



150 CR 4603, Bogata, TX 75417

Phone: 870-545-3886

[www.idpa.com](http://www.idpa.com)

## **Match Director / Chief Safety Officer Handbook**

Copyright © 2017-2019 International Defensive Pistol Association, Inc., all rights reserved.  
V2019.2



## Table of Contents

1. THANK YOU! .....	1
2. HOW TO BE A GREAT MATCH DIRECTOR .....	2
3. MARKETING AND PUBLICIZING YOUR MATCHES.....	3
4. STAGE DESIGN TIPS, DOS AND DON'TS .....	4
5. SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN STAGE DESIGN .....	7
6. RUNNING MATCHES.....	8
7. THE WRITTEN STAGE DESCRIPTION .....	9
8. MD / CSO PRE-MATCH STAGE WALK-THROUGH .....	10
9. SIGN-IN .....	11
10. THE SHOOTERS' MEETING .....	11
11. THE SHOOTERS' STAGE WALK-THROUGH.....	12
12. MATCH EFFICIENCY SUGGESTIONS .....	13
13. REPORTING MATCH RESULTS .....	13
14. MATCH CANCELLATION .....	14
15. SANCTIONED MATCHES - SOME NOTES .....	15
16. SANCTIONED MATCH TIMELINES .....	16
17. CLOSING THOUGHTS .....	17

## 1. Thank You!

Thank you for supporting IDPA and local clubs by volunteering to serve as a Match Director (MD) or a Chief Safety Officer (CSO) and taking the time to learn how to do it well.

The procedures, guidelines, and resources cited and/or included herein are intended to assist in designing stages, setting up and running IDPA matches, and reporting the results of matches. This handbook contains guidelines to help run a better and more effective match, and is not designed to specifically override or define binding rules (which are defined in the official IDPA rulebook and Match Administration Guide). Available online at [www.idpa.com](http://www.idpa.com)

For the first few matches that a new MD runs, it is a good idea to get an experienced Match Director or CSO as a mentor to help with the process. This person (or persons) can serve as a sounding board or reviewer of match and stage plans. They may also be available to consult on match day.

## 2. How to be a Great Match Director

Remember that IDPA is a defensive shooting sport, and people shoot IDPA matches for a variety of reasons. For some it is about winning the competition, for some it is practicing concealed carry techniques, and for many it is a little of both. It needs to be fun and challenging for all.

- a. Make sure everyone finishes the day safely. This is the first priority as the Match Director or CSO.
- b. Make sure shooters have fun, especially new shooters. This is the second priority.
- c. Make it fun, fair and challenging! If you allow shooters to approach the match the way they choose, within the rules, they will come back and bring their friends.
- d. Develop an atmosphere at the club and range that is welcoming to visitors and shooters; new and loyal shooters alike.
- e. Provide great IDPA stages for the shooters. These can be from the Internet, sanctioned matches, or home grown.
- f. Follow all of the current IDPA rules all of the time.
- g. Develop an ever-growing pool of good CSOs and SOs through recruitment, training, mentoring, coaching, and refresher classes.
- h. Train your replacement by enlisting a few good SOs and stage designers to be Assistant MDs or CSOs over the course of a season or two of shooting.
- i. Develop a written “New Shooters Briefing” handout, video and/or class, and meet with all the new shooters at a match to explain match flow, safety, and basic expectations. Some clubs have even developed an “Intro to IDPA” class for new IDPA shooters. There are many different ways to organize an “Intro to IDPA” class. It may consist of a classroom session which reviews the basic IDPA commands and rules, followed by taking the shooters out to shoot some IDPA stages or an actual IDPA match. Or it may be a dedicated range session with some courses of fire designed specifically for the class.
- j. Consider offering specialty divisions that may appeal to shooters at your club or in the area. If your club will offer specialty divisions (e.g. PCC, etc.), make sure that your courses of fire, range procedures, and any club policies are clearly communicated to the shooters before (and during) the match. The goal is to ensure the shooters experience a safe, high quality match – no matter what division they shoot.
- k. Make sure any safety rules or important range policies that are relevant to the safety of the match (which are not part of IDPA rules – e.g. no muzzles pointed above the berm, etc.) are communicated in your match announcements (e.g. email, websites, Facebook announcements, safety briefings, etc). For a sanctioned match, these policies will also need to be part of the match booklet. There should be no surprises to the competitors in this regard.
- l. Assign each new shooter to an experienced, affable mentor for the match. This one-on-one mentoring is the best way for new shooters to learn and have fun. If possible, spread the new shooters out across multiple squads in the match.
- m. Provide a group walk-through on each stage for all of the SOs and shooters at once, where feasible. That way, every SO and shooter hears the same briefing, and hears all the questions and answers about the stage. If this is done at your local matches, it will be consistent with other clubs, and larger sanctioned matches.
- n. Require IDPA membership of all shooters in compliance with the IDPA Code of Conduct.
- o. Publish match scores promptly. Shooters are eager to see how they did, and do very much appreciate scores that are posted quickly. If you decide to record scores on paper, consider dedicating a person to the role of entering and posting the scores. You may also consider using electronic scoring devices to help process the scores quickly after the match is done.
- p. Travel and shoot with other IDPA clubs to learn from them and possibly to teach them.
- q. Remain free during the match, to shoot a stage or two with each squad and to observe your SO Teams. (See g.) Remember that IDPA matches are entertainment, and every match attendee could be spending their money and time at other clubs or in other sports.

### 3. Marketing and Publicizing Your Matches

Many IDPA competitors and new shooters are eagerly looking for clubs to shoot IDPA. Many use the IDPA web site to search out clubs in their area. As a Match Director, here are some useful tips to market your matches and to help shooters find your club and come ready to participate in your match.

