VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
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VMI Firing Range Policy

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish standard procedures and guidelines for the use of all firing ranges at VMI.

2. **Scope:** This policy will apply to all events utilizing the VMI Firing Range located at the Military Leadership Field Training Grounds at North Post, the Trap and Skeet Range at McKethan Park, as well as the Indoor Firing Range at Kilbourne Hall.

3. **Safety Requirements:** Anyone using the VMI Firing Range will utilize North Post Firing Range SOP (Annex A), US Army Range Regulations as a guideline for range operations. See Army Regulation 350-19 and FM 3-22.9 (Rifle Marksmanship) for more information. A Range Officer (OIC), Safety Officer and medical coverage will be designated for each firing event at the Firing Range. For the Trap and Skeet Range, users must follow the established Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual along with the safety annexes to that SOP. For the Indoor Firing range, users must follow the SOP for that facility. Copies of each of these safety SOPs will be provided to all users. Full compliance with all mandates is required, and safety is paramount. All users are subject to no notice compliance inspections by VMI Range officials. .

4. **North Post Firing Range**: All requests to use the VMI Firing Range shall be directed to Director of Marksmanship for approval and required deconfliction. Requests will be submitted utilizing the special use permit request form located on the Commandant's Home Page (forms link). Upon approval by the Director of Marksmanship, all outside agency requests must be submitted to the VMI Physical Plant for external use agreements and contracting.

5. **North Post Firing Range Notifications:** Upon approval, the Director of Marksmanship will notify the Deputy Commandant of all proposed uses of the range. The Director of Marksmanship will include all approved range operations in the Cadet Schedule for post-wide planning purposes and ensure there are no impacts or conflicts with cadet activities. Additional notifications will be made to the Deputy Superintendent of Finance, Administration and Support, VMI Police, Physical Plant and Chief of Staff.

6. **Firing Range Priorities**: Rat Challenge activities are scheduled during the fall semester from early September to November. These activities normally occur on Tuesdays and Thursday afternoons during military duty (1550—1850 hours) and on some Wednesday afternoon periods (1605-1800) durng Rat Military Duty. When these Rat Challenge activities are occurring, the Firing Range will not be used. When scheduling use of the range, efforts should be made to reduce the impact on cadet activities.

7. **Firing Range Responsibilities**: The Director of Marksmanship will oversee the care and upkeep of the North Post Firing Range. This official has full authority to submit work orders and direct activities in support of this Range. This authority includes the ability to direct prior users to clean up or repair defects caused by their use. See also paragraphs 12 and 13 below.

8. **Non-VMI Use of the Firing Range**: Requests for use of the Firing Range by non-VMI organizations, such as local law enforcement, may be considered by the Director of Marksmanship. Priority will be given to VMI-sponsored events. Appropriate use agreements and fees will be collected by the Physical Plant if non-VMI users are granted authority to use the range. Safety and adherence to all range rules is required, and will be a required item in the use agreement. Copies of the range safety procedures will be provided and MUST be reviewed by users prior to use. As with VMI users, a Range Officer and Safety Officer must be appointed prior to use. All users are subject to no notice compliance inspection by VMI officials.

9. **Trap and Skeet Range Use**: The Trap and Skeet Range is scheduled, operated and maintained by the Corps SGM. All requests to use the VMI Trap and Skeet Range shall be directed to Corps SGM for approval and required deconfliction. Requests will be submitted utilizing the special use permit request form located on the Commandant's Home Page (forms link). Upon approval by the Corps SGM, all outside agency requests must be submitted to the VMI Physical Plant for external use agreements and contracting. All users are required to be familiar with the published Standard Operating Procedures maintained by Cadet Life. Range use and safety mandates are outlined in the SOP and Annexes A-C of the SOP.

10. **Non-VMI Use of the Trap and Skeet Range**: Request for use of the Skeet Range by non-VMI organizations will be considered by the Corps SGM. Priority will be given to VMI-sponsored events. Appropriate use agreements and fees will be collected by the Physical Plant if non-VMI users are granted permission to use the range. All safety rules must be followed as established in the Virginia Military Institute Trap and Skeet Range SOP. Appropriate notices and deconflictions with other events scheduled at McKethan Park will be made by Corps SGM as required when the Trap and Skeet Range is in use. All users will receive a copy of the range use safety mandates which must be reviewed prior to use of the range. The use agreement will reflect this requirement. All users are subject to no notice compliance inspections.

11. **Indoor Firing Range:** This Range is scheduled, operated, and maintained by the VMI Athletic Department's NCAA Rifle Team Coaching staff. Use of this Range and the designated procedures and safety requirements will be in accordance with the NCAA Men's and Women's Rifle Rules and Interpretations as well as the VMI Indoor Firing Range Standard Operating Procedures. Priority use is to VMI's NCAA Rifle Team and then to other VMI organizations. The VMI NCAA Rifle team coaching staff is the sole authority to allow or deny use of the VMI Indoor Firing Range at Kilbourne Hall. All users will receive a copy of the range use safety mandates which must be reviewed prior to use of the range. The

use agreement will reflect this requirement. All users are subject to no notice compliance inspections.

