donations, you must consult your tax advisor and attorney. Besides other regulations, federal law requires that certain disclaimers accompany a solicitation for a donation. If you are not a 501 (c)(3) organization, any solicitation for a contribution must state that contributions are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

## **TAXES**

If your club or range is not intended to be a for profit business, you should apply for tax exempt status with the IRS and your state's tax agency. Just because your hunt or gun club is not really being run "for profit" does not mean that your club is automatically "tax exempt." Even if your club is a non-profit organization under state law, this does not necessarily mean that your club is tax exempt under federal law. To guarantee that you will receive tax exempt treatment, you should apply for tax exempt status with the IRS and your state's tax agency. All organizations are

subject to federal income tax unless they have a specific exemption under the provision of Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code.

You start the process by filing an application for exemption with the IRS and also with your state tax agency. You can obtain the appropriate forms from the IRS and your state's tax agency. An attorney or accountant will be able to assist in the selection of the proper exempt classification and preparation and filing of the required IRS and state documents and forms.

There are different types of tax exemptions. Most shooting clubs are potentially eligible for exemption under the provisions of Section 501(c)(4) (civic leagues or organizations) or Section 501 (c)(7) (recreational clubs) of the internal Revenue Code. Most of the NRA's affiliated clubs seek tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(4) or Section 501(c)(7).

Section 501(c)(4) organizations must not be organized for profit and must be operated for the promotion of social welfare. This means that the organization must be primarily engaged in promoting in some way the common good and general welfare of the community. To support your club's application for 501(c)(4) status, the club could conduct NRA hunter safety or firearms education courses, allow for sighting in days as a public service, sponsor a junior shooting club, or permit the use of the club's shooting facilities by community groups such as the police, National Guard or Boy Scouts.

If social activities will be the primary purpose of your organization, you should file for an exemption as a social and recreational club under Section 501(c)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code. Section 501(c)(7) exempts from federal income tax "[c]lubs organized for pleasure, recreation, and other non-profitable purposes, substantially all of the activities of which are for such purposes and no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder."

State law and regulations concerning state income taxes vary from state to state. Although a club's exemption from federal income tax is sometimes recognized for state income tax purposes, and in some states the requirements follow the pattern of federal regulations, in others there are different criteria, and in most cases you must apply for and receive "tax exempt" status from your state tax agency also.

Tax exempt status provides that income to the club, obtained during the course of its activities in furtherance of its tax exempt status, is not taxable. However, tax exempt status does not mean that all the income the organization receives is tax exempt. The organization's "unrelated business income" will still be taxed even though the club has qualified as a Section 501(c) tax exempt organization. If income is derived from a trade or business, regularly carried on, that is not substantially related to the charitable, educational or other tax exempt purpose of the organization, then such income is taxable "unrelated business income." Section 511 of the Internal Revenue Code imposes a federal tax on such unrelated business income. (This unrelated business income tax is often referred to as UBIT.) Therefore, certain income of the club may be taxable even if the organization is tax exempt. The idea is that a tax exempt organization should not be allowed to have an unfair advantage when competing in the commercial sector.

While it is legal for a tax exempt organization to have this type of income, it will be taxed under Section 511 of the IRC as UBIT. But be careful; if the IRS judges that the unrelated business income received by the tax exempt organization surpasses a certain threshold, the club may be endangering its tax exempt status. The IRS will look at the proportional amount of such unrelated business income relative to the organization's non-taxable income (such as dues, fees, donations, etc.) to determine its tax status.

The fact that a tax exempt organization makes money in some of its activities does not mean that the organization must be treated as a business for profit. Thus, a tax exempt organization may

make money by selling something but devote the money to the organization's ultimate purposes, in which case "the unrelated business activity" is to be treated as a business operation (e.g. it is taxable) but the organization's overall non-profit status continues. You should consult with a tax attorney or a certified public accountant when planning your tax exempt organization's finances, income and tax returns.

Please note that 501(c)(4) and 501(c)(7) status does not entitle a donor to seek a tax deduction for his donations. Only a Section 501(c)(3) (charitable, educational, religious) status organization can offer a donor that benefit. Seeking Section 501(c)(3) status is more complicated than seeking 501(c)(7) or 501(c)(4) status. The IRS often turns down applicants for 501(c)(3) status and requires them to jump through more hoops to obtain this status.

Note that all 501(c) tax exempt organizations must file an annual income tax return with the IRS. If the tax exempt organization's gross income is \$50,000 or less, the organization must file the Form 990-N (the e-post card), which asks only eight questions. If the Tax exempt organization has income greater than \$50,000, it has to file either the Form 990EZ or the Form 990. The failure to file tax returns may result in the revocation of the organization's tax-exempt status, and the failure to do so for three consecutive years will automatically result in such a revocation. Revocation may result in the taxing of the organization's revenues.

## **Basis for Tax Exemption**

Non-profit organizations affiliated with the National Rifle Association of America have successfully used one or more of the following activities as a basis for claiming exemption:

- Participation in the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP). The CMP is covered in Title 36 of the U.S. Code, 40721-40733, and falls under the Corporation for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Firearms Safety.
- Conducting NRA Hunter Safety courses, Basic Marksmanship Courses, and Sighting- In Days as a public service to the community.
- Sponsoring a junior shooting club to promote firearm safety education and marksmanship training.
- Permitting use of club shooting facilities by other community groups, such as the police, National Guard, Boy Scouts, etc.

## **Federal Income Tax Booklet**

The Internal Revenue Service of the U.S. Treasury Department publishes a booklet entitled *How to Apply for Recognition of Exemption..* This booklet describes the rules and procedures pertaining to clubs and organizations that seek exemption from Federal income tax. Most organizations will need to use Form 1023 unless 501(c)(3), in which case, Form 1024 may be used.

Your club can obtain this booklet by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or by visiting [www.irs.gov/charities-&-non-profits/](http://www.irs.gov/charities-&-non-profits/)

## State Income Taxes

Regulations concerning state income taxes vary from state to state. In some states, the requirements follow the pattern of federal regulations, while in other states there are entirely different criteria. Information on state taxes may be obtained by writing to the income tax division of the department of revenue for your state.

You must consult with your tax advisor and attorney in order to comply with federal, state and local tax laws.

## INCORPORATION

Corporate law is governed and determined by each state. Usually Articles of Incorporation are filed with the state's agency along with a filing fee. Once the Articles are approved, then the business, range, association or gun club is incorporated.

Most states ask that the corporation keep Bylaws, and hold and keep minutes of annual Board meetings and so on. This information will need to be kept on file with the corporation and does not need to be filed with the state.

An attorney should be sought to incorporate the business, range, association or gun club. Or the state agency could be contacted on how to handle incorporation on an individual basis. Costs are minimal for an attorney to handle this type of procedure. For more information, request brochure by calling (800) NRA-CLUB or email clubs@nrahq.org.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

### The NRA Foundation Grants

The NRA Foundation Grants support communities by funding programs such as Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, FFA, Jaycees, local clubs, educational institutions, associations and police departments in the areas of training, education and safety as well as supporting programs for wildlife and natural resource conservation.

The NRA Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization that raises tax-deductible contributions to support qualified educational, training, and developmental programs. The *Friends of NRA* program raises money through dinners and auctions. Half of the monies raised are utilized by The NRA Foundation nationally, with the other half invested in the state in which the money was raised. Each state has a *Friends of NRA* State Fund Committee that review grant applications and recommends grant funding to The NRA Foundation's Board of Trustees for final review.

For more information about grants or to apply online visit [www.nrafoundation.org/grants](http://www.nrafoundation.org/grants) or , contact The NRA Foundation at (703) 267-1131 or (800) 423-6894.

### NRA Range Grants

Qualifying 100% NRA membership clubs can apply for range grants up to \$5,000 per year for improvements and/or the development of shooting ranges. Range Grant funds are made available at the NRA's sole discretion to qualifying NRA-affiliated clubs and associations by approval of the Range Development Committee – a standing committee of the NRA Board of

Directors. The Range Grant Subcommittee reviews grant applications from qualifying NRA affiliates, and it submits recommendations to the Range Development Committee for approval. Range Grants will be awarded concurrent with the fall NRA Board of Directors meeting.