- a. Keep UP TO DATE information about the dates, registration time, match start time, location, cost, and any important range information, etc. on your club web site. Provide names and emails of club contacts (so shooters can reach out and get questions answered about the match).
- b. Update this information on the IDPA website as well. Many shooters use that site to look for clubs, contacts, scores, etc.
- c. Provide information about any specialty divisions you may offer at your match, and any information on how these divisions may be run (e.g. PCC guns requiring flags, etc).
- d. Provide information about any additional or more restrictive safety requirements that may be required at your club. As a note, any additional restrictions or requirements must be published in all Sanctioned Match announcements and visibly displayed at the match in a location accessible to the shooters.
- e. Many MDs find it useful to use a Facebook page to announce match information, but keep in mind that many shooters do not subscribe to Facebook, so this should only be used to augment your club website, IDPA website, emails, etc., for disseminating information.
- f. Many people looking at your club web site will be new IDPA shooters, so provide information that may be useful from a NEW SHOOTER perspective. Examples – what gear to bring, how many rounds of ammunition, where the pistol bays are located, etc.
- g. If your club offers an “Intro to IDPA” class or session, provide all the information one may need to register or participate in the session.
- h. If the match requires pre-registration, provide a link and instructions on how shooters should sign up. Many clubs use existing on-line services designed just for this purpose (e.g. [matchsignup.org](http://matchsignup.org) or [practicore.com](http://practicore.com)), and these services are highly recommended instead of using email for registration. They also offer on-line payment, but on-line payment is not mandatory.
- i. Post match scores on the web. The scores can be posted on the IDPA website, or other location.

## 4. Stage Design Tips, “Dos and Do Nots”

Great matches need great stages! Here are some “Dos and Do Nots” for creating fun, interesting stages that will keep your shooters coming back for more!

### Dos:

- a. Ensure every stage follows all of the IDPA rules. Even for local matches! Never say, "It is only a local match; we do not need to follow that rule."
- b. Provide a realistic self-defense scenario for the stage in two or three sentences.
- c. Clearly indicate cardboard targets, steel, activators, swingers, drop-turners, runners, etc., in the stage description.
- d. Clearly indicate start positions (SP1, SP2, etc.) shooting positions (P1, P2, etc.) and vision barriers (VB1, VB2, etc.) in the stage description.
- e. Set reactive targets at a 90° angle to the predicted bullet path to the target.
- f. Place walls or barricades strategically within a stage so that shooters cannot see targets which are not intended. Example: a shooter standing back along a fault line might be able to engage unintended targets.
- g. Fault Lines MUST be used for every appropriate stage. They are not optional based on weather or topography.
- h. Place fault lines in a position that puts the shooter mostly behind cover for the array to be engaged. From that position they should be able to safely engage all of the targets. Fault lines should extend as far back as needed to accommodate the positions a shooter may take when engaging that array.
- i. Direct shooters through a stage with props instead of with wording.
- j. Use the word “then” to describe order, when order is important. For example, if a Mozambique is mandated, the Stage Description should say, “Shoot two to the body and THEN one to the head.” Stating “Two to the body AND one to the head” leaves the order of engagement up to the shooter!
- k. State the measurable qualifiers for prop usage and body positions. Specify the required start position of the hands, feet, butt and back if it is important to the stage. (Example: Seated in chair, back against the chair, palms down completely on the table.)
- l. Design stages that make slide-lock reloads come naturally. They are the preferred type of reload in IDPA.
- m. Make stages simple and subtle instead of complex and confusing. Use the minimum number of walls and props needed to direct the shooter through the stage without a lot of written description. Any additional barricade or barrels can be added to overcome issues of target visibility from an unwanted shooting position. Props and walls equate to extra work for setup and teardown, so use them wisely.
- n. The sequence of target engagement should be obvious to the shooter without extensive briefing or instruction. Procedural penalties because a shooter did not understand the course of fire should be rare.
- o. Consider how penalties will be applied. Try to predict the sorts of penalties that might arise during a stage and inform your SO team of how to handle it.
- p. When placing activated targets in a stage (e.g. disappearing targets, swingers, etc.) keep in mind that the relative position of the target to other targets determines its priority, not the fact that it moves or disappears. If several targets are visible at the same time, targets are engaged from near-to-far unless they are equal threat. If targets are hidden by cover, the targets are engaged as they become visible around the edge of cover (slicing the pie). Place the targets so that this priority is clear to the shooter.
- q. Design every stage so they are manageable by everyone. (Example: Do not force the dragging of a 100-lb. dummy.)
- r. Leave as many options open to the shooter as possible. Design stages that can be solved by applying IDPA rules to the scenario, targets, props, and cover presented, rather than needing to follow a sequence of prescribed dance steps.
- s. Design stages that provide risk vs. reward. (Example: Provide difficult shots at distance and a path through the stage to get closer to them for easier shots.)
- t. Consider mixing movement and shooting positions that favor both left-handed and right-handed shooters.
- u. Consider ALL the divisions that will be shooting your match in your stage design. Try to keep the various equipment divisions balanced as much as possible by considering round counts and reload points.
  - o An 18-round stage requires CCP, CDP, REV and BUG shooters to do an extra reload over ESP and SSP. Consider where typical reloads occur – after 6, 9, and 11 rounds. Then repeat the exercise for 12, 17, 18, and 21 rounds.
  - o If using a disappearing target, consider where the triggering popper will be hit in the round count. Try to be fair to all equipment divisions. A reasonable point to engage the popper would be after 6 rounds. CCP and CDP will still have 2 rounds for the disappearing target, SSP/ESP – 4, BUG and Revolvers will have just reloaded. A better point would be after 12 rounds so there are extra rounds available in case of missing the steel.
  - o Consider requiring the download of magazines to 6 rounds at the start of a 17- or 18- round stage to force every division to do the same number of reloads.
  - o If a Course of Fire requires magazines to be downloaded, the shooter’s division still determines the number of reloading devices that may be carried on the belt (as specified per 8.1.4 and 8.1.5)

