



SAGA SNIPPETS

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COVID-19 Message from SAGA

Talk to us about firearms, the effective use thereof for lawful purposes and firearm rights, and we are in our element. However, all of a sudden SAGA finds itself treading foreign territory, one where an invisible enemy causes consternation and havoc. At midnight on the 26th of March 2020 all citizens were suddenly under house arrest, not because of their mischief, but because a virus that came from abroad decided to make life miserable for us all. Our freedom is being seriously infringed, however, we understand that self-isolation is for the greater good of all our peoples and since we SAGA members are law-abiding and responsible, we shall abide.

SAGA is fully appreciative of the fact that isolating oneself for such a long time is no fun and games. We ask you to care and pray for yourselves and your loved ones, and also for those you do not even know. Use your time constructively by cleaning your firearms, re-loading ammunition and ensuring that you know exactly when you need to renew your firearm licences and competency certificates.

Take time to reacquaint yourself with your wife and children (where applicable) and keep yourself and them constructively occupied. Not unlike the handling and use of firearms, these endeavours require great responsibility.

After lockdown we may have (God willing) contained the coronavirus, however, we may (will) have great unemployment, many

people being charged with murder, assault, child abuse, domestic violence, etc and suing for divorce. Responsible people will not allow this to happen – exercise self-constraint and patience and show real character. What we do during the isolation must contribute towards creating a better South Africa.

Unfortunately, criminals do not abide by the law and they have no respect for others, hence we urge you to remain vigilant and psychologically and physically prepared. Bear in mind that the police will be even less loathe to respond to calls for help – they seem to be so occupied with enforcing the disaster management regulations that not many of them will respond to crime. This is a clear example why SAGA always say that the responsible armed citizen remains the first responder to crime. Take time to read, or re-read, the Snippets articles on self-defence, the rules of engagement and your rights and responsibilities.

Please ensure personal hygiene and safe physical distances. By setting examples as aforesaid and by being kind, our SAGA members will actively and tacitly play a role in making South Africa a safer place

We express our great appreciation for our members' continued support in protecting the rights of free and responsible South African

Emergency Hotline: 0800 029 999

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COVID-19

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citizens to acquire, possess and use firearms for lawful purposes. And now, in these times of indiscriminate viral attacks against our people, SAGA thank you for obeying the disaster management restrictions and standing united. Be strong and be safe.

Please be advised that the SAGA Office is closed until lockdown reaches a level which allows us to safely re-open. Memberships and enquiries received in this period will be attended to after lockdown. Our apology for any inconvenience caused.

Members who normally renew their SAGA membership at HuntEx should please renew when they receive their renewal notices so as to avoid any lapse in membership.

SAGA will send out reminder emails about membership renewals to those who were due to renew during the period from February to May 2020.



Competency Certification and Lockdown Readiness

Competency Certification of Members of Official Institutions, including Police and Private Security Officials

By John Welch

During February this year we received word that the Minister of Police (MinPol) intended amending the Firearms Control Regulations regarding the practical testing every 12 months by police officials. Many people raised concern as they believed that police officials should in fact be “more competent” than private bearers of firearms. The amended regulations came into operation on 9 March 2020 (Government Gazette No. 43081; Government Notice No. 275 dated 9 March 2020).

It must be borne in mind that although the private holder of a competency certificate is not expected to train or be tested during the period of validity of her or his competency certificate, SAGA advises that all licensees practice with their firearms, especially self-defence firearms, as regularly as possible. Bear in mind further, that competency certificates are valid from 2 years to 10 years [section 13: 5 years; section 14: 2 years; and sections 15, 16, 16A and 17: 10 years]. Section 10 (2) provides that “A competency certificate contemplated in subsection (1) (a) (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv), remains valid for the same period of validity as the period determined in this Act in respect of the licence to which the competency certificate relates, unless the competency certificate is terminated or renewed in accordance with the provisions of this Act.” This amendment of subsection (2), which was brought about by the FC Amendment Act, No. 28 of 2006, dispels the notion that those competency certificates issued without end-dates, are valid for life.