At the NRA's sole discretion, grants are awarded to qualifying NRA affiliates to assist with acquisition, development and improvement of shooting facilities. Grants are also awarded to assist qualifying NRA affiliates with projects designed to improve community relations and to address environmental issues related to range operations.

Range grant applications are due on August 1st of each year. To apply online, visit <http://range.nra.org/range-grants.aspx> or contact NRA Range Services at [range@nrahq.org](mailto:range@nrahq.org) or (877) NRA RANGE.

## **NRA Public Range Fund**

The NRA Public Range Fund was established in 2009 as a matching grant program to encourage city and county governments, and state or federal agencies, to work with NRA on efforts to build and improve public ranges across the United States.

At the NRA's sole discretion, grants are awarded to qualifying city and county governments and state or federal agencies to assist with the acquisition, development, and improvement of public shooting facilities. Grants are also awarded to assist qualifying agencies or local governments with projects designed to improve community relations and to address environmental issues related to range operations.

### **Eligible Applicants:**

- An applicant may be any city or county government or state or federal agency that plans to build or improve, or is currently building or improving, public ranges, and is able to provide proof of ability to 100% match awarded funding in revenue, labor, equipment, materials, etc. to ensure the project's completion.
- Generally, grants are awarded on a 50-50 matching basis with 50% of the cost of the project being provided by the applicant and 50% awarded from the NRA Public Range Fund. In-kind services of labor, materials, and equipment may be considered to provide the applicant's 50% contribution to the project.
- For projects where Pittman-Robertson Funds are being used, the applicant's share will be 75% of the project, with the remaining 25% coming from the NRA Public Range Fund.

### **Projects/Activities Eligible for Funding:**

- To build or improve upon existing public ranges at the city, county, state, or federal level by providing assistance for construction, labor, materials, and equipment costs.
- To provide assistance for the maintenance, security, and upgrades of public ranges at the city, county, state, or federal level.
- To support activities and objectives set forth in the bylaws of the National Rifle Association of America.

Applications for grant funding will not exceed \$25,000 for any qualifying applicant per year and all applicants will be required to show proof to provide the matching amount of requested funding. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis as funding is available.

All funding and/or grants awarded under or pursuant to this program are entirely at the NRA's sole discretion. No party, including applicants under the program, has the right to receive funding nor is funding guaranteed. No application, participation in the program, and/or submission of any application or other forms related to the program, shall be construed as creating a contractual relationship between the NRA and the applicant. An applicant applies at his/her own expense.

For more information or to download an application visit <http://range.nra.org/public-range-fund-grant-program.aspx> or contact NRA Range Services at [range@nrahq.org](mailto:range@nrahq.org) or (877) NRA RANGE.

# CHAPTER 7: MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

## MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Progressive clubs constantly seek ways to attract new members. New members are the key to an active, growing club. With this understanding, attention should be centered on membership drives.

### Membership Benefits

The more diverse the benefits offered by a club, the more people will want to join it. Access to a shooting range and the opportunity to participate in scheduled shooting events are probably the two most meaningful benefits that can be offered when a club is newly organized. When establishing benefits for the promotion of the club, be sure that these benefits can be continued on a regular basis and that they are low in up-front costs. Following are some suggestions for benefits that your club may wish to offer:

- Range use.
- Shooting events.
- Training workshops.
- Women's programs.
- Legislative information.
- Attractive membership cards.
- Club newsletter.
- Social events.
- Community service activities.
- Junior programs.
- Affiliation with the NRA and NRA State Associations.

### Membership Promotion

There is no better advertising for your club and its activities than satisfied members. Try a "member-get-a-member" promotion campaign. Get your members to talk about your club and all its benefits. Suggest that they call a friend, a fellow worker, or other acquaintances who are interested in shooting and hunting. Talk to local merchants, especially those who handle firearms or sporting goods. Offer an award for the person who signs up the most new members. If you can infuse others with your own enthusiasm, this method of promotion will be an unqualified success.

### Displays, Exhibits, and Web Sites

With a little effort and minor expense, attractive promotional displays and exhibits about your club can be created for use in your local area (store windows, check-out counters, etc.) or on your own website. Sign-making kits, lettering sets, and even hand lettering can



create attractive posters for public display. Displays can be developed using club firearms, scopes, shooting trophies, game mounts, photographs, and other similar materials.

Local sporting goods dealers and owners of shops on heavily traveled streets may permit your club to erect displays or posters in their shop windows. Your display may enhance the appearance of the owner's building and help the owner to promote the store. For example, tying your display into a store's fall sales event may help both the storeowner and your club.

Local sportsmen's shows, fairs, and carnivals also offer excellent opportunities for manned exhibits. Club materials, shooting accessories, and hunting gear can easily be displayed. Club members can man the exhibit and answer questions.

Semi-permanent displays can be placed in local gun shops, hardware stores, and the sporting goods departments of large stores. Make attractive arrangements of photographs of club members and shooting activities. Title the displays with eye-catching copy. This type of display can be easily changed, and can be used for promoting membership, advertising upcoming shooting events, and informing the public of other club activities. Remember to make sufficient supplies of membership folders and applications readily available in the display area.

## **MEMBER RETENTION**

Existing members are an important club asset, and every reasonable effort should be made to keep members active. They should be positively reminded when memberships come up for renewal. The club secretary or membership chairman should follow-up with reminders to members who don't renew. Letters, phone calls, or, even better, a personal visit to the lapsed member should be used to encourage the member to renew.

If some members are not taking full advantage of the various opportunities offered by the club, be sure to emphasize to them that their dues are supporting many other worthwhile programs besides those in which they are taking part. If they are reminded that their dues are supporting many valuable programs, they may be more willing to renew their membership.

Important and useful information about the club can be gained by talking to a lapsed member at this time. A lapsed member's evaluation of club programs will provide insight into what can be done to improve member satisfaction.

# CHAPTER 8: INDIVIDUAL NRA MEMBERSHIP

One of the most effective ways to stimulate interest and activity among club members is to encourage individual NRA membership. Among numerous other benefits, NRA members can elect to receive one of the NRA's magazines (*American Rifleman*, *American Hunter*, or *America's 1st Freedom*), read NRA Legislative Bulletins, and use NRA information services for advice on hunting and shooting subjects. It has been found that such club members are generally more active in club activities.

Enrolling your club in the NRA Recruiting program can significantly aid your club's treasury. The program is free to join and provides your club with a year round opportunity to raise money while strengthening the NRA. By becoming a NRA Recruiting Club, your club can earn up to \$25 for every membership sold. In addition, the NRA Recruiting Programs Department will provide your club with the necessary materials to facilitate NRA membership recruitment.

To obtain an application for enrollment, please visit [www.nra.org/Recruiter](http://www.nra.org/Recruiter), email [recruiter@nrahq.org](mailto:recruiter@nrahq.org), or call (800) 672-0004.

## CLASSES OF NRA MEMBERSHIP

### Annual

Individuals who are at least 18 years old can apply to become an **Annual Member**. Dues are \$35 for one year, \$60 for two years, \$85 for three years, and \$125 for five years. Persons age 65 or older and disabled U.S. Veterans can apply to become special **Distinguished Annual Members** at discounted rates. Dues are \$30 for one year. All **Annual Members** and **Distinguished Annual Members** will receive one of NRA's magazines. Persons who have five years of consecutive membership are eligible to vote in all NRA elections.

### Junior

Persons 18 and under can qualify as **Junior Members**. Annual dues of \$15 entitle a member to receive a monthly subscription to *InSights* magazine (NRA's publication for juniors). Juniors aged 15 years or older are entitled to receive NRA's magazines other than *InSights*. Please note that *InSights* is only available in a digital format. A valid email address is required to for junior members who wish to receive *InSights* magazine.