- v. With the increased use of optics at our matches, the policy regarding “sight pictures” has come to the forefront. The rules around “sight pictures” were meant to restrict stage rehearsals while inside of a stage boundary. The rules were meant to restrict stage rehearsals while inside of a stage boundary. With the optics in two divisions now, many shooters want to verify the condition of their sight prior to getting the start signal.
  - o In these cases, it is permissible to point their gun down at low ready (not at a target) to ensure the optic is functioning during the make ready command.
- w. Iron Sight divisions are still prohibited from any type of sight picture before the Start Signal.
- x. Design stages that are consistent throughout the day.
  - o Consider conditions that will change over the course of the day. Example: Avoid hands starting in a tub of water that’s 40 degrees at 8AM and 70 degrees at 1PM.
  - o Use and maintain props that can run consistently. Make sure activators, weights, etc. are marked in a way that will ensure that they be set exactly the same for every shooter.
  - o Work out all the bugs in a new target, prop, or activator long before it appears in a sanctioned match. Make sure it works in a few local matches first.
  - o Ensure target placement and timing remains consistent. Be cautious about stapling replacement targets on top of old targets on devices or props that might have their timing affected by the extra weight of the new target (e.g. on a clamshell). It is recommended that the first set of targets hung in a sanctioned match should be treated as backers. These original targets should be left in place with the heads cut off and new targets stapled over them. This method insures consistent target placement throughout a match. This may also be applied to swinging or other moving targets, so that the “weight” of the target keeps the swinger or moving at the same rate as targets are replaced throughout the day.
  - o Calibrate activators to allow BUG firearms to knock them over.
- y. Design a mix of short and longer stages. A 12-14 round average is a good mix.
- z. Typically, two or more shots should be required on each target, simulating real-life encounters. Include some stages that require 3 or 4 rounds per target.
- aa. Include 20-yard shots in a match from time to time.
- bb. Have stages reviewed by experienced stage designers before match setup.
- cc. Provide a scale drawing with dimensions in the stage description to the setup crew.
- dd. Determine ahead of time the physical space the SO can safely occupy and see the shooter’s firearm when the shooter is in a vehicle or other unusual or potentially confined shooting position.
- ee. Identify stages that require an experienced SO team, and those that are less demanding for less experienced SOs.
- ff. Provide an official IDPA box with appropriate spacers at local matches for shooters to check their guns and ensure that they are legal.
  - o It is not recommended to use the official IDPA measuring box as a start prop for a stage, because some legal, full-sized guns may have a very tight fit in the box and if a shooter tries to retrieve the gun from box under the pressure of time, the gun may get stuck and represent an inconsistent start for some shooters. If the gun gets stuck, this also could be a safety hazard. Also, forcing the gun out of the box could potentially damage the box and knock it out of specification. It is better to use a more appropriate, bigger attaché case or large purpose-built prop box so that guns of ALL divisions can be retrieved quickly, safely and consistently.
  - o Also note that the new Carry Optics division requires a modified full sized IDPA test box with an opening to accommodate the optic. Test boxes are modified by opening the side of the box opposite of the hinges to allow the optic to protrude outside the normal dimensions of the box. This is accomplished by measuring approximately 1” inside both corners and cutting away the side to create an opening that continues to fit standard pistol and carry optic firearms with an empty magazine inserted and allow the lid to completely close.
- gg. From time to time include the use of a “pick-up” firearm for 6 shots or less. Make it something that is simple to operate and has no more recoil than an SSP firearm.
- hh. If the match allows specific specialty divisions (e.g. PCC), then you may need to afford provisions in the stage briefings to accommodate these divisions. You will also need to make sure the stage designs and procedures can accommodate these divisions. (e.g. start positions for PCC rifles, props and shooting positions that are compatible with these type of guns, etc.)
  - o Be reminded that an added stabilizer or Sig Brace is not legal to use as a butt stock in IDPA. The firearm in question should be an actual rifle, not a pistol.
- ii. Consider planning stages that serve as more than one stage with minor or no modifications. Altering starting positions or reversing directions are easy ways to change the stages and provide more shooting with less work. This saves space and set-up/tear-down time.
- jj. Find good stage designs used in the past and modify them slightly or use them directly. Even the same stage with slightly different target, non-threat, or barricade position is new and different. Be aware that IDPA rules may have changed since the stage was written and thus a once-legal stage may need some modification to be legal now.
- kk. For sanctioned matches compare every stage to the Stage Design rules in the rulebook and ensure compliance.
- ll. For sanctioned matches have stages reviewed by experienced stage designers or other SCs or ACs before submitting them for approval.

- mm. For sanctioned matches provide a scale drawing with dimensions to the AC for stage approval.
- nn. Welcome shooters from other shooting sports, but make it clear that all IDPA matches are subject to all IDPA rules all of the time, even local matches.