Section 95 of the FCA provides for Official Institutions and the issue



of firearms to members of such institutions. In this context an ‘Official Institution’ means (i) the South African National Defence Force; (ii) the South African Police Service; (iii) the Department of Correctional Services; (iv) any intelligence service established in terms of the Constitution; (v) the armaments acquisition agency of the State (ARMSCOR); and (vi) any government institution accredited by the Registrar as an Official Institution. Take note that from numbers (i) to (v) such official institutions are automatically entitled to possess and use firearms, provided they comply with the law, while those contemplated by number (vi) must be accredited as such by the Registrar.

One prerequisite to the possession of, and use by, an official of a firearm, is that the official must be competent and have a competency certificate.

In addition, Regulation 79 provides for the prescribed training and testing in respect of employees of Official Institutions -

“(1) The training and testing of an employee for the safe use of firearms as contemplated in section 98 (8)(b) of the Act, must comply with the provisions of the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995) read with the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998).

(2)(a) The Head of an Official Institution must apply the provisions of section 9(2)(d) to (p) of the Act in respect of an employee who will be

required to handle firearms as part of his or her work and to whom the Official Institution will issue a firearm and firearm permit to ensure the competency of the employee of the Official Institution to possess and use a firearm under the control of the Official Institution.

(b) In order to sustain the competency of an employee of an Official Institution to whom a firearm was issued the head of the Official Institution must-

(i) [“subject to subregulation (3)” has been inserted] ensure that he or she undergo at least one practical training session at least every 12 months or within a shorter period as may be reasonably necessary in the circumstances, in the proper and safe handling and use of the relevant firearm and ammunition; and

(ii) undergo psychological debriefing within 48 hours after experiencing any violent incident, discharging their firearm or witnessing a shooting.

The 2020 Government Gazette inserts a new paragraph (3):

“(3) In order to sustain the competency of an employee of an official institution contemplated in section 95 (a) (ii) of the Act [SAPS] to whom the firearm was issued, the head of that official institution must ensure that an employee of that official institution undergo at least one practical training session at least every 60 months or such shorter period as the head of that official institution from time to time direct, in the proper and safe handling and use of the relevant firearm and ammunition.”

Because of the insertion of subregulation (3) police officials only have to do one training session with the relevant firearms during a 60-month period, and should they pass the test and still conform to all the other requirements they will continue to be competent.

Continued...Competency Certification and Lockdown Readiness

Whether this amendment was required because of a shortage of ammunition; police officials are too busy and have no time to visit shooting ranges; they are trained well enough and do not require in-between training, or whatever other reason, is no excuse. One would expect the police, who are in the first line of fire against the country's huge criminal element, to be as best trained as possible. I have no doubt, though, that the specialist units, such as the Special Task Force, the Technical Operations Management Section (an Intervention Unit) and the presidential and ministerial protectors will do regular training – and rightly so.

In contrast with official institutions, section 20 licenses are issued for business purposes, including private security service providers, and in this regard regulation 21 (2) prescribes the rules applicable to the issue of firearms to such security personnel.

In accordance with subregulation (2) (s) (viii) the private security service provider shall ensure *“that the security officers issued with firearms undergo at least one proper practical training session, at the cost of the security service provider or person accredited as contemplated in regulation 11(2), at least every 12 months, or within a shorter period as may be reasonably necessary in the circumstances, in the proper and safe handling and use of the relevant firearm and ammunition; and (ix) ensure that the security officers issued with firearms attend at least one proper briefing session, at the cost of the security service provider or person accredited as contemplated in regulation 11(2), every 12 months, or within a shorter period as may be reasonably necessary in the circumstances, during which they are properly informed of the relevant legal principles, rules and procedures and of their legal duties re-*

garding the possession, carrying, safe custody and use of firearms and ammunition issued to them”.

During this state of disaster lockdown period, people tend to focus on the immediate and direct threat, the coronavirus. This obviously is important, since this is a threat that impacts on us all, however, as written before, one must guard against tunnel vision. When visiting a shop to buy groceries, even when parking is abundant, with very few pedestrians, be vigilant. Criminals are on the prowl and will take advantage of every opportunity to separate you from your hard-earned cash or property. And since the police's attention is also focussed on those who transgress the state of disaster regulations, they may not necessarily be around when you need them most.