### Associate

**Associate Members** enjoy the same benefits as Annual Members, but cannot vote in NRA elections and do not receive any of NRA's magazines. Dues are \$10 per year.

### Life

**Life Members** pay a one-time fee for membership. (The unused portion of an existing membership may be applied to the life membership fee.)

All Life Members are eligible to vote in all NRA elections provided they achieved Life Member status 50 days before an election.

Classes of life membership include **Regular, Junior, Distinguished, and Disabled U.S. Veteran:**

- **Regular Life Member** -- membership fee of \$1,000.
- **Junior Life Member** -- membership fee of \$550. (Available for youngsters who are 18 years and under. A Junior Life membership will automatically convert, without any additional payment of fees, to a standard Regular Life membership when the junior reaches 18 years old.)
- **Distinguished Life Member** -- membership fee of \$375.
- **Disabled U.S. Veteran Life Member** -- membership fee of \$375.

The membership fee may be paid in either monthly or quarterly installments using NRA's Easy Pay Life (EPL) program. Under this program, a fee of \$25 is paid each quarter toward the cost of membership. Life membership credentials are not issued until the final EPL payment is made.

### **Contributory (Endowment, Patron, and Benefactor)**

These contributory categories are designed for Life Members who wish to donate funds to the NRA over and above their regular life membership fee.

- **Endowment Member** -- membership fee of \$2,000.
- **Patron Member** -- membership fee of \$3,500.
- **Benefactor Member** -- membership fee of \$5,000.

These memberships are essentially "Super-Life" categories, and life members are entitled to a credit based on the current value of whatever level of life membership they now hold. For example, a person who is already an Endowment Member (currently valued at \$2,000) would only need to pay an additional \$1,500 to reach the \$3,500 Patron Member level.

### **NRA Golden Eagles**

This special category is an annual membership program in which members contribute a \$200 annual fee in support of numerous NRA educational, legislative, media, and outreach programs, including hunting and shooting programs, Refuse To Be A Victim® seminars, law enforcement training programs, *Friends of NRA*, the Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program, etc. **Golden Eagles** members receive numerous benefits, including an annual subscription to one of NRA's magazines. Golden Eagles memberships can be held as a sole membership or in addition to any of the Life Member categories.

Golden Eagles membership requires an annual contribution of \$200, which can be paid in quarterly installments of \$50. Installment members of the Golden Eagles must have fulfilled at least three-quarters of their membership commitment to qualify for full benefits.

# CHAPTER 9: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Running a good public relations program means you're the one shaping the message. A message that changes minds, influences decision makers and increases your customer base. This can be accomplished by establishing a good working relationship with the local news media, reaching out to the community and becoming active on the Internet.

The first thing to decide is who's in charge. Who handles public relations for the club? There are a few things to consider before making that choice.

Do they have good oral and written communication skills? Will they be able to going the respect of local television, newspaper and radio reporters? Are they familiar with the Internet? Do they take part in the clubs activities? And most importantly, do they have time to do the job?

Once you answer those questions, it's time for them to roll up their sleeves and get involved. They need to participate in all club activities at the top level. This person should be present at board meetings, policymaking discussions and public events to ensure that they are familiar with all aspects of the club. Only then can your public information director be effective when dealing with the media.

Next its time to reach out to the media. Local newspaper staffers, outdoors writers, news commentators, sports writers, and feature editors will be the people receiving club material and deciding on its use. There are two simple ways to do reach out: arrange an introduction or invite them to an event.

The ideal approach to arrange an introduction is to have someone who already knows the reporters introduce your public information director to them. If this is not possible, you can call the media offices to arrange a brief visit to get acquainted and to furnish them with some background material on the club. At this meeting, ask what type of material that the particular media representative can use.

Invite the media to visit the club, especially when interesting events are taking place. Offer use of the club's facilities and, where appropriate, send complimentary passes. Whenever the media shows an interest in the club's activities, a good public information director will be prepared to fan the flames of that interest.

An underutilized tool in public relations is the internet. Do you have a good website? Not sure? That's easy enough to figure out. Does it look like Apple, CNN, Harley Davidson or your favorite product's website? If not, then it might need addressing. But your internet journey doesn't stop there. There's also social media.

Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and Pinterest are a few good places to start. If your public information director isn't familiar with these social media tools then it should be their priority to learn. After all, these are the platforms that have broken the news, announced revolutions and push people to act. They cannot be ignored.

## THE NEWS STORY

Write a story whenever there is interesting news to tell! They won't run every story you submit, but the more information you provide, the better your chances. Keep in mind that these stories should not be written just to get the club name or a member's name in the paper -- stories must contain **news** or they will be discarded. The following events or activities are a good base for sending out a news release to your local media:

- A club public service project, such as hunter safety classes, a Hunter Sighting-In Day, or junior instruction classes.
- An interesting club meeting or speaker program.
- The opening of a new shooting range.
- A club shooting match.
- Match results when a club member does well in a match.
- An unusual game trophy taken by a club member.
- When undesirable legislation concerning firearms is being proposed.
- When there is a good human interest story, such as an exceptional junior shooter, a novelty shooting match, or an unusual firearm being used.

The media carries a news story for two basic reasons: (1) it is a matter of sensational and/or controversial impact; and (2) it is a current point of interest and information for the reader, viewer, or listener. Much as we might wish it otherwise, the degree of sensationalism and urgency (or current activity) usually dictates whether the story will be used.

No one can guarantee the printing of a story in the daily press. But the chances of having coverage of your event will be improved if you follow the steps in this guide. While there are many friends of the shooting sports in the public media, there are also many persons who are not sympathetic toward our cause. Your personal attention to journalists will help overcome that attitude.

### The Advance Story

When you decide to hold a newsworthy club activity or program, notify the newspaper, radio, and television media with a short *advance story*.

Be sure to keep your advance story short -- it should contain only the specifics and facts. Name the sponsor, type of program, date, place, and entries (if it is a shooting event). The name and phone number of a contact person in the club **must** be included. Normally, the contact person is the club secretary or public information director.

Address your story to the sports editor (by name). Your story should be prepared and distributed to hometown outlets and those in surrounding communities about one week prior to the event.

### The Pre-Program Story

The *pre-program story* is actually a re-write of the advance story, but with a few additional facts to update the event. For example, in the case of a tournament, you can now add the actual number of entries, how many out-of-town competitors are entered, the number of competitive rounds the participants will fire in the tournament, the names of the defending tournament champions, etc. To add a little color, you can also give the names of the people who hold the record scores for this event, and mention whether they are entered in the tournament. Always invite the public to attend, and send a special invitation, followed by a personal phone call, to the sports editors of your local newspapers and broadcast media. Approximately 200 words should be sufficient for this type of story.

You should plan to have this story arrive in the sports department of the news outlets at least two, but not more than four, days before the program.

### The Program Story

The *program story* is a day-to-day report of the program's progress. Your public information director must know the story submission deadlines of the media, and make sure that there is ample time to meet them. The various media deadlines can be obtained when the public information director makes his or her first introductory visit with the various media contacts, or at the time that contact is made with the advance story.

To get your story in the news, it is **absolutely** necessary that you meet deadlines. Statistical people must be aware of this requirement if you are covering a tournament. Plan carefully before the event begins, and know exactly **what** information will be needed and **when**.

The final deadline for afternoon papers is usually about 9:00 a.m. For morning papers, the deadline is usually about 8:00 p.m. the previous evening. Primary news blocks for broadcast are normally 7:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m., and 10:00 -- 11:00 p.m. Broadcast media very often use an *actuality* -- a telephone interview with someone giving the results and color.

### WRITING THE STORY

Always write a rough draft to use as a working copy. When you are ready to submit the final version to the media, be sure to submit a clean, typed (double-spaced), and complete version.