12. **Inspections:** All authorized range users will be responsible for policing their brass and remove any debris generated from using the range including the removal of targets. The range used must be returned in a condition meeting VMI standards and may be subject to inspection.

13. **Compliance Officials**: The Director of Marksmanship and other certified VMI range officials on staff are authorized to conduct inspections and take any steps necessary to ensure safety and compliance mandates are met. Other officials may be designated as necessary.

14. The Chief of Staff's Office is responsible for notifying the on-post community via email and weekly bulletin any time the Firing Range is in use.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

James P. Inman
Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret.)
Chief of Staff

DIST: E, Cadets

Attached - Appendix A

OPR: Director of Marksmanship

Appendix A

North Post Firing Range SOP

VMI North Post Firing Range SOP
References:
VMI Range Operation and Maintenance Manual, Action Target
FM 3-22.9, Rifle Marksmanship, M16A1, US Army
FM 3-23.35, Pistol Marksmanship, M9, US Army
FM 3-22.68, Crew Served Weapons, M249, M240, US Army
VMI General Order Number 64, VMI Firing Range Policy
NRA Range Safety Officer Manual

Outline:

1. Purpose: To outline the procedures for the safe and efficient operation of the VMI North Post Firing Range.
2. Responsibilities
    a. Director of Marksmanship, LTC (RET.) Bill Bither (Phone: 464-7075 EMAIL: bitherwf@vmi.edu), is responsible for the scheduling and approval of all firing on this range. Auxiliary Services/Physical Plant is responsible for External use agreements and contracting of outside agencies approved to use the range.
    b. The Director of Marksmanship is responsible for approving the Courses of Fire fired on and the cleanliness and maintenance of the range.
    c. The Director of Marksmanship will appoint three range control officers to assist with range operations/training, inspections, safety and approval of unit firing plans.
    d. The Physical Plant is responsible to clean, conduct repairs, and abate the hazardous material on the range at the request of the Institute and or Director of Marksmanship. This includes weekly vacuuming of the range floor, trash removal and cleaning of the tables and range entrance area.
    e. The Range Officer in Charge (ROIC) will be responsible for the overall safe conduct of training and proper use of the North Post Range Complex.
    f. The Range Safety Officer (RSO) is responsible for the safe running of the range and for conducting a pre-firing safety briefing to all firers. Also ensures weapons and personnel are properly placed, authorized ammo is used, weapons are properly cleared prior to entering the range, exiting the range or moving down range to check targets, personnel wear approved hearing and eye protection, medic and aid vehicle are present and cell phone for EMS. **Must be present on the range at all times.**

3. Coordination
    a. Scheduling and Approval for use of this range will be made 30 days in advance with the Director of Marksmanship utilizing the special use permit request located on the CMDTs Home page under forms. Upon approval, outside agencies will also require an external use contract, prepared by Physical Plant/ Auxiliary Services IAW General Order 64.
    b. Once approval is granted, the firing unit will coordinate with the Director of Marksmanship for the following actions: walk through of the range, approval of the Courses of Fire, and sign for the key.
4. Cancellations
    a. Cancellations will be sent to the Director of Marksmanship as soon as the firing unit knows of the change. (Outside agencies will also notify auxiliary services and P2 of contract cancellation)
    b. The key will be returned to the Director of Marksmanship upon completion of the firing event or cancellation.
5. Range Safety
    a. Responsibility
        i. All personnel on the range are responsible for safety. Anyone may call a **"cease fire".**
        ii. When moving on the range, firers will keep weapons on safe, pointed in a safe direction; down range and toward the bullet stop, finger off the trigger, unloaded until ready to use and follow all range commands.
        iii. Weapons will be locked to the rear and on "safe," except when the firers are in approved firing positions, on the firing line, and preparing to fire.
        iv. Additional safety officers must be present when firing large groups of students (minimum rifle ratio 4:1, pistol 2:1); first class cadets with recent weapons training, National Guard/SMP Cadets and ROTC Faculty/Staff are recommended.
        v. A coach will be assigned to each firer.
        vi. Firers will lock bolts to the rear, remove magazine, place weapons on "safe," and place weapons on the ground, before moving down range to check targets. Coaches and RSO will check the status of all weapons before giving the all clear signal to the ROIC.
        vii. Weapons will be cleared, checked, and dry-fired toward the Bullet Stop prior to removal from the Range.
        viii. Range Control Room status switches must be in the "Live Fire" position" during live fire so that the outside live fire lights are flashing.
        ix. In order to mitigate the 45 Meter Surface Danger Area to the sides and rear of the range, Barricades will be posted to stop foot traffic on the hill above the firing Range; Barricade #1 and #2 located at the Weaver (1) to

stop foot traffic from entering the Red Loop trails above and below the conditioning obstacle course. Barricade #3 located at the Mountain Rescue (D) to stop foot traffic from entering the Red Loop conditioning course trail (west) and black loop (south) toward range. Barricade #4 located at the trail entrance below the 12 foot wall to prevent access along the west side of the range. Barricade #5 located at the range parking lot entrance to block access to the east side of the range. Firing units must provide radios for sentries or coordinate with Commandants office for temporary hand receipt of radios.

