

NFAS SAFETY RULES – 2010-11

The rules and guidance below came into force on 1st April 2010 and replace all previous rules and guidance.

Safety Policy

“The National Field Archery Society (NFAS) exists to foster and promote Field Archery in all its forms. The General Committee of the NFAS will carry out the affairs of the Society with due respect for the environment and the health, safety and welfare of its Members and others who may be affected. The NFAS is committed to the promotion of best practice amongst its membership and as such will take steps to communicate this and ensure that all Members may draw from the experience of others. The NFAS will devise and maintain systems to achieve its aims and comply with the law. Where appropriate the NFAS will consult and involve the Membership. All members have a responsibility for safety and the Society depends on the compliance of individuals to ensure these safety standards are met.”

Because a bow and arrow is a lethal weapon every member of the Society is responsible for ensuring that she/he shoots safely. All members are expected to intervene and take constructive action where she/he identifies unsafe situations caused by another archer or a course.

Learning from safety issues

The NFAS Safety Advisor will publish information about all shots perceived as dangerous, Near Hit incidents and accidents in the NFAS Newsletter, giving the nature of the incident so that all archers can learn from the experiences of others (see rules 1-5).

Rules about shooting safety

- 1) It is the responsibility of each archer to ensure that others in the group are shooting safely and in accordance with NFAS rules.
- 2) Archers must report dangerously laid targets, dangerous behaviour and Near Hit incidents to course officials or marshals at the earliest opportunity.
- 3) Archers must report accidents to course officials or marshals immediately.
- 4) Course officials and/or marshals must investigate immediately any report of dangerously laid targets, dangerous behaviour, Near Hit incidents and accidents made by archers and take necessary steps to reduce any hazard.
- 4a) Any non-archer who accompanies an archer around a course, whether as a shoot guardian or observer, must be an Associate Member of NFAS in order to benefit from NFAS insurance cover. Such an individual must follow all applicable NFAS safety rules. Any marshal or course official at an open or friendly shoot must be a NFAS member.
- 5) All dangerously laid targets, dangerous behaviour, Near Hit incidents and accidents must be reported by all the archers witnessing these incidents to the NFAS Safety Advisor within seven days, regardless of any subsequent action taken by course organisers. It is unfair to report any issue only to the NFAS Safety Advisor without having raised the same issues with the shoot organiser or a marshal.
- 6) Archers should always ensure that the target and visible overshoot are clear of other archers before shooting. If you have concerns about the safety of a shot, do not shoot.
- 7) Whilst someone else is shooting be alert for possible danger. Where possible danger exists shout “stop”. On hearing “stop” all members of the group must stop shooting immediately.

- 8) Never point or loose an arrow in any direction other than at the intended target.
- 9) Never point an arrow at a person and never shoot to the side of a person.
- 10) Never point a bow – whether loaded or unloaded - at anyone.
- 11) Never knowingly shoot a damaged arrow.
- 12) Never move between targets with an arrow nocked on the string.
- 13) Bows must not be drawn in a manner where an accidental release could be dangerous (eg a high draw).
- 14) It is only permitted to physically assist another archer where there is a genuine safety issue, eg high wind, dazzling sun or slippery terrain. This can only be done with the unanimous agreement of all members of the shooting group and only if there is no risk to the archer, the person providing the assistance and all other members of the group.
- 15) Every adult archer must carry a whistle:

- a) In the event of an emergency or accident, only one capable person (normally an adult) shall use a whistle to give the emergency signal of three blasts followed by a pause.
- b) On hearing the emergency signal, all archers must stop shooting immediately.
- c) The emergency signal shall be repeated only by one of the group originating the signal until the shoot organiser or a marshal arrives at the scene.
- d) On hearing the emergency signal any other persons on the shoot site (such as caterers, trade stalls etc) should stay where they are until told otherwise by the shoot organiser or a marshal.
- e) The shoot organiser and marshals, on hearing the emergency whistle signal, shall immediately sound the shoot's 'stop shooting' signal, which should also be three blasts. The source of this signal (eg an air horn) must be announced to archers in the shoot organiser's pre-shoot safety briefing.
- f) Only the shoot organiser can restart the shoot (with the information passed on by marshals if necessary). The restart signal is normally one blast of the same source (eg an air horn) used to stop the shoot which should also be highlighted at the pre-shoot safety briefing. A whistle must not be used to restart a shoot.

- 16) No one should be on a NFAS course under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Archers should not be under the influence of any medication which causes drowsiness whilst shooting. Advice can be sought from a medical practitioner or pharmacist if there is any uncertainty about whether any medication affects an archer's ability to shoot safely.
- 17) It is the responsibility of parents/guardians and shoot organisers to ensure that the NFAS Child Safety Policy is followed for all archers under the age of 16.
- 18) No one in a group is permitted to stand forward of the archer on the shooting peg (including no forward spotting).
- 19) Do not alter the setting of the shot. If you believe there is a safety issue alert the shoot organiser or marshal.
- 20) Give the archer on the peg sufficient room to avoid creating a safety hazard or distracting the archer.
- 21) When scoring, drawing or looking for lost arrows, at least one adult member of a group must remain standing in front of the target.
- 22) Walk away from the target as a group and never go back to the target.