Almost everyone is familiar with the *Five W's* (and one *H*) formula that news journalists follow: *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, and *why* (plus *how*). Editors will look for these basic elements in your story. These elements need not be in any specific sequence, but it is important that they all appear in your story. When you have finished your first draft, read it thoroughly to make sure that all these elements are in the story:

- *Who* -- This element is primary to most news stories. Readers are always interested in *who*. All names **must** be spelled correctly. Never use just an initial and surname -- always use first names (or two initials) with a last name. Along with names, use titles or other identifying information. In the case of stories about firearms and/or shooting events, avoid using the actual street addresses of individuals for security reasons.
- *What* -- What is the event or occasion? What is unusual or important about it? Give the complete and accurate name of the event or occasion.
- *When* -- Did the event happen on Monday or Wednesday, morning or afternoon? Was the event or result a surprise, and did it take place suddenly, or was it a development covering a period of time? Never say *recently*. Be specific and give the exact date.
- *Where* -- Be specific. Examples: *At the Middletown Gun Club* or *the 29th Street Police*
- *Range*. If the specific location is not easily identifiable, name some nearby place that is well known.
- *Why* -- Was the event the result of carefully made plans? Is it a traditional occasion?

- *How* -- How did "Joe Shooter" win the match? Give the details as to how something happened or how it was done.

Write only the facts. Keep the story brief. Don't editorialize or use extra adjectives or superlatives. Remember, news editors don't like cute grammar. Avoid all jargon -- it is absolutely imperative that you use **non-technical** language to make your story easily understood by the editor and the general public.

Compare the following paragraphs carefully. Notice what a difference the use of the above writing tips can make!

**Do this:**

*Peter L. Smith of the Middletown Shooting Club won the .22 caliber rifle championship today at the 20th Street Range. Smith scored 1595 out of a possible 1600, four points under the Middletown match record. Wind gusts up to 15 miles per hour cost the champion five points on the 100-yard range. He fired perfect scores on the shorter ranges.*

**Not this:**

*The smallbore aggregate winner was P. Smith with 1595-15X's. Smith missed his possible in the Dewar because of a three o'clock wind gust, but ended up only five down after working on the sighter bull.*

Always remember to observe the following guidelines:

- Type your story double-spaced on one side of plain 8 " x 11" white paper. Never submit a story in longhand.
- Use at least 1 inch right and left margins. (This space is useful for editing purposes.)
- In the upper right-hand corner, give the name of your club and the name, address, and
- phone number of the person who should be contacted for information and assistance.
- Always give a dateline (place of origin of the event) and a "slug" headline that will attract the editor and will indicate the content.
- Start the story at least a fourth of the way down the page, leaving room at the top for the editor to write his instructions to the re-write desk.

Be prepared to furnish additional background information if the news media should call. In all cases, respond promptly and courteously to every request from the media for additional information or assistance.

Study the example on the next page of a sample news release:

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
May 11, 200X**

**For More Information, Contact:  
John Bugle, Public Information Director  
Middletown Rifle & Pistol Club  
4718 Oak Street  
Middletown, Ohio 55555  
Phone: (703) 555-1531**

**Annual Blue Valley Rifle Shoot  
to be Held at Local Club Range**

(Middletown, OH) -- Sam Jones, President of the Middletown Rifle & Pistol Club, announced today that the 14th Annual Blue Valley Smallbore Rifle Shoot will be held at the club's range (16th and Maple Streets) on Sunday, May 4. Eight shooting events are scheduled, including special competitive events for youngsters 14-18 years old. Firing will start at 10 a.m. and will end at 3:00 p.m.

This event, which is open to the general public, attracted a field of more than 100 competitors last year from all parts of the state. More than 150 competitors are expected to participate in this year's matches. John Taylor of Adamsburg, Ohio, has won the adult championship for the last two years in a row, and will be competing again in Sunday's matches. The shoot is registered with the National Rifle Association, and local sponsors include Post 114 of The American Legion, the Middletown Police Officers Youth Club, and the First National Bank of Middletown.

Following the matches will be a raffle featuring ammunition, rifle cases, and gun cleaning supplies donated by Whitcomb's Hardware and Garden Center in Middletown. Food and soft drinks will be available throughout the day, and families are welcome.

To obtain more information about the event, or to purchase raffle tickets, contact match director Jim O'Brien at (703) 555-2212.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS FOR THE STORY**

Editors usually require high quality photographs. The photos should have definite news or human interest value, and action should be emphasized. Always try to show people who are **doing** something, not just standing around looking at the camera!

If your club has an experienced photographer, fine. If not, ask your local newspaper editors about securing the services of a good photographer.

Photographs should be color and at least 300 dots per square inch (dpi). And if they are able to shoot video too, there's always the chance they can use that too.

Always include a caption with each photo. The caption should explain what is taking place in the photo, and should be no more than a few lines in length. Identify each person in the photo, and be sure to identify your contact person at the end of each caption.



## **PUBLIC SPEAKING EVENTS**

Effective club public relations program also includes dealing **directly** with the general public. Clubs need the understanding of both the non-shooting and shooting portions of the community. Telling the townspeople about your club's work and activities is an excellent way to promote good community relations. Interesting, informative talks presented by your club will help to give townspeople a favorable impression of your club's activities.

It takes work to prepare a talk. Clubs need to develop members who are adept at making speeches or organizing presentations for the public. It is important that your presentations address current issues that the local community can relate to, and identify with, in their daily lives.

An accepted length of time for a speaker is usually 10-20 minutes. Movies and slides are wonderful visual aids in a speech. The speaker can also plan a brief period to answer questions from the audience.

Be sure to choose interesting topics. For example, you may have an outstanding shooter in your club who can demonstrate safe, but intriguing, shooting. The shooter might perform demonstrations of accuracy while also explaining and emphasizing the safe handling of firearms. In presenting such demonstrations, remember -- **safety first.... always!** This type of presentation can be entertaining and educational to those unfamiliar with shooting practices, and may even encourage persons to enroll as members of your club.

Another type of presentation might be historical in nature. Using a few antique guns from the collections of your members, this type of presentation can be a blend of historical information, facts about guns, and anecdotes. Perhaps the speaker can talk about some of the past greats in the gun world, such as Samuel Colt, Henry Deringer, Horace Smith and Daniel Wesson, Eliphalet Remington, and Oliver Winchester illustrating the talk with examples of the firearms invented by these famous men. When you speak to your audience about such topics, you will make them aware of the great role that firearms have had in American history.

If you want to speak to a specific organization then contact the group's program chairperson. He or she can tell you what topics and length of time are appropriate for their organization. Be sure to provide the chairperson with a brief, but complete, summary of your club's history and activities. Also include appropriate contact information for your club. When you select a speaker, be sure to provide the group's program chairperson with information about your speaker, including name, occupation, other organizations to which your speaker belongs, honors and awards received, etc.

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Odds are your club is already involved with the local community, but to what extent? Are you a participant or a bystander? If you're not involved, then it's time to get your hands dirty.

Chamber of Commerce and City Council are great first steps. Sitting shoulder to shoulder with community decision makers provides both standing for your club and the ear of those who pull the strings. These strings could be issues such as permits, zoning and infrastructure – all which can affect your operation.

Fairs, festivals and parades are another good place to make friends with the community. A car or float with the name of your club on the side. Or an airgun booth or antique firearms display at the County Fair. But that's not always an option. So go another direction. Sell hotdogs, funnel cakes or roasted peanuts. As long as you're out there, shaking hands with your neighbors, then you're putting a good foot forward.

Another option is the sponsorship of local youth sports teams. T-ball, soccer or basketball teams are always looking for someone to help pay for jerseys or equipment. Invest the money there and you'll be cultivating future participants in America's shooting sports.

## **CONCLUSION**

The main thing to remember in every public relations program is potential. Everything has potential. Every setting, every event and every contact. Whether an official club function or a night out with the family, any and all actions has the potential to improve or damage the image of your club – so best behavior at all times.

It's all about getting out there. Once you do, your neighbors and friends will begin to see your club, and its members, as an asset to the community.

# CHAPTER 10: CLUB NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is one of the most important club services. Its main purpose is to provide news, such as announcing meetings, promoting activities and programs, giving recognition for achievements, and keeping the membership informed about ongoing club activity.