**Do Nots:**

- a. Do not repeat an IDPA rule in the stage description.
- b. Do not make up new rules in the stage description.
- c. Do not do long winded scenario descriptions or do meaningless scenario descriptions. (Example: "Bad Guys... shoot 'em.")
- d. Do not try to teach tactics with a prescribed stage procedure.
- e. Do not make your stages unusual to the point of appearing silly. Some of these are simple modifications of stages from other shooting disciplines that require contestants to ride rocking horses and shoot targets after walking through swinging saloon doors. Sometimes these stages are called silly names like "Revenge of the Green Men from Mars" or "Zombie Apocalypse". Such scenarios simply degrade what IDPA is about. Please keep IDPA true to its concealed-carry roots.
- f. Do not design stages to "get" or "slow down" specific shooters or groups of shooters.
- g. Do not design stages that a 4' tall shooter or a 6'6" tall shooter would have an advantage or disadvantage when shooting.
- h. Do not design stages that require 6 or more rapid shots to get all the required hits. Example: Shooting an activator and then 5 shots on a disappearing mover. (Reduce these round counts by 1 if the BUG division is included in the match!)
- i. Do not make stages a memory test. (Example: Shoot T1 with 3 rounds, T2 with 2 rounds, T3-T4 with 3 rounds, etc.) When at a position of cover, it should be clear which targets you are engaging. Targets that have been previously engaged should not be visible at another shooting position. Do not force shooters to memorize which targets they needs to shoot or not shoot from a position.
- j. Do not try to skirt the IDPA rules with a "cleverly" designed stage.
- k. Do not paint unrealistic hard cover onto threat targets (e.g., a checkerboard of black boxes, circles, stripes, etc.).
- l. Do not place targets standing on their head, or horizontal unless this fits in well with the scenario somehow.
- m. Do not require a third person to activate a prop for a shooter. Shooters should activate all props themselves.
- n. Do not use the phrase, "Well, it is the same for everyone," to justify a poorly designed stage. Please do not use this phrase to use stages or props that trivialize the principles of IDPA or that are not really practical. Claiming that it will be the same for everyone is a way of rationalizing a poor stage design. Mistakes may be made in IDPA, but allowing poor stage designs to flourish will lead to the demise of IDPA at a local club more quickly than any other factor.
- o. If using sticks to designate fault lines, the stick IS the fault line. Painted lines can also be used as fault lines. Do not try to paint sticks different colors on each side, or use both painted lines and sticks in ways that would penalize a shooter with a fault if they touch or move a stick. Faulting the line is defined as the shooter touching the ground or other objects on the non-cover side of the fault line.

## 5. Safety Considerations in Stage Design

- a. Keep shooters moving at a downrange or up-range angle so their natural muzzle direction will be safe. The single greatest concern for muzzle direction issues in IDPA is a stage that requires the shooter to move along a line parallel to the 180-degree plane. Always be alert to this issue for both right and left-handed shooters. The shooters' natural tendency is to keep their muzzle pointed within an arc somewhere between straight ahead and their weak side while moving or reloading. Check every stage for places where the shooter's muzzle might naturally break the 180-degree plane, and change the stage. There are two common ways to fix such a stage:
  - o Most times, turning the stage setup in the bay 30 degrees will fix it. This especially applies to walls that parallel the 180-degree plane where shooters might reload while moving along the wall.
  - o Make the stage laterally symmetrical. That is, design it so that it may be shot by moving either from left to right or from right to left on the bay, with a very similar shooting experience and no advantage in target order, engagement angles, prop activation, or reloading points either way. By setting up a mirror-image stage and allowing left- and right-handers to shoot it starting from opposite sides, one can avoid muzzle-direction safety issues and DQs.
- b. Movement up range should be done engaging or just finishing engagement of downrange targets so the muzzle starts down range.
- c. Another concern is reload points. Reloads should be planned so the shooter is facing down range such that the natural muzzle direction while reloading is safe, for either right-handed or left-handed shooters.
- d. Consciously think about the proper type of muzzle safe points to use in each stage. Some may require a cone and others may require use of the 180-degree plane, or both in concert.
- e. Warn shooters in the written stage description of a DQ possibility for sweeping. (Example: legs on seated start positions, hands when opening doors, etc.) Orientation of chairs, benches, etc. to first array of targets may also help in this regard.
- f. On vehicle stages that require the shooter to start seated in a vehicle and draw to engage targets outside of the vehicle, care must be taken in the process of drawing the firearm. Instead, require the shooter to start with the firearm in hand, pointed in safe direction, like at a dot on the dash or below the side window line. This will make the using of the firearm while inside the vehicle less of a safety hazard, and allow the response from inside the car to a threat to be a viable part of a scenario stage.
- g. Steel plates and poppers must be shot from a distance of at least 10 yards. This is a safety requirement. Also make sure that make-up shots on steel are not done and, preferably, not possible, at distances less than 10 yards.
- h. Targets to be shot on the move, from retention, or weak-handed should be as close to the berm as possible. In each of these cases, the angular deviation of fire from target center must be expected to be far greater than normal. Therefore, shots over the berm and into the ground and bounced over the berm must be prevented.
- i. Consider mobility challenged or physically disabled shooters when designing stages. Provide them a possible and safe way to shoot the stage with few, if any penalties due to their restrictions.
- j. For stages that require a firearm to be laid down (e.g., shooter's firearm, "pick-up" gun, etc.), make sure that the stage design dictates that the firearm is on safe. In addition, make sure there is a clear, safe spot to lay it down where it will naturally point to the berm or down range so the shooter or SO will not be downrange of the muzzle later in the stage.
- k. For stages that require a firearm to start on a table, on a barrel, or on the ground make sure that it starts pointing toward the berm or downrange.
- l. Reduce the height of the targets for seated, kneeling or prone shooting to force the rounds to impact safely into the berm without ricocheting off the bay floor.
- m. Start positions, movement around obstacles, and vision obstructions will need to safely accommodate specialty divisions if allowed in match (e.g. PCC).



## 6. Running Matches

To most IDPA registered shooters, local matches encompass their entire IDPA experience. Some estimates are that less than 15% of IDPA shooters attend sanctioned matches. As such, local matches are extremely important to shooters and to IDPA. Below are some suggestions for running great local IDPA matches, most of which also apply to running great sanctioned matches.