23) Always keep to the marked path when moving from one target to the next. The marked path should also be followed when a round has been completed because other groups may still be shooting.

Safe equipment guidance

Whilst not rules, it is strongly recommended that the following are adhered to:

- a) All archers should follow manufacturer's instructions for minimum arrow spine and weight and ensure a spine and weight is used which is safe for the model and draw-weight of bow being used.
- b) All archers should follow manufacturers' safety instructions and recommendations for all equipment to be used safely.
- c) All archers should consider wearing at least one piece of highly visible clothing or headgear that makes it easier to be seen by other archers.
- d) It is good practice to check an arrow for damage each time it is shot.

Rules about course laying

- 24) All courses must be evaluated for safety risks prior to a shoot by a responsible individual or individuals who will take the necessary action to make a shoot as safe as possible.
- 25) Any potential hazards (for example potentially slippery bridges, rabbit holes) identified when evaluating course safety risks (rule 24) must be highlighted to archers in a pre-shoot safety briefing.

- 26) Every shot must have a clear shooting window or windows which makes the shot potentially hittable for all types of bows and all archers shooting from that peg. This does not require there to be a clear lane.
- 27) Shooting pegs should be positioned in as straight a line as possible to the target to maximise the effectiveness of backstops and overshoots and reduce the risk of damage to arrows.
- 28) Safe overshoots must be provided for all targets taking into account different bow types, the potential for deflections and the terrain (for example a longer overshoot will be required if the ground drops away).
- 29) Sufficient sideways separation between targets must be allowed, taking into account different bow types, the potential for deflections and the terrain. Greater distance for sideways separation must be allowed for long shots or shots involving shooting through gaps in or between trees, where there is greater risk of deflections occurring.
- 30) Do not set out targets where the direction of shooting faces towards areas used by the general public (eg roads, public footpaths) unless a safe overshoot can be provided.
- 31) Enough space must be provided for three members of a group to stand in front of the target to score and pull arrows.

32) Course direction markers must be clearly marked along the whole route.

33) The path to the next target must bring archers in behind the furthest peg.

Course laying guidance

Whilst not rules, it is strongly recommended that the following are adhered to:

- e) At least one person laying a course should have previous experience of assisting in laying a minimum of four courses.
- f) Courses should be tested in advance of a competition by as many different bow types (eg compounds, longbows) and different physical types of archers (eg tall, short, right-handed, left-handed) as possible.
- g) Walk-away routes from targets should, where achievable, be at 90° from the line of the shot.

- h) Bosses used are to be positioned to reduce deflections, for example with wooden supports at the side and not the top and bottom.
- i) Consider having a sign at each target containing the name of the animal to be shot which is visible to archers waiting to shoot that target.

It is also recommended that course layers refer to the NFAS 'Club Pack'.

Rules about organising shoots

- 34) The shoot organiser must provide a safety briefing prior to each shoot commencing, identifying any high risk matters (see rule 25), information about what to do in case of an accident (first aid and instructions for stopping/restarting the shoot in case of an accident – also see rule 15), whether smoking is allowed and what signal will be used to start the shoot.
- 35) The shoot organiser must ensure that course officials and marshals have safety information to use in the case of an emergency. This would normally include: map reference for the shoot; the name of the access road(s); the address of the nearest Accident & Emergency hospital; the nearest helicopter landing site (if applicable).
- 36) The shoot organiser (or a delegated person) must see current NFAS membership cards from every archer when signing into a shoot. If an archer does not have a current NFAS membership card, temporary membership must be taken out. Temporary membership requires a witness to state that an archer is a 'competent archer' as defined by NFAS 'membership rules'.

Shoot organisation guidance

Whilst not rules, it is strongly recommended that the following are adhered to:

- j) Details of the location of the shoot (eg map reference and access routes in/out of shoot) are provided to the emergency services and revalidated with the emergency services on a regular basis.
- k) A scale map of the course, showing the location of individual targets is prepared for use by the shoot organisers and emergency services.
- l) All shoots should have a suggestion box and archers should be encouraged to provide their views – verbally or via the suggestion box about good and bad points of the course so that the course organisers can learn for the future. Suggestions made should be evaluated by shoot organisers on a regular basis.

Course etiquette guidance

Whilst not rules, it is recommended that the following course etiquette be observed:

- m) Keep well back from the group in front.
- n) Keep noise down.
- o) Turn off mobile phones.
- p) Respect other archers and allow them to execute their shots without disruption.
- q) Be tolerant of archers shooting a different bow style from you.
- r) Help others to pull or find their arrows.
- s) Keep children and dogs under close control.
- t) Be polite to course officials, marshals and members of the public.
- u) Keep courses free from litter and respect the course owner's property.

v) If archers see queues forming at the target ahead, ensure that there is space at the next target to wait before moving on.