The newsletter is more than a promotional tool -- it is an information source. When used properly, it can help increase attendance at shoots and meetings, increase membership renewals, and develop the support of the membership for fund-raising projects, work parties, and social events.

## SELECTING THE EDITOR

Selection of the editor will be a major factor in determining the effectiveness of the newsletter. Above all, the editor must be organized and competent. His or her editorial skill will be necessary for the job of shortening the copy so it can fit into a limited amount of space while retaining its meaning and appeal.

The editor must also be able to sell key members on supplying news according to newsletter deadlines. The regulation and flow of material is a primary concern for the success of the newsletter.

A newsletter should be fairly short and easy to understand. The editor is responsible for the decisions on the amount of copy used and the type of material that is important to a club when it is newly organized.

## CONTENT

The newsletter is basically a paper and its contents should resemble the local newspaper. It should include announcements of programs and meetings, appointments, elections, and match results. It should also include news about the personal achievements of members, such as awards, hunting trophies, and records established. Use it to recognize your members' activities in business, community affairs, and honors bestowed outside of club activities.

The newsletter should cover essential items without many frills. A paid advertising section should be started only after a careful study to see if it is worth the effort. Continuing features or departments should be introduced only if it is certain that copy will be furnished on a steady basis. Certain non-time sensitive feature information can be kept on hand to round out a newsletter. Safe gun handling, marksmanship improvement tips, hunting information, and similar items are examples of the types of material that may be used. Much of this information can be obtained from information distributed by the NRA. Permission is usually given by the NRA to reprint information printed in the NRA's official journals: *American Rifleman*, *American Hunter*, and *America's 1st Freedom*.

Contact information on club officers and the newsletter editor should be carried in every issue of the club newsletter. The name, address, and phone number of the club secretary will enable

members to make contact on club business. The same information for the editor will enable members to report news items for publication.

A club membership application printed in every issue of the newsletter will assist members in signing up new members and in renewing their own memberships on time.

## **PUBLICATION FREQUENCY**

Almost any club can manage a quarterly newsletter. If the needs of the club indicate an increase to bimonthly or monthly frequency, a stepped-up schedule should be instituted. The decision to publish monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly will be determined largely by the amount of club activities which generate news and the funds available for publication. Whatever schedule is selected, it should be adhered to faithfully in the interest of readership appeal.

## **FORMAT AND PRODUCTION**

If you are fortunate enough to have any combination of computer, copier, and/or printer in your club, production problems will be at a minimum. However, since most clubs are not this fortunate, the task of mechanical production will necessarily be the responsibility of the newsletter editor. The format of the paper can be as professional as the editor's talents and the club budget will allow.

Considerable planning and effort go into the publication of a newsletter. It is the standard means of communication. Without a newsletter or a similar publication, it is difficult for a club to grow and prosper. By keeping the newsletter lively, simple, and on schedule, it can be the club's most tangible benefit. You may find that a substantial segment of your members have access to the Internet. If this is the case, you may consider posting your newsletter on a webpage or e-mailing each issue directly to your individual members.

# CHAPTER 11: HOW TO RUN A COMMUNITY SHOOTING EVENT

## RECRUITMENT

Community involvement is a great networking and recruiting tool for your club and club's events. There are several places and opportunities to recruit people, such as churches, business organizations, sports groups, civic organizations, local politicians and other places unique to your area. Become involved in your community by volunteering to speak at schools and participating in school Career Day activities. Build relationships on a personal level.

Another place to meet possible recruits is at shooting ranges, but don't forget about people who attend various firearm-related events like firearm instructors or coaches. You can request a list of NRA instructors from the NRA Training Department by calling (703) 267-1391 or email [training@nrahq.org](mailto:training@nrahq.org). Tell them what you are trying to do and ask them to join in and help.

## ORGANIZE EARLY

Gather as much information as you possibly can **before** you call your first meeting. Research the interests of the general public and gather pertinent information to help plan the event. Write goals and objectives that your club wants to accomplish with the event. When you have your first meeting, try to bring together those people who are active in other projects and who have been making other events a success.

## PUBLICITY

A good program makes great copy for a news release. The sports section of your local newspaper is an excellent outlet to announce your event. You can also pass out flyers in your local stores and buy airtime on local radio/tv stations. Don't forget about publishing your events in the NRA magazines or list your event online on the NRA National Registry of events by going to [www.nrahq.org/clubs/events.asp](http://www.nrahq.org/clubs/events.asp).

## EVENT COMMITTEE

Set up an event planning committee and discuss the several positions that need to be filled (food services, range control, first aid, welcoming, administrative, etc.) Discuss the tasks, and as a committee, set timeframes for the work to be done. Get all committee members to contribute something in the initial stages.

Keep the lines of communication open at all times. Hold as many meetings as necessary to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

Determine the critical components of the project and set deadlines as to when these components must be completed. Have alternate solutions ready to go if one component is unaccomplished.

Be receptive to the concerns of your workers and make them feel that they are part of the planning process. Keep them talking and encourage them to offer their opinions as to how things can get done.

## **APPRECIATION**

Show your workers that you appreciate their level of participation. Get some small gifts or mementos for everyone, and **always thank them** for what they do.

## **SOLICIT DONATIONS & GRANTS**

Work at obtaining donations and or financial support all year round. Use your sign-in sheets from previous events, businesses and suppliers you have used, charitable organizations, the firearm industry, and individuals.

Most importantly, apply for grants! In the majority of cases, you have to apply well in advance for support from major organizations. Find out what their grant application cut-off dates are and submit your request on time. Provide news clippings, pictures, testimonials, and follow-up your application with letters, e-mail, and telephone calls. Don't forget about NRA Foundation grants! (Refer to Chapter 6: Club Finances)

## **PRE-REGISTRATION**

Have the attendees pre-register for your event. The pre-registration form may ask for a name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address, and should include a hold-harmless release for the attendee to sign, which may be obtained by contacting a local attorney or your insurance provider. Also ask each attendee to furnish the name and contact information for a person who will vouch for the attendee's good character. This pre-registration process is helpful in four ways: it creates in the attendee's mind a commitment to attend; deters participation by unwanted guests; gives you an estimate of what your head count will be; and eliminates paperwork on the day of the event.

## **SAFETY**

Go out of your way to show the attendees that they are safe at all times and make sure every precaution is taken to ensure the safe actions of others. Hand out an itinerary of the day's events; explain hot areas and safe areas. Point out restroom facility, lounge areas, and a first aid station. Explain what their day will be like, and point out the location of the conveniences.

## **INSTRUCTION**

Stick to the basics! Your goal is not to produce sharpshooters, but rather to instill the basic firearm safety rules. Hold an instruction session of the safety and range rules to newcomers. Keep it interesting and keep it moving. Tell the attendees how much fun they are going to have once they get out on the range.

## **RANGE CONTROL**

Have one NRA Certified Range Safety Officer (RSO) conduct the live fire exercise on each range. If multiple ranges are used, assign a Chief RSO to be responsible for control of all live fire ranges.

It is ideal to have a one-to-one ratio of instructors to attendees, but that is seldom the case. Strive to have at least one instructor at each station on the range for every five attendees. For information on how to find a RSO in your area or to enroll in an upcoming course, visit <http://training.nra.org/training/range-safety-officer-home-validation.aspx>.

## **WORK THE CROWD**

As mentioned earlier, try to recruit new members from the attendees. Keep the sign-in sheets and hold-harmless statements for a mailing list. See if the attendees have additional contacts that can lead to more people for your next event. Invite attendees to come back to the club for additional shooting/training.

## **FEEDBACK**

Give the attendees evaluation sheets to fill out. Read what they have to say. If it makes sense, make the changes recommended.

## **TAKE- HOME STUFF**

Attendees need stuff to take home and pass around to their friends. Do not let them go home emptyhanded.

Give them information about your organization, state firearm laws, places to shoot, how to purchase a firearm, and training classes. Many companies in the firearm industry will supply items bearing their logo at no cost to you. All you have to do is ask.