- a. In advance of match day, arrange for other shooters to help with setup. As with any group, if you ask the group for help, some may help but most will not. Asking a group member directly for help will yield better results. However, try to use a different group of volunteers for each match so no one gets burned out. It's a good idea to talk to fellow shooters a few days ahead of time and arrange for some help setting up the match. (Offer an incentive for helping through reduced match fees!)
- b. Build a team and share the work. The MD or CSOs are not expected to set up each stage and run it all by themselves. While allowing for the shooters' physical condition, everybody should be willing to help or should reconsider their participation. Upper level shooters are not exempt.
- c. If setting up the match on match day, show up early. If the MD becomes unavailable at the last minute, the Assistant MDs and CSOs should be prepared to run the match without issue.
- d. Place a written stage description with a scale drawing of the layout into each bay. This way the stage can be set up properly without direct MD oversight. This empowers the setup crew and relieves the MD to focus on the match rather than the stages. Do not kill yourself trying to do it all alone. Wait for some help to show up and share the heavy lifting.
- e. The MD and/or CSO should review each stage for proper setup, safety and function. The stages should be set and ready to shoot at the posted match starting time.
- f. The MD and/or helpers are responsible for having all the required materials available to start and run the match. This includes timers, tape, paint, sign-in sheets, score sheets, props, etc. The MD can ask other shooters to help take care of these items, while the MD is busy getting stages set up.
- g. Some MDs like to set up the day before the match. If you choose to do so, make sure there are no range conflicts that would prohibit access for early set-up.
- h. If setting up multiple stages on multiple bays, consider the flow of several squads so that they do not have to wait on each another. Consider where to place slow-running stages or multiple stages in a single bay with where to start the squads to attain a smooth flow through the match.
- i. When building a stage, start at the berm and work backward to the shooting position. This places the most downrange target at the berm and helps to minimize bay floor bullet impacts.
- j. Avoid preventable damage to props. Additionally, if a barricade or prop is needed close to the line of fire where it is likely to be hit, pick a well-used one, not a new one. The property master and treasurer will thank you.
- k. Do not staple targets or stage descriptions to barricades or other props. Use an extra target stand.
- l. It is highly recommended to paint scoreable steel targets between shooters (or minimally between squads). A freshly painted steel target will help to determine where the shooter hit the steel, and may help to determine if the steel target was properly calibrated.
- m. At the end of the last match, possibly a few days before the match, or early on match day, prepare a match bucket for each squad. Do not forget black and tan tape, stapler, staples, paint, reliable timer, extra batteries, pens, score sheets or electronic scoring device, etc. (Placing the extra staples, batteries, and pens in a plastic bag can help keep them organized.)
- n. Possibly a few days before the match or at the shooters' meeting, pick the SOs for each squad.
- o. Prepare match and range sign-in sheets showing fees for club members, non-members, and new shooters.
- p. At the shooters' meeting, make it clear that every squad will check with the MD and then, when given permission, will tear down their last stage and leave a clean bay. Depending on the number of stages and squads, a squad may need to tear down two stages.

## 7. The Written Stage Description

The written stage description is one of the most valuable items that an MD or CSO provides for a match. A well-written stage description will eliminate most of the questions that come up during the day about a stage. Stage descriptions with a scale diagram of the stage with distances labeled will aid the setup crew as well as the SOs running the stage. Ensure the stage description contains all of the required elements:

- a. **Scenario:** A brief and meaningful description of the self-defense scenario that the stage portrays. For standards stages, this section need only to contain the word “Standards.”
- b. **Procedure:** A brief description of what the shooter is supposed to do within the stage for each string of fire. Also describes any special conditions such as “strong hand only,” required shooter movement, target order, and other items the shooter must accomplish.
- c. **Muzzle Safe Points:** Muzzle safe markers or 180-degree rule, or a combination of both.
- d. **Scoring:** Limited or Unlimited.
- e. **Scored Hits:** Number of scored hits per target or per string and minimum round counts.
- f. **Start Position:** Describes the start position, condition of the shooter’s firearm and ammunition feeding devices. Describes the shooter’s start position and the action the shooter is performing at the start of the stage, if any. Specifies if a concealment garment is not required.
- g. **Stage Diagram:** A scale or rough scale drawing showing the position of the targets, props, starting position, points of cover and fault lines.
- h. **Start Signal:** Describes the start signal, like audible, flashing of a light, etc.
- i. **Stop:** Describes the stop signal if any. This is usually the “last shot” but can be other things such as shooting all the targets and then pressing a button, etc.
- j. **SO notes:** Optional instructions to the SO team for safety or proper running of the stage.

## 8. MD / CSO Pre-Match Stage Walk-Through

When setup is complete, walk through the stages as a final check.

- a. Check the stage for the intended scenario or standards:
  - 1) Are the targets where they should be based on the stage diagram?
  - 2) Are visual barriers used to guide shooters?
  - 3) Are there shoot-throughs on threat targets?
  - 4) Are sufficient “down 0” zones showing around non-threats for less experienced shooters?
  - 5) Are the reload points reasonable?
  - 6) Are head-sized targets and SHO/WHO targets at or below the maximum allowed distances?
- b. Does setup agree with the stage diagram’s number of targets, placement, steel, start position, cover positions, and vision barriers?
- c. Can the stage reset be duplicated squad-to-squad?
- d. Is the start position clear or marked in some way?
- e. Are target sticks marked so that targets can be replaced in exactly the same position? Or, have the SO Teams been instructed to treat the first set of targets as backer targets by leaving them in place and stapling new targets on top?
- f. Are fault lines marked or anchored so that they will remain consistent throughout the match?
- g. Are there any special props? Is a plan needed to maintain them (spare parts, spare props, etc.)?
- h. Managing reactive targets
  - 1) Is a wrench, or pair of wrenches, available to adjust the target?
  - 2) Is the target in good working order?
  - 3) Was the target calibrated today?
  - 4) Is there paint available to paint scoreable steel targets between shooters (or squads)?
- i. Are there any shooter traps or SO traps?
- j. Are there any 180 traps?
- k. Are there any confined spaces?
- l. Are there any odd procedurals possible? How will they be handled?
- m. What tasks and materials are needed to support pre- and post-match activities?
- n. Are targets available to change targets every 2 or 3 squads? Are painted targets available?
- o. Is there a score sheet administration process for each bay?
- p. Inspect the range surface for trip hazards, puddles, mud, ice, snow. Can these be minimized?
- q. Do all rounds impact berms, and not bounce off range floor?
- r. Check the stage for safety, for the shooter, the SO, and bystanders:
  - 1) Are there trip hazards near any movement path of the shooter?
  - 2) Are there tendencies for unsafe muzzle directions?
  - 3) Will range property be damaged?
  - 4) Will a ricochet hazard be struck?
  - 5) Are steel targets shot from less than 10 yards?
  - 6) Can a short shooter put a head shot over the berm or can a tall shooter bounce a low shot over the berm? If so, the target needs to be closer to the berm.
- s. Look past and through each target to see the bullet impact area.
- t. Is there a shoot-through on another target or stage prop?
- u. Ask a few CSOs and/or SOs to review the stages as well. A second pair of eyes can help.