Many of us who used to regularly frequent shooting ranges, obviously cannot do so now. However, this does not mean that you cannot practice for the forthcoming hunting season and also with your self-defence firearm. Depending on where you live, you can dress yourself in your favourite hunting clothes and boots, take your UNLOADED rifle and run a few times up and down the stairs and in your backyard to cause you to breathe unevenly, and practice from the prone, sitting, kneeling and standing positions by pointing the rifle at a target in your backyard (NEVER at a person or an animal) and pulling the trigger. If you do not like pulling the trigger on an empty chamber, load a DUMMY round, although this is strictly necessary only for .22 rim-fire rifles and shotguns.

With your self-defence handgun, use a sturdy belt and attach the holster that you regularly use, insert your UNLOADED handgun and draw from the concealed position (in all public places the fire-

arm MUST be carried concealed) and point at a target against the wall and pull the trigger. With a double-action pistol or revolver you can in fact “fire” two shots in quick succession. You can also do magazine changes, preferably tactical changes, where you do not drop a magazine, but retain it, pocket it, and insert the second EMPTY magazine. Learn not to take your eyes off your target while doing this and to move laterally before you again engage the target.

All of the above MUST be done with a firearm that is completely safe. The ammunition must preferably not be in the same room or area where you train. Neither must there be people or animals.

You must PERSONALLY check your firearm. NEVER rely on what ANYBODY tells you about the condition of your firearm. YOU alone take responsibility for your acts and omissions – do not blame anyone for your mistakes, least of all SAGA!

SAGA Advisory on the Letter from the Minister of Police



On 22 April the Minister of Police responded to SAGA's letters about the 2019/2020 Firearm Amnesty and the Renewal of Firearm Licences and Competency Certificates during the COVID-19 lockdown period. See this letter on our website homepage.

The Minister's response has raised a lot of queries and SAGA is preparing a follow-up letter to the Minister to clarify the issues mentioned below. We will keep our members updated as these matters develop.

John Welch has prepared this advisory for SAGA members based on what we know so far:

Whilst we were appreciative of the Minister of Police's response to SAGA's request to extend the Amnesty and to suspend the renewal of firearm licenses and competency certificates, SAGA had however hoped that the Minister would thoroughly apply his mind to all the matters that we had raised and not come up with a superficial response.

Amnesty:

With regards to the Amnesty, Parliament, for all intents and purposes, is functioning and the Portfolio Committee on Police could easily be convened, either in person or in virtual form. Since the Amnesty is currently in place (until 31 May), chances are that the Minister's application for an extension, would probably be fully supported.

Suspension of the Licence Renewal Process

Regarding the suspension of the renewal process, the Minister stated the following:

"Persons who are negatively affected by the lockdown, would be those in respect of whom the limit of 90 days expires during the lockdown period."

In liaison with the National Commissioner of Police, as the Registrar of Firearms, the assurance can be given that applications for the renewal of firearms licenses and competency certificates in respect of which the 90 days limit expired during the lockdown period will still be accepted, as long as the license has not expired."

It is, accordingly, clear in SAGA's view, from the Minister's letter that, provided the licence has not expired, the application for renewal would be accepted even though the application may be made **during the 90 days period** and **prior to the expiry** of the licence or competency certificate.

Should the licence have expired in the period from 27 March to date, and because of the lockdown period the firearm owner has been unable to renew their licence, the result is that such licences have already expired. The Minister is not offering such persons any assistance and they are now sitting with a firearm with an expired licence.

While the impression is gained from the Minister's letter that the DFO offices are fully functional, this is not what we have gathered from information supplied from across the country. Many members (and others) have informed us that their DFOs were not available. In some instances they were informed that since firearm licensing was not an essential service, those police officials were occupied with other police work. At the same time we received reports of some DFOs doing sterling service by even delivering licence cards to persons during the lockdown period.