# CHAPTER 12: MAKING NRA PROGRAMS WORK FOR YOUR CLUB

Whether you're a new or prospective gun owner or hunter in search of training, whatever your age or level of expertise, whatever type of firearm you're interested in, NRA's Education & Training Division is here to help you.

## **NRA SPORTS**

Established in 2013, the NRA Sports Department was developed for NRA members who have a genuine interest in the recreational shooting sports. The programs offered appeal to a wide variety of clubs, ranges, hunters, novice and shooting sports enthusiasts. Take ownership of your NRA by taking part in these exciting programs.

### **Clubs & Associations**

The NRA Clubs & Associations Department provides services and assistance to a network of over 14,000 NRA-affiliated clubs, associations, and businesses. Contact us at (800) NRA-CLUB (672-2582), email at [clubs@nrahq.org](mailto:clubs@nrahq.org), or visit <http://clubs.nra.org/> for more information.

### **Hunter Services**

With over 2.3 million members who hunt, the NRA offers hunters a wide range of programs addressing all aspects of hunting, including youth hunter skills, advanced skills training and the conservation of our natural and wildlife resources. All Hunter Services programs work toward the common goal of instilling and promoting the skills and ethics that will ensure the continuance of America's proud hunting heritage. More Information can be found online by visiting <http://hservices.nra.org/>

### **Range Services**

NRA Range Services offers a number of resources to public and private ranges across the country including on-site assistance, educational seminars, grants and much more. Visit <http://range.nra.org/>, email [range@nrahq.org](mailto:range@nrahq.org) or call (877) NRA RANGE for more information.

### **NRA Day**

Brownells/NRA Day events provide adults, youth, families, hunters, sportsmen, competitors - literally everyone - the opportunity to come together under a formal program to learn, experience, share, and grow in appreciation of the shooting sports. The event themes offered in the program are designed for discovery. They provide exposure to the many different activities available in shooting sports and offer participants the opportunity to explore them in a safe, controlled environment. The Brownells/NRA Day is a family affair! Everyone can attend! Visit <http://training.nra.org/nra-shooting-sports-camps.aspx> to sign up to host an event today!



### **3 Gun Shooting Events**

NRA Sports Activities are designed to introduce new and intermediate shooters to a safe, family fun, mildly competitive, recreational shooting event. These events revolve around the non-traditional action packed, ever popular 3 Gun competition, utilizing modern sporting rifles, shotguns and pistols. Visit <http://nrasports.nra.org/3-gun-shooting-events.aspx> for more information.

### **Women's Wilderness Escape**

The NRA Women's Wilderness Escape provides women 18 and older with an eight-day getaway opportunity to experience the softer side of firearm education with exposure to a wide variety of shooting sports activities and an array of enticing hunting and outdoor related activities. Whether you are a novice or a seasoned outdoor enthusiast, it's an experience that will prepare you for your next adventure! Sign up today by visiting <http://nrasports.nra.org/womens-wilderness-escape.aspx>

## **TRAINING DEPARTMENT**

From beginner shooter to developing competitor, the NRA Training Department develops safe, ethical, responsible shooters through a network of some 92,000 instructors who conduct basic training and Range Safety Officers who run safe shooting ranges. NRA's Training Counselors recruit and train instructors to teach NRA's basic firearm courses. NRA Coaches, in turn, develop competitors at the club, high school, collegiate and national levels. More information on the variety of programs offered for training opportunities can be found online at <http://training.nra.org/>, [www.nrainstructors.org](http://www.nrainstructors.org) or by emailing them at [training@nrahq.org](mailto:training@nrahq.org)

## **YOUTH PROGRAMS**

The NRA helps America's adult leaders and national youth serving organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, Royal Rangers, National High School Rodeo Association, 4-H, USA Shooting, Junior ROTC, American Legion, VFW and the Safari Club International, to set up shooting programs. These programs introduce first time or intermediate shooters to a lifetime of recreational and competitive opportunities. In addition, NRA Instructor Courses and Training Counselor Workshops are offered throughout the year, resulting in clubs, ranges and youth organizations having a cadre of NRA trainers to run safe, well organized shooting sports programs for all. Programs that are available from the NRA Youth Programs are the Winchester/NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program, which provides both adults and youth the opportunity to experience the shooting sports at all levels of shooting; Brownells/NRA National Youth Shooting Sports Ambassadors Program; and the Brownells/NRA Outstanding Achievement Youth Award. To find out how to participate in the many programs that are available, or how to get youth activities in your club, visit <http://youth.nra.org/>

## **REFUSE TO BE A VICTIM ®**

Improve your personal safety strategies with NRA's Refuse To Be A Victim® Program. Experts agree that the single most important step toward ensuring your personal safety is making the decision to refuse to be a victim. That means that you must have an overall personal safety strategy in place before you need it. Through a four-hour seminar (shorter presentations are

available) called Refuse To Be A Victim<sup>®</sup>, you can learn the personal safety tips and techniques you need to avoid dangerous situations and avoid becoming a victim.

Hundreds of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials across the country have implemented Refuse To Be A Victim<sup>®</sup> into their crime prevention and community policing initiatives. For more information, visit <http://refuse.nra.org/>

## **EDDIE EAGLE GUNSAFE<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM**

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe<sup>®</sup> Program teaches children in pre-K through third grade four important steps to take if they find a gun. These steps are presented by the program's mascot, Eddie Eagle, in an easy-to-remember format consisting of the following simple rules:

**If you see a gun:**

**STOP!**

**Don't Touch.**

**Leave the Area.**

**Tell an Adult.**

Anyone may teach The Eddie Eagle GunSafe<sup>®</sup> Program, and NRA membership is not required. The program may be readily incorporated into existing school curriculum, taught in a one- to five-day format, and used to reach either levels or simply one or two grades. Materials available through this program are: student workbooks, 7-minute animated DVD, instructor guides, brochures, and student reward stickers. Program materials are also available in Spanish. For more information visit <http://eddieeagle.nra.org/>

## **GUNSMITHING**

NRA short term gunsmithing schools offer courses on topics such as general gunsmithing, bluing, stockmaking, checkering, engraving, and parkerizing. More specialized courses focus on topics such as accurizing the AR-15 rifle; accurizing varmint rifles; fine tuning single-action revolvers and long guns for cowboy shoots; accurizing the Colt Model 1911 pistol; and English Gunsmithing. Law enforcement armorer classes are also offered. Learn more about available gunsmithing schools at <http://www.nragunsmithing.com/>

## **WOMEN'S PROGRAMS**

Women from across the country and from all walks of life are expressing an increased interest in their personal safety, in firearms, and in firearm training. They are experiencing the empowerment of taking responsibility for themselves. NRA Women's Programs has developed and conducts events *for women, by the women of the NRA*. Whether a woman's interest is in gun safety, gun knowledge, marksmanship, hunting, recreational or competitive shooting, or personal safety and crime prevention, the NRA has a variety of programs and activities that encourage female participation at all skill levels. Discover all the NRA is doing for women by visiting [www.nrawomen.org](http://www.nrawomen.org)

# CHAPTER 13: NRA PROGRAM MATERIALS

The NRA Program Materials Center Online Store is where you can locate and purchase most of your training needs. On this store you will find a wide variety of items including everything a NRA Certified Instructor needs to teach basic firearm courses (basic course student packets); a Club or Association with a Range might want such as Range-related merchandise (range flags/ range perimeter signs/2012 NRA Range Source Book) and even bright yellow Range Safety Officer Hats and Vests to distinguish your RSO's on the range. For Clubs looking to provide Eddie Eagle® materials (workbooks/DVD's/stickers) or the ever popular Refuse To Be A Victim® brochures to your members, to getting more women involved with NRA (Women Come Join Us booklet) this is the place to get these items too. This is just a small sampling of what we have to offer you so please visit the store to see all of our listings.