Reviewing the stage as a shooter what are three questions about the stage?

---

---

---

Reviewing the stage as a CSO what are the three things needed to effectively run this stage?

---

---

---

Reviewing the stage as an MD what are the three possible rulings that the CSO or MD will get called to the bay to answer?

---

---

---

From the review points is there anything that can be modified on the stage to avoid these issues?

*This page is designed to be printed and used during the walk through.*

## 9. Sign-In

By now the shooters have arrived to the range and are gearing up, shooting the breeze and waiting around. Sign-in is their first touch with the match. Sign-in can be a bottleneck, taking a lot of time. When possible have two or three sign-in lines to cut this time. With electronic scoring it is possible to have shooters sign-in and/or pay fees on-line before match day. This cuts match day work considerably, however there will always be “walk-ons” to sign-in on match day.

- a. Have all shooters read and sign the match and range sign-in sheets and pay their fees. (Some clubs may allow the MD, SOs or setup crew to pay reduced fees.) If using electronic scoring, enter the shooter’s information, including IDPA membership number into the master scoring device.
- b. If emailing match results to shooters, make sure their email address is readable.
- c. Explain to new shooters that they must join IDPA before shooting a third match. One suggestion for MDs - For new shooters that are not yet members, enter “NEW1”, “NEW2” or “NEW3” as their IDPA membership number. This allows the club and the shooter to track the first 3 matches where IDPA membership is not required. There should never be a “NEW4”.
- d. Identify new shooters. Notify new shooters that a New Shooter Briefing will be required and arrange for the briefing for all new shooters in attendance prior to the first shot of the match.
- e. Allow shooters to self-squad, or divide the shooters’ score sheets into an appropriate number of squads, making sure that there are an adequate number of experienced SOs in each squad. If using electronic scoring devices, synchronize the master scoring device with the other scoring devices used for the match. Then squad shooters using electronic scoring devices.
- f. Where possible, group those that want to shoot together into the same squad.
- g. Pair up new shooters with an experienced and willing mentor to help them through the match.
- h. Count the money or enlist help, if there is time. If there are discrepancies, attempt to resolve them. Store the money until after the match.

## 10. The Shooters’ Meeting

The shooters are ready to begin after sign-in. Generally the MD addresses all the shooters at once in the shooters’ meeting.

- a. Optionally, some clubs start the shooters’ meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- b. Welcome the shooters to the match, and thank them for coming.
- c. Give a brief overview of the match, number of stages, round count and mention the theme of the match if any.
- d. Announce any unique safety rules used at that particular range. (Example: a range may have a policy of “no muzzles pointed over the berm when reloading” policy.)
- e. If applicable, announce any specific provisions for specialty divisions (e.g. handling PCC rifles on the range, flagging, transporting, etc. or any other considerations).
- f. Announce that the shooters are expected to help teardown stages and store the materials before leaving.
- g. Announce other upcoming matches of all types, even at other ranges, gun shows, and training opportunities in the area.
- h. Possibly a few days before the match or at the shooters meeting, pick the SOs for each squad and assign them a bay to start in. Matching the squad number to the starting bay number, if possible, can help avoid confusion.
- i. Ask if there are any questions. When questions are finished, the stage walk-through is normally next on the agenda.

## 11. The Shooters' Stage Walk-Through

The stage walk-through can be given for all the stages at one time before the match starts, or as a squad arrives at the stage. This is dependent on whether it is a local or sanctioned match, the number of shooters, number of squads, the match set up, and personal preference.

- a. Keep in mind that giving everyone the exact same stage walk-through is important to the consistency of the stage and fairness of the match.
- b. The first stage walk-through should be the same as the last stage walk-through. Read the written stage description word-for-word without inserting more and more things as the day progresses.
- c. Safety issues pointed out by anyone must be addressed immediately, even if it means re-shooting or throwing out a stage. Safety cannot be compromised.
- d. If a shooter finds a safety, procedural or any other issue during the stage walk-through and prior to anyone shooting that stage, there are several options:
  - 1) First the CSO and MD should be called to make a ruling.
  - 2) The written stage description can be changed or clarified in writing by the MD to fix the stage.
  - 3) The stage can physically be changed (move a target, barricade, etc.) to prevent (or resolve) the issue(s).
- e. After a stage has been shot by others, if a shooter exploits the stage design to perform an IDPA legal (but unintended) action that results in a considerable advantage, there are a few options:
  - 1) First the CSO and MD should be called to make a ruling.
  - 2) The shooter's score can stand, and the stage designer can learn from the incident to prevent future stage design flaws.
  - 3) The written stage description (or layout) can be changed and clarified in writing by the MD to fix the stage. The shooter will reshoot the stage using the updated procedure. This action should only be taken if it is possible to offer all previous competitors a reshoot. Otherwise, this is not an option.
  - 4) Consider not using the stage's scores as part the final match score, since there was a documented competitive inequity. This prevents possible complaints from those shooters who did not exploit the loophole, and protects the reputation of match.
- f. Remind the staff, especially SOs, to help the new shooters. New and nervous shooters should be verbally coached through the stage procedure, if necessary, but this is not allowed at sanctioned matches. Keep the stage designs straightforward for both safety and for attracting and retaining new shooters. We want new shooters to have a good, safe time, and to come back. Remind the shooter if they forget to engage a target or if they do not complete engagement, etc. This is a courtesy to the shooter. SOs are not perfect and may forget, but it should be done as consistently and as fairly as is possible.
- g. Remind the group that after the match is over the stages need to be cleared and props properly stored. If there are tasks that need to be done after the match (like removing old target sticks, clearing the bleacher areas, emptying trash, etc.) they should be mentioned before the match starts. IDPA is an all-volunteer community and the work is easy and short duration when everyone helps.