Thus according to the Minister, those persons who wish to renew may now do so, and should your DFO not be available to take in your application, please immediately contact SAGA, via email on legal@saga.org.za, informing us and furnishing the police station's details.

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Continued...SAGA Advisory

Although the constant call at this time is to stay at home, we are obliged to attend to essential matters, such as purchasing groceries, medicine, fuel and apply for the renewal of firearm licences. The latter, as you may have noticed, is not mentioned anywhere in the government's documents dealing with the lockdown. In the meantime the renewal of vehicle and drivers' licences has been suspended. While such renewals are also statutory requisites, one does not understand why the Police Minister cannot also suspend the renewal of licences and competency certificates. As we have now realised, under the state of disaster regulations many things are possible.

Form SAPS 518(a) is required when you wish to renew a firearm licence. Paragraphs 37 to 39 of his form provide for the following:

37. *"Was your application handed in 90 days before expiry of the existing license? If no, submit the reason."*

38. *"Was your application handed in after the due date, but before expiry of the existing license? If yes, submit the reason."*

39. *"Was your application handed in after the expiry of existing license? If yes, submit the reason."*

The fact that questions 37 and 38 are the same, excepting that the former is in the positive while the latter is in the negative, is not relevant now. Be that as it may, the renewal application form,

which forms part of the regulations, provides for circumstances where the application was either not submitted "at least 90 days" prior to the expiry of the licence, or even after expiry of the licence. The fact that these questions are asked in paragraphs 37 – 39 means that such applications can be submitted and will be accepted. The question though, is, what will be the effect of the answers to those questions?

Within the South African legal context we refer to a state of necessity where it is objectively impossible to do something required by law or by contract. In certain circumstances, for instance, a lessee may be exonerated fully or partially from paying his rent due to necessity; while in criminal law our courts have ruled that under extreme circumstances one may kill someone else because of duress or other circumstances in a state of necessity.

This must be the reason why provision was made in Form SAPS 518 (a) for the late submission of renewal applications, both during the 90 day period and even after expiration of the licence. That too is why the applicant must supply reasons for the late handing in of the application.

It must be borne in mind that these reasons must objectively prove that the timeous submission of the forms was impossible, AND that the delay was not due to the applicant's fault, e.g. the firearm owner was hospitalised or was abroad on holiday or employed overseas on a lengthy basis.

Since renewal applications will be accepted (according to the Minister) during the 90 days period, the Covid-19 lockdown would be a valid reason for not being able to renew in time. Where a person's licence has expired because he or she was caught stranded overseas, waiting for approval to obtain a return flight, we suggest that the applicant submits his or her renewal application as soon as practically possible and submits that as a reason and provide as much proof as possible about the circumstances - dates, delays, flights, quarantine, etc. If the DFO fails to accept the forms and explanation, then such person may approach a court to force his hand, and in this regard, should such persons be members of SAGA, we will elevate such cases to the Registrar and the Minister.

If it was not for the lockdown, members could have at any time before the expiry of the licence, even during the last 90 days, handed over or sold their firearm to a licensed arms dealer. However, firearm dealerships are not functional during the lockdown period, unless they are in support of essential services, such as for security companies. So currently this is not even an option. After expiry of the licence, the SAPS are of the view that a dealer may not accept the firearm.

How (& Why) You Should Keep Both Eyes Open While Shooting

by Frank Melloni
Wednesday, April 22, 2020

A common topic among shooters is how to shoot with both eyes open. There are several advantages to not closing an eye when forming a sight picture, that range from accuracy to situational awareness. I am also a firm believer that the grimace we make when squeezing one eye shut heightens our sensitivity to unpleasantness, and actually leads to jumping and flinching. Here's an example: Getting a shot in a doctor's office. Before the needle hits our arm, the first thing many of us do is close our eyes and tighten our facial muscles. However, if we relax, the pinch is barely noticeable and we get more comfortable with needles.

Then there's the tactical question. If you close one eye, you lose half of your field of view and leave yourself open to a second attacker or other hazards. So whatever style of shooting you prefer, you owe it to yourself to learn how to do it with both eyes open.