The NRA Program Materials Center Online Store has compiled some of the following pages to assist you in obtaining NRA Program-related materials. These are direct links to specific areas of the store:

Certified Instructors/Training Materials (includes individual handbooks, various brochures, student packets) [http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=CI\\_Training](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=CI_Training)

Range Related (range flags/range perimeter signs, etc.)  
[http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=Range\\_flags/signs/posters](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=Range_flags/signs/posters)

NRA Range Source Book  
<http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=Range%20Source%20Book>

Range Safety Officers (hats/vests/shirts/etc.)  
<http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=Range%20Safety%20Officers>

Eddie Eagle® (DVD's/workbooks/stickers)  
[http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE\\_videos](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE_videos)  
[http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE\\_Books](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE_Books)  
[http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE\\_Decals](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=EE_Decals)

Refuse To Be A Victim® (brochures/training materials)  
[http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=rtbav\\_instructor\\_materials](http://materials.nrahq.org/go/products.aspx?cat=rtbav_instructor_materials)

HOME PAGE: <http://materials.nrahq.org/go/home.aspx>

Visit <http://materials.nrahq.org/go/home.aspx> for online shopping, or call toll free 1-800-336-7402 weekdays 8:30 am to 8:00 pm EST. All orders must be paid for at time of order with a credit card. We do not accept checks, money orders, award points, or cash. Additionally, we do not invoice or take purchase orders. If your club or association is tax exempt you need to fax your tax exemption certificate(s) to the NRA Financial Services Division (703) 267-3952 (so it can be added to the tax exempt database) BEFORE you place your order BY TELEPHONE. All tax exempt orders must be called into the store and you should provide your tax exempt number to the call center operator at the onset of the call.

# CHAPTER 14: COMPETITIVE SHOOTING PROGRAMS

Each club should gear its activities to the size of the club, membership support, and finances. However, club programs and activities will be a determining factor in whether a club reaches its full potential. If your club's promotional activities are planned carefully, they will offer the best opportunity for increasing the strength and vitality of the club. Plan programs that lend themselves to the club's best capabilities.

NRA's Competitive Shooting Division offers a wide range of activities in all types of shooting, for everyone from the novice to the world-class competitor. The NRA sanctions over 11,000 shooting tournaments and sponsors over 51 national championships each year.

If you have any questions about the division, please call (877) 672-6282 or visit their website at <http://competitions.nra.org/>

Why Shoot Competitively? Because...

- Any person (male or female) can compete on a par with others of their approximate skill level.
- Young and old can and do compete for the same prizes.
- Participants can become as good as the amount of effort they invest.
- A person may practice alone or enter a tournament with hundreds of other competitors and the outcome is based totally on one's own ability.

It's invariably challenging because a perfect score is rarely fired. You will meet many new friends with like interests who will be eager to help you join your selected shooting discipline

## WHERE TO START

We receive many questions on how to get started in a particular competition shooting program. The following pages will answer most questions, but if you have other questions, please write, call, or e mail the Competitive Shooting Division.

This is not intended to cover all aspects of all shooting programs. It is intended to cover the basics only. The following information applies to all NRA competitive shooting programs.

If you're interested in trying competitive shooting, please go to [www.shootingsportsusa.com](http://www.shootingsportsusa.com) to view our free digital magazine Shooting Sports USA. The "Coming Events" section of this magazine lists NRA sanctioned tournaments for several months following the publication date. Find a tournament conducted near you, contact the listed sponsor and request a program. Attend first as a spectator; this will let you see how it works and talk to the sponsor and competitors. Be sure you don't disturb the competitors during the match - between relays is a good time to talk to them.

You will see a variety of equipment and accessories. Every competitor has his own opinion as to what is best. This may sound confusing, but remember, you're there to gather information.

If there is a club in your area, attend one or more of their practice sessions. This will serve the same purpose as attending a tournament except a practice session is not always conducted under match conditions. However, this will give you a better opportunity to talk about equipment.

An excellent way for a new shooter to start in competitive shooting is a league. Although NRA rules are used, a league is generally informal. Usually a handicap system is used so all individuals or teams have an equal chance of winning. A Sanctioned League Handbook and application is available at no cost from the NRA Competitive Shooting Division.

Should you decide that competitive shooting is for you, you may wish to join a local club. Ask three questions of your prospective club leaders:

- Does the club have a range or access to a range?
- Does the club have the type(s) of shooting program(s) you're interested in?
- Is the membership open?

If you can answer "Yes" to all three questions, then you have found a good starting place (most shooting activities are sponsored by local gun clubs).

## **Eye and Ear Protection**

These should be the first accessories you purchase. If you normally wear glasses and they have hardened lenses, you are covered for eye protection. If not, you should get shooting glasses designed for that purpose. Ear plugs or muffs are necessary also. Some shooters wear both.

## **Equipment**

You don't need to have the best, most expensive equipment available to compete effectively. There are many good values in used equipment. If others know you are "in the market," you will hear of good deals. Although the question of which is best is asked often, there is no answer. As you will find, each competitor has his or her favorite brands and models. A reliable gun dealer is helpful in proper firearm selection. A used firearm for a beginner is not a bad idea, especially if the dealer can certify the condition of the firearm and/or guarantee it.

## **NRA Rule Books**

You will see many references to the NRA Rule Book. We strongly recommend you get the appropriate book and read it. You don't need to memorize it, but all competitors should be familiar with it. A general understanding will prevent many problems. Free downloadable versions are available on the NRA website at <http://www.nrahq.org/compete/> Rule Books may be purchased from the NRA Sales Department or by visiting <http://materials.nrahq.org/go/home.aspx> .

## **NRA Classification System**

Many new shooters do not enter competitions because they feel they are not good enough and would not win anything. This is true to some extent as with most sports, the first time does not prove productive as far as awards are concerned. The NRA Classification System, developed to provide an equitable distribution of awards, places all shooters in a particular class: Marksman, Sharpshooter, Expert, Master, or High Master, depending on their average. Tournament sponsors award prizes in each class and in some tournaments, depending on the number entered, second and third place. Complete information on the NRA Classification System is in Section 19 of the NRA Rule Books.

## Tournament Entry

When entering a tournament you will be required to fill out a Registration/Entry Card (also known as an "SR-1 card" for Conventional Pistol and Smallbore Rifle events, or an "SR-7 card" for Black Powder events). Provided by the tournament sponsor, this card gives the sponsor the information needed to place you in your proper class and category. Part of this card is sent by the sponsor to NRA at the end of the tournament with your scores so they can be posted to the NRA Classification System maintained at NRA Headquarters.

It is very important that you put your NRA membership ID number (if you are an NRA member) on the card. This will assure that your scores are posted properly and quickly. It is also very important that you use your name in the same way all of the time, to avoid confusion. For example, if initials are used, such as "J.D. Smith", then continue to use initials, rather than sometimes using "Joe Smith." Also, always use your name and address on record with NRA when entering a tournament.

If you are not an NRA member and wish to become one you may join the NRA at any NRA Sanctioned tournament. For competition purposes you will be considered an NRA member after completing the forms and paying the dues to the tournament sponsor. However, all other NRA membership services and benefits will begin approximately one month after signing up at a tournament.

## Other Activities

Competitive shooting is a great hobby you can pursue on weekends, with maybe a practice session during the week. NRA's Marksmanship Qualification Program allows you to use the practice session and matches to earn attractive awards by meeting or beating "par" scores. For complete details on the NRA Qualification Program, write to the NRA Education & Training Division at NRA Headquarters, call 703-267-1505 or email [marksmanship@nrahq.org](mailto:marksmanship@nrahq.org).