## 12. Match Efficiency Suggestions

- a. For matches utilizing two or more squads, when possible, space the starting squads on stages far enough apart that the squads are not waiting on each other.
- b. To make sure the match runs smoothly and quickly, remind Scorekeepers to call the next three shooters after the current shooter finishes the course of fire. The Scorekeeper should call the next shooter to the line, and then call out the names of the next two shooters. This simple thing will greatly help the match to run much more quickly and smoothly.
- c. Remind Scorekeepers to write clearly and legibly and in the proper locations on the score sheets. Asks shooters to check each other's scoring and legibility and to make sure times are recorded for each shooter and stage as the match progresses. This will be appreciated when tabulating scores.
- d. Remind Scorekeepers using an electronic device in the bay scoring to review the score with the shooter before hitting "Save" or "Accept".
- e. Remind everyone that all shooters need to tape targets and reset the stage. The shooter that just finished shooting, the current shooter and the on-deck shooter should be the only ones not taping or resetting.
- f. The MD's job during the match is to keep the match running safely and smoothly. Usually this requires no more than answering an occasional course of fire question or making a ruling on a disagreement on a stage.
- g. The MD must calmly assert him/herself as the final authority. It is not acceptable for others to interfere with the MD or attempt to take over the match. Shooters may call out safety issues and make suggestions, but cooperation and mutual respect is expected from all.
- h. Do not allow SOs to develop a confrontational attitude toward shooters. Remind SOs not to "label" shooters, or lecture shooters on the SO's view of self-defense techniques, equipment choices or an approach to a stage. Accusing a shooter of "gaming" or assessing an FP or FTDR should be done only in cases where the infraction was visible and obvious. The burden of proof is heavy and rests squarely on the SO's shoulders. The utmost degree of detachment and fairness must be exercised by the MD when called to arbitrate between a shooter and an SO. If the MD has a reasonable doubt about which way the call should be made, the benefit goes to the shooter.
- i. As squads finish shooting, make sure they begin to teardown stages where possible and store props and target stands. Advise them where the equipment should be stored.
- j. Gather all score sheets or synchronize the electronic scoring devices together. In either case make sure scores are present for each squad before the end of the match.
- k. Check the range and bays for remaining equipment, general cleanliness and make sure the equipment is properly stored.

## 13. Reporting Match Results

It is the Match Director's responsibility to tally the final scores or get a very reliable volunteer to do it. The majority of shooters expect the scores to be posted within a day or two, but highly appreciate same day results. Please make this possible. If the scores will be delayed, please notify the webmaster by email or phone so that a notice can be posted to reset expectations. While we understand that this time limit is an additional burden, please remember that the match is not over until the scores are posted, and many shooters consider the scores to be the whole point of having a match.

## 14. Match Cancellation

Typically matches are only cancelled at the last minute due to developing weather conditions, but other factors may also warrant a match cancellation.

- a. It is the MD's decision to cancel or proceed with a match.
- b. The major concern is for safety.
- c. A match may be cancelled if conditions are dangerous due to lightning, ice, muddy/slippery range conditions, flooding, or if the shooters may not be safe while traveling, etc.
- d. Cold or wet hands, slippery range surface conditions, excessive heat or dehydration can lead to dangerous situations with loaded firearms.
- e. Similarly, high winds present dangers due to barricades, targets, range props falling over and flying debris. Any of these could possibly injure or startle the shooters or staff.
- f. Here's a short list of the pros and cons to help with the decision:

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our members want to shoot. It's what we do.</li> <li>• The worst day shooting beats the best day at work.</li> <li>• Shooting skills may be called upon in any weather.</li> <li>• Experienced/dedicated IDPA shooters can handle anything.</li> <li>• Significant time has been spent designing the stages.</li> <li>• Significant time may have been spent driving out and setting up the match.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the shooters and staff be safe while traveling and shooting?</li> <li>• Will most shooters be comfortable enough to enjoy the match?</li> <li>• Senior, junior, competition-only, and casual shooters may not show.</li> <li>• New shooters may be unsafe moving on a slick range with frozen fingers.</li> <li>• Overall shooter turnout may be low.</li> <li>• Do have supplies, such as bags for targets, that would make a poor-weather match feasible?</li> <li>• Again, will the shooters and staff be safe?</li> </ul>

- g. In order to minimize the number of shooters who may show up for a canceled match, please try to allow three hours' notice, two at the minimum.
- h. When poor weather is possible, monitor the weather forecast the night before the match.
- i. Before heading out to the match, it is advisable to check the local weather forecast and weather radar at [weather.com](http://weather.com).

## 15. Sanctioned Matches - Some Notes

- a. ACs can usually choose to shoot the sanctioned match with the staff or with the guests. Shooting with the staff can help to identify stage and procedure issues early and leaves the guest day free to observe and help the MD, CSOs, SOs, and guests as they shoot the match. ACs are sometimes asked, or volunteer, to help out on match day if something comes up. ACs must also handle any arbitration raised by a shooter.
- b. At a sanctioned match, the AC with the MD must ensure the stages are set up properly and have no variations from those approved, or adjust stages for safety issues, and ensure that the stages all comply with IDPA rules as set up and executed. The AC has the final say on stage safety, legality, and suitability for competition.
- c. The MD must advise the AC, IPOC or Designate responsible for the match of a shooter DQ, for anything other than failing chronograph or an equipment check, as they occur. If multiple DQs occur on a single stage, the AC/IPOC/Designate is expected to take the following action(s) and log the investigation findings in the after-action-report sent to IDPA HQ:

**Three (3) DQs:** Immediately investigate the stage for any issues with stage safety, legality, match personnel, construction, or other problematic areas.