x. All firers will receive a Range Safety Briefing and Pre-marksmanship Instruction before firing on the range.

xi. No food or drink allowed on the firing range.

xii. No smoking, chewing or dipping of tobacco products is allowed on the firing range.

b. Medical Requirements

i. Firing units must have an EMT or current Combat Lifesaver (CLS) present during the entire live fire. If needed, firing units should coordinate with VMI EMT CIC for medical coverage.

ii. Firing units will provide a dedicated casualty evacuation vehicle capable of transporting a litter/stretcher. Vehicle will have a dedicated driver and TC; Vehicle operators will be briefed on their duties/responsibilities and provided with a map to Stonewall Jackson Hospital.

c. Ammunition

i. <u>No Tracer Ammunition</u> or <u>Armor Piercing Incendiary rounds</u> will be fired on this range.

ii. All VMI ammunition will be stored in the bunker and coordinated with Army ROTC.

iii. No live rounds or empty cases, belonging to ROTC or VMI, will be removed from the range. Cadets will give a declaration of "No Brass or Ammo" before returning to Barracks. Amnesty point (Ammo Can) will be located in the Guard Room and checked daily for residue or live rounds.

iv. Blanks and blank firing attachments are not allowed on the range.

d. Weapons

i. Weapons up to .50 Caliber (Rifles only) may be fired on this Range

ii. Automatic Fire: M16A2/M4 shoulder fired from 10 Meter line only. M249 and M240 will only be fired from the Tripod, Bipod, or sandbag supported firing positions. Bipods and Tripods will be padded on plywood/rubber mats so as not to score the floor.

e. Protective equipment
    i. Hearing and eye protection will be worn at all times while firing, observing, or coaching on the range
    ii. Range fans will always be on during firing and allowed to warm up before firing.
    iii. Fire extinguishers are located at the 25 meter firing line on the center wall and range control room.
f. Limits
    i. Left and right range limits are clearly defined by the Bullet Stop. Coaches will advise firers of left and right limits to insure rounds do not impact the walls especially when firing on lanes 1, 15, 16, and 30.
    ii. Firers will fire only on their target and will not fire into adjacent lanes.
    iii. Coaches will monitor firers and take corrective action to insure rounds do not impact the ceiling, baffles, and sound dampening material.
    iv. Inexperienced firers will first shoot from the 15 Meter firing line, or closer, to insure they are applying the fundamentals of marksmanship before shooting from the 25 meter line.

6. Range
    a. Preparation
        i. Firing units will supply their own targets.
        ii. Targets will be stapled to target backings, not glued.
        iii. Targets will be stapled as far down on the target backing as possible to keep rounds from impacting the target hangers.
        iv. Targets are hung from the target hangers by pushing up on the metal handle with the heel of the hand. <u>Do Not</u> use any sort of tool.
        v. At no time will items be stacked on the back wall under the Fans.
    b. Range Packet
        i. A Range Packet containing the range reference material is located in the Control Booth.
        ii. <u>Do Not Remove this Packet from the Range</u>.
        iii. Copies of the Range SOP, suggested Safety Briefing, and Closing Report are located in this packet.
    c. Operations
        i. Before Firing
            1. If using actuated targets
                a. Turn on Air Compressor and turn Ball Valve to the on position (assessed from the outside, left of the building, behind the Bullet Stop.

b. Boot up the Computers in the Control Room. Instructions for programming Courses of Fire are in the VMI Range Operation and Maintenance Manual, Action Target.

2. If not using actuated targets
    a. Do Not turn on Compressor or turn Ball Valve
    b. Targets may be turned by hand by twisting the Target Hanger.
3. Turn on Lights and Range Fans
4. Post barricades at the (5) trail access points along the sides and rear of range.
5. Turn on Sound System and test.
6. Switch Range switches to "Live Fire" and check Flashing Lights. Doors must be closed or alarm will sound.

ii. While Firing
1. Doors should be closed and Range switches will be in the "Live Fire" position during actual live fire.
2. To rotate personnel into the range, lock and clear all weapons and switch range switches to "Secure" before opening the doors.
3. Commands may be given over the loud speaker system or on the firing line.

iii. After Firing
1. Set Range Switches to "Secure." Insure all blue flashing lights are off.
2. Turn Off Fans
3. Police all Brass
4. Turn off Air Compressor
5. Close Air Valve

d. Maintenance and Recovery
i. Do Not Sweep the Range
ii. All Target Backings will be removed from the Target Hangers, stripped of targets, and stored neatly in the Range Closet. Do not throw away Target Backings.
iii. All trash will be removed from the range and thrown in the dumpsters located near the baseball field.
iv. Mats will be rolled and stored in the supply closet, Sandbags will be neatly stacked along the 25 Meter Firing Line
v. Turn Off the Fans
vi. Turn Off all Lights, inside and out.
vii. Make a final check.
viii. Close and lock all doors.

ix. Return Key to the Director of Marksmanship or Corps SGM.

7. POC: Contact LTC Bill Bither, 464-7075, bitherwf@vmi.edu , for all questions concerning this SOP, the Range, and Range Operations.