## NRA Club Champion Event

The NRA Competitive Shooting Division is proud to offer a new recreational shooting event for home town shooting clubs, businesses and civic organizations! Our goal is to create an intraclub event that anyone can shoot, beginner to expert. These events are to be fun, relaxing and will encourage your members to try a variety of disciplines and courses of fire. Learn more at [www.nraclubchamp.com](http://www.nraclubchamp.com)

<b>Collegiate &amp; Schools Dept.</b>	<a href="mailto:collegiate@nrahq.org">collegiate@nrahq.org</a>
<b>Disabled Shooting Services</b>	<a href="mailto:disabled-shooting@nrahq.org">disabled-shooting@nrahq.org</a>
<b>Division Administration</b>	<a href="mailto:compadmin@nrahq.org">compadmin@nrahq.org</a>
<b>High Power Rifle</b>	<a href="mailto:nrahighpower@nrahq.org">nrahighpower@nrahq.org</a>
<b>Marketing &amp; Corporate Sponsorship</b>	<a href="mailto:comp-marketing@nrahq.org">comp-marketing@nrahq.org</a>
<b>NRA Action Pistol</b>	<a href="mailto:actionpistol@nrahq.org">actionpistol@nrahq.org</a>
<b>Pistol Dept.</b>	<a href="mailto:pistol@nrahq.org">pistol@nrahq.org</a>
<b>Postal Matches</b>	<a href="mailto:postals@nrahq.org">postals@nrahq.org</a>

Rifle: Smallbore / Air Gun / Black Powder	<a href="mailto:sbrifle@nrahq.org">sbrifle@nrahq.org</a>
Silhouette Dept.	<a href="mailto:silhouette@nrahq.org">silhouette@nrahq.org</a>
Tournament Operations Dept.	<a href="mailto:tournopns@nrahq.org">tournopns@nrahq.org</a>
Tournament Reporting Dept.	<a href="mailto:tournrpts@nrahq.org">tournrpts@nrahq.org</a>
Volunteers Dept.	<a href="mailto:volunteer@nrahq.org">volunteer@nrahq.org</a>

NRA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS INFORMATION & PROGRAM REQUEST	
National Action Pistol Championship (NRA Bianchi Cup)	<a href="mailto:bianchicup@nrahq.org">bianchicup@nrahq.org</a>
National Rifle & Pistol Championships, Camp Perry, OH	<a href="mailto:compadmin@nrahq.org">compadmin@nrahq.org</a>
National Silhouette Championships	<a href="mailto:silhouette@nrahq.org">silhouette@nrahq.org</a>
National Collegiate Rifle Club & Pistol Championships	<a href="mailto:collegiate@nrahq.org">collegiate@nrahq.org</a>
National Black Powder Target Rifle Championship	<a href="mailto:silhouette@nrahq.org">silhouette@nrahq.org</a>
National Indoor Rifle & Pistol Championships (Sectionals) Pistol Rifle Collegiate	<a href="mailto:pistol@nrahq.org">pistol@nrahq.org</a> <a href="mailto:rifle@nrahq.org">rifle@nrahq.org</a> <a href="mailto:collegiate@nrahq.org">collegiate@nrahq.org</a>
NRA National Junior 3-Position Air Rifle Championships	<a href="mailto:rifle@nrahq.org">rifle@nrahq.org</a>
National Police Shooting Championship	<a href="mailto:mlipp@nrahq.org">mlipp@nrahq.org</a>

# CHAPTER 15: NRA STATE ASSOCIATIONS

All 50 states are served by NRA State Associations. Their tasks of coordination and communication are quite different from those of local organizations. NRA State Association objectives are broader and their operations are more far reaching. They are the liaison between local clubs and the National Rifle Association. The NRA State Association is obliged to keep one eye on the specific interests of members and clubs at the local level, and the other eye on the myriad shooting events constantly taking place throughout the nation as well as the state.

Information is a prime product of any state rifle and pistol association. Shooters in one part of a state may have an interest in what shooters in other parts of the state are doing. Only NRA State Associations can supply this information. National publications do not have sufficient space to cover the news and personalities that are of interest to shooters solely in a particular state.

Firearm legislation must be continually followed for restrictions on the rights of citizens to own and use firearms. Such anti-firearm legislation often originates in the state legislature. NRA State Associations can perform a valuable service in reporting such proposals to clubs. There are times when it is necessary to attend hearings, contact individual legislators, and furnish information to the various news media. The effective legwork being done by NRA State Associations assist local clubs in their information services to their club members.

State shooting championships are popular with competitive shooters everywhere. Most NRA State Associations conduct their rifle and pistol championships through local clubs, although a few completely manage their own shooting championships. NRA State Associations determine the location, choose the events, and promote the championships. Some of them approve match officials, furnish the awards, and publish the results. They also handle tryouts for the selection of team members. Many NRA State Associations sponsor Regional, Sectional, Registered, and Approved tournaments, as well as leagues and pistol matches. By coordinating all types of competitive shooting activities within the state, NRA State Associations can help bring about better scheduling of matches, more interesting programs, and improved ranges.

Meeting annually is another important function of NRA State Associations. It is beneficial to all shooters in a state to have its leading shooters and club officers meet to discuss problems and programs common to all. Officers and committees report on their activities, new programs are planned, and elections are held. The benefits to shooters statewide increases through these meetings.

NRA State Associations assist in the guidance of conducting club events, improving shooting facilities, and conducting training courses. They also help the club to locate and train instructors. Individual NRA State Association members are furnished to help locate and join gun clubs in the state.

For more information about your NRA State Association visit <http://clubs.nra.org/state-associations.aspx> or call (800) NRA-CLUB.



# CHAPTER 16: NRA CLUB AWARD PROGRAMS

## PURPOSE

The NRA Club Awards Program recognizes noteworthy achievement by NRA-affiliated clubs nationwide in selected areas of administrative organization, member services, program development, and/or public service. The National Rifle Association on the recommendation of the Clubs and Associations Committee gives awards annually.

## THE AWARDS

The NRA Club Awards are handsome certificates or plaques suitable for display at a club facility or other appropriate location. The awards are:

- Donn C. DiBiasio Outstanding Club Award
- Outstanding Youth Award
- Outstanding State Association Award
- Public Service Award
- NRA Gold Medal Award

The president of the club selected to receive the annual Outstanding Club Award will be invited to attend the fall NRA Board Meeting where the award will be presented. The awards brochure and application are mailed to all NRA-affiliated clubs in the fall of each year. The application deadline is December 1 of each year. Club officers will be notified of Awards Committee decisions by February 15.

NRA Gold Medal Club Awards are presented to clubs that are members of their NRA State Association, have 100% NRA membership, a newsletter, a Junior Shooting Program, and an NRA Recruiting Program. The application deadline for the Gold Medal Awards program is February 15 annually.

For more information on NRA Club Awards or to obtain an application(s), call (800) NRA-CLUB or visit [www.nrahq.org/clubs](http://www.nrahq.org/clubs).

## GOLD MEDAL CLUB

Each year the National Rifle Association recognizes outstanding clubs that have gone above and beyond by striving to meet NRA's goals. Don't miss out on the opportunity to apply or renew your club for the NRA Gold Medal Award! Meeting the Gold Medal standard is a great way to show your pride and support for the NRA and the Second Amendment.

## **NRA Gold Medal Club Award Criteria**

Clubs must meet ALL of the following criteria to become an NRA Gold Medal Club:

- Be a 100% NRA Club (provide membership list or by-laws)
- Have a Club Newsletter (please send one copy with application)
- Belong to the NRA State Association in your state (please provide proof of membership)
- Have administered or currently incorporate a NRA Youth Program into your club agenda
- Be an active participant in the NRA Membership Recruiting Program

## **Benefits**

- Priority status for NRA Range Grants
- Free materials for select NRA Sports programs offered on a quarterly basis
- Copies of NRA Sports magazine provided for each member of your club (up to 100 copies)

Please submit an application should your organization meet all of the above criteria. Your club will receive a wall plaque to proudly show its achievement. A placard of the awarded year will be sent to your club each year you renew. Clubs are required to reapply each year in order to maintain Gold Medal status.

The deadline for NRA Gold Medal Awards is February 15 each year. Applications will be mailed out to all NRA Affiliated Clubs that have given proof of 100% NRA Membership in the month of December. To download the application, visit <http://clubs.nra.org/gold-medal-clubs.aspx>



**NRA**