

Rules of Gun Safety

Weapons are by their nature very dangerous tools. To avoid ugly accidents, you should learn and follow at least these 4 basic rules (real life rules according to Gabriel Suarez):

1. Treat every weapon as if it were loaded!

The idea behind this rule: ALWAYS be focused when you have a gun or explosive device in hands. No matter if training, transport or actual combat. Be aware of the tool in your hands and the fact that one careless moment could end the live of the man next to you!

2. Keep your finger off the trigger until you made the conscious decision to shoot!

A more detailed concept behind this rule is called Degree of Weapon Readiness DoWR:

- Unload: no magazine/clip is inserted, no round in the chamber; the weapon is “clear”
- Load: magazine/clip inserted, but no round in the chamber
- Action: magazine/clip inserted and a round in the chamber, safety catch is applied, additionally the weapon is zeroed to the expected combat range; the weapon is “save”, an accidental discharge is unlikely but possible
- Instant: magazine/clip inserted and a round in the chamber, safety catch is removed; the weapon is “hot”, i.e. ready to fire; keep your finger off the trigger to avoid an accidental discharge

In most computer games only some states can be applied (for example it might not be possible to unload a weapon). And usually it's not really necessary that you keep your finger off the left mouse button. Because you don't move your whole body like in real life, chances that your finger bends by accident are far less. Moreover it's often pretty uncomfortable to use a mouse this way. Nevertheless these degrees should be used whenever suitable to prevent accidental weapon discharge. Establish a mental barrier to press the left mouse button, unless you made the conscious decision to fire your weapon. Place your mouse in a way so that it can't collide by accident with any obstacles which could trigger a button.

(Additional Reference: http://www.chsaustralia.org.au/html/lesson_3_4.html)

3. Don't be careless with your gun muzzle!

Carelessness is like pornography: hard to define, but you will recognize it when you see it.

This rule is also called “muzzle discipline”. A more restrictive version would be “don't point your weapon at anything that you don't intent to shoot”, but that's quite impractical during combat.

Again it might be hard to follow this rule at all times in some computer games because you can't easily move the muzzle of your gun independently from your view. However you must always be aware of the direction your muzzle is pointing and whether it's safe to fire or not!

4. Be sure of your target and what's beyond.

Is your line of fire really clear? What might your bullet hit if it misses or penetrates the target



(“overpenetration”)? Even if you don’t aim at a specific target (e.g. suppressive fire), you should be quite sure that there are no friendlies or civilians in your target area (when in doubt, rely on the commands of your team leader).

Further Rules

Note that these are only basic rules for firearms. In combat and when dealing with explosive devices or heavy weapons, there are far more things to remember. A few examples are:

- proper hearing protection
- not to cross in front of friendly units when they might be about to fire
- clearing the backblast zone of a rocket launcher prior to firing the weapon
- etc.