From my sample of more than 1,000 students at Renaissance Firearms Instruction, we have determined approximately 85 percent of shooters are same-side dominant. This means that most right-handed people are also right-eye dominant, and most lefties are left-eye dominant. This demographic has the easiest time learning how to shoot with both eyes open. However even they require instruction on how to do so.

My basic instruction with same-side-dominant people starts with having them lift just their right arm, then just their left, followed by legs, followed by closing one eye then the other, and last having them breathe through just one nostril and then the other. I do this to assure them that they can inde-

pendently use any voluntary muscle God gave them two of, once they realize how. After this I have them focus at any distant object with their dominant eye, and then their non-dominant eye. Then I have students focus on the white of my fingernail that I raise up and concentrate on bringing it into focus and allowing my face to blur in the background, then I have them do the opposite.

If done correctly, I have just taught the student two things.

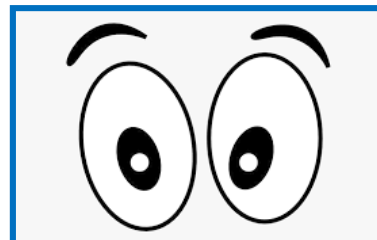
They can focus on an object with either eye; and

They can focus at different distances, as long as they concentrate on the details.

It's important to understand that your non-dominant side isn't useless; it's just not as strong and agile as your dominant side. Consider your weak hand—after all, it's still good enough for most tasks and with a little practice, you can even write with it to some degree.

So what about that 15 percent that is cross-dominant? Well, just like when you broke your wrist back at summer camp you can train yourself to get those muscles up to snuff and shoot just as accurately as your same-side-dominant buds.

On a personal note, I have even taught myself to change dominance at will and even shoot a long gun off of either shoulder. You see, I'm left-handed and left-eye dominant. However, most students are right-handed and watching a left-handed demonstration can be very confusing. Therefore, just from years of handling a gun and demonstrating proper cheek weld, I am approaching a level of ambidexterity that is merely a happy accident. My happy accident can be your happy training plan...so here's how I did it:



Don't overdo it with a pistol

If you're cross dominant both-eyes-open pistol shooting is very easy to attain. Most folks take the instruction of "hold the gun over more" to a ridiculous extreme and cock or turn their head or even cant the pistol. These positions are doing nothing to help promote a relaxed form and even slow you down as they become habit before you fire a shot. The secret is in the septum. All you have to do is use the septum of your nose as a dividing line and make sure you are bringing the pistol towards the dominant side of your face. Here you don't need to focus with your non-dominant eye at all, just make sure you are shifting your eyes to the front sight, to bring that into focus. By doing this you will no longer need to close one eye.

Stay natural with a rifle

When it comes to long guns, you have that stock in your way, so the only way for a cross-dominant shooter to use their dominant eye is to fire off of their non-dominant shoulder. While this is certainly an option, many shooters don't have the dexterity to do so. However, some people do some things weak-sided and they don't understand why. Therefore I always present this as a first option; often-times they are equally comfortable on either side, so why not embrace that?

Continued...Keep Both Eyes Open

However, for those who must shoot a rifle cross-dominant the secret is just a few cents' worth of tape. By covering the eye protection over the dominant eye it forces the shooter to use and strengthen the non-dominant eye. After time goes by, they can often shoot without that eye covering—simply by shifting focus and attention to the eye that they need to use. Just as they can raise their weak hand without raising their strong hand, they can use their weak eye to focus on a front sight while relaxing their dominant eye.

However, this only works if they mount the rifle the way it is supposed to be mounted. Most cross-dominant shooters will attempt to

hyperextend their neck in an attempt to get their dominant eye behind the sight or scope. Here they find themselves with their cheek lying on top of the stock instead of alongside it where it belongs. Once they find themselves trying to do this all is lost, as neither eye is going to be in line with the aiming device. Here I discourage the use of "Band-Aid solutions" like the installation of high scope rings, as this only promotes poor form and eventual neck pain.

Being cross-dominant or left-handed is not a handicap, and in fact, it can be the catalyst to making you a better shooter than those who are considered

"normal." I recall once, during a practical carbine match, I watched shooter after shooter bend and twist to engage a target from both sides of a barrier. When it was my turn, I shot left-handed from one side and then right-handed from the other side earning me the fastest time on my squad for that stage. All it takes is a little practice using that "other" eye and you can easily shoot with both eyes open and be comfortable doing so.

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2020/4/22/how-why-you-should-keep-both-eyes-open-while-shooting/>

Follow-Through: A Shooting Fundamental

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2020/4/6/follow-through-a-shooting-fundamental/>

by Larry Quandahl
Monday, April 6, 2020

There are several fundamentals of shooting: aiming, hold control, trigger control and breath control. As with many other facets of life, there's one more hurdle to mastery and that's follow-through. What is it? Well, follow-through is the final step in the integrated act of firing the shot. Follow-through is the glue that holds the other fundamentals together and makes firing the perfect shot possible. The big questions concerning follow-through are: How do you follow through, and how can you improve?

First, how does the shooter follow through? The simplest description of follow-through is that it's when you maintain aim, breath control, hold control and trigger control until after the shot has been fired and the gun has settled back into position. When does follow-through start? Follow-through starts when the shooter has aligned the sights and begun to aim the shot.

NRA Junior Rifle Shooting, the handbook for training young people in rifle shooting, says to extend follow-through for a full two seconds after the shot is fired. Those seconds include time for the firearm to recoil and for the shooter to recall what the sight picture looked like as the shot was fired, making it possible to call the shot. The time required for recovery depends on the shooting position and the caliber of the firearm being used. Good recovery is the last stage of follow-through and pays big dividends when it comes to evaluating both a shot and a shooter's position. Reflexive recovery at the end of follow-through also prepares the shooter for sustained fire.

fundamental

It's hard to tell on your own if you're following through properly. Have a coach (or other person who's working with you) observe you in the process of follow-through. They should position themselves just outside the arc of your peripheral vision - so their presence won't distract you - and watch for small movement or adjustment to your position following the shot. These adjustments may occur as you fire the shot, or during recovery, or after follow-through is complete. They usually occur because you did not build a true natural point of aim. What your coach will see is you forcing the gun back into position instead of letting a correct natural point of aim do the job.

Another point the coach should watch for occurs when the shooter relaxes after the shot instead of following through. Then the whole rifle drops out of position because the shooter was using muscles, not a good position, to hold the rifle. Other things they should watch for are head position, eye relief, eyes closing and grip on the firearm.

Once following through becomes second nature, the next step is to build on the technique as a tool for shooting sustained fire. What is sustained fire? It is simply firing one shot at a time, one after another. Examples of sustained fire include firing a string of 10 shots in 60 seconds with a rifle, or firing a string of five shots in 20 seconds (called "time fire") with a pistol.

One way to make the transition from slow fire (loading and firing one shot at a time), to a shot every four to six seconds, is to simply compress the time used to complete the integrated act of firing

the shot. By learning the fundamentals including follow-through, you have already built a firm foundation on which you can build sustained-fire skills. You'll gradually speed up the integrated act of firing, while correctly performing each fundamental.

There are two techniques that can help you develop a smooth transition between shots. Both will refine your "shot process," which is the system every shooter develops for firing the shot. Shot process includes mental preparation, shooting position and the integrated act of firing the shot. One technique is to breathe after each shot. Taking a breath keeps your vision clear by oxygenating the blood. Breathing can also help you time your shot string by developing a firing cadence.

The second technique is to reset the trigger. Learning to reset the trigger will take some training, but it is worth the effort. You'll keep the trigger finger in contact with the trigger and release it only far enough to reset the sear. By maintaining contact with the trigger, you reduce firing time by not having to take up the slack in the trigger stage.

The techniques of breathing and resetting the trigger will save you time, making more time available for working on your aiming and trigger control.

Follow-through welds the shooting fundamentals-aiming (sight alignment and sight picture), breath control, hold control and trigger control-into one continuous action. This technique of using follow-through to continue applying the fundamentals reduces the chance that you will give up on the shot just as it is fired.