**Five (5) DQs:** The MD may consider removing the stage from the match.

Shooters earning a DQ on a stage that is later thrown out may not re-enter the match.

- d. An MD can re-assign or remove an SO at their discretion. An or AC/IPOC/Designate may also perform this action but must immediately notify the MD. The after-action-report sent to IDPA HQ must include this event and the issue prompting the action. Possible reasons for re-assigning or removing a match official include:
  - Violating the IDPA Code of Conduct
  - Safety violations while administering a stage
  - Issuing incorrect range commands
  - Inconsistent stage briefings and/or walk throughs
  - Incorrect application of the rules
- e. HQ requires submittal of the courses of fire at least 90 days prior to the match. Allow a month for the AC to review and make comments on the stages, and the MD to modify the stage descriptions and submit the stages again. Remember that stage approval is often an iterative process and can take some time. For a Tier 4 match the AC and HQ must approve the stage descriptions, which can take longer.
- f. MDs need to carefully check shooters classifications for sanctioned matches and that they understand the Equity classification, Rule 9.5.1. If this information is not vetted, and shooters compete under the incorrect classification and receive trophies, these wins may be challenged or rescinded. This is a mess for ACs to clean up so preventive maintenance will make your lives easier.
- g. In regards to ensuring high quality and consistent matches, if a problem occurs at a match and is brought to HQ's attention by shooters who attended the match, IDPA HQ investigates by first contacting the AC/IPOC who has ultimate responsibility for the match. IDPA HQ also randomly selects other shooters and reach out to them to confirm the complaints we have received. If the complaints/concerns are found to be legitimate, we meet with the AC/IPOC and MD to discuss with them why/how this happened. The next step is remediation. Depending on how severe the issue is, several things can be required. The match may lose a Tier the following match/year so that the MD can concentrate on the quality of the match rather than higher tier requirements; HQ may require an AC from outside the area walk the stages prior to the next sanctioned match to assist the MD and local AC with identifying issues prior to anyone shooting the stages. HQ may assign another MD so that the local MD can be mentored. In more egregious cases, other remediation may be required. The remediation activities are not punitive but proactive so that the next match can be flawless. The consistency and success of our matches builds our sport.
- h. If the sanctioned match has offers a PCC division, it is highly recommended that the "most accurate" trophy be offered for "Pistol Most Accurate" and "PCC Most Accurate", or you may wish to note on the registration form that PCC is not eligible for Most Accurate.
- i. If the match is weighing guns as part of the equipment check, be sure to have appropriate calibration or test weights to ensure the scale's accuracy.



## 16. Sanctioned Match Timelines

### a. 8 to 12 Months Out

- 1) Coordinate with the Area Coordinator and other large shooting matches in the area to select match dates that do not conflict with other large shooting events.
- 2) Design the match logo.
- 3) Begin unofficial advertisement of the match.
- 4) Call local hotels to verify room availability during match dates. Consider working with the hotel event coordinator to get special match pricing.
- 5) Consider test running candidate stage designs at some local matches to see how they work, or validate your concept or theme on the stage. Use that experience to zero on your final stage design to be submitted for the match.

### b. 6 to 8 Months Out

- 1) Submit stages to the Area Coordinator for approval.
- 2) Add the event to IDPA.com Events page.
- 3) Pay match sanctioning fee to IDPA HQ.
- 4) Select a scoring program or a match administration tool.
- 5) Continue advertising the match, and post “how to register” details.
- 6) Open Registration.
- 7) Collect fees from shooters.
- 8) Squad shooters.

### c. 4 to 6 Months Out

- 1) Line up knowledgeable staff for equipment check and chronograph. Accumulate chronograph gear, IDPA box and spacers, etc.
- 2) Locate minimum power factor ammunition and firearm for reactive target/steel calibration.
- 3) Arrange for sufficient restroom facilities for match days.
- 4) Arrange for SO classes if needed.
- 5) Arrange for extra Classifiers so shooters can become properly classified for the match.
- 6) Continue advertising the match. Start a waiting list if the match fills up.

### d. 1 to 3 Months Out

- 1) Check every shooter’s IDPA membership and classification in the IDPA classification database and verify they will be active and current on match day.
- 2) Verify props, target stands, reactive targets, etc. are not double booked.
- 3) Identify setup crew.
- 4) Identify a “Mr. Fix-it” to keep the match equipment functional. Put together a “fix-it” tool and spares kit.
- 5) Update or ensure a Range Safety and Emergency Response Plan is available.
- 6) Order NCR score sheets if used.
- 7) Order trophies.
- 8) Order t-shirts and hats.
- 9) Order lunch.
- 10) Order portable restrooms.
- 11) Make stage map for the shooters’ packets.
- 12) Stuff shooters’ packets.
- 13) Hold range cleanup days.
- 14) Continue advertising the match. Start a waiting list if the match fills up.

### e. Match Setup

- 1) Set up stages exactly as approved.
- 2) Notify the AC if any last minute changes are made.
- 3) Prepare Safety Officer/Stage Buckets with extra timer battery, stapler, extra staples, paint, tape, scoring apparatus, radio with extra batteries, etc.
- 4) Calibrate reactive/steel targets before match.
- 5) Verify stage descriptions for understandability.
- 6) Verify all moving targets and props are working properly and consistently.
- 7) Ensure Safe Areas are available.
- 8) Verify that stage setup matches the stages as designed and approved while checking possible unforeseen safety issues.
- 9) Assign staff to stages based on experience and difficulty of the stage.
- 10) Arrange for teardown resources.
- 11) Consider posting the stage descriptions on-line or at IDPA.com.

**f. Staff Shoot**

- 1) Collect signed liability waivers from staff.
- 2) Hand out shooters' packets.
- 3) Have the Chief Safety Officer and Safety Officers assigned to a bay/stage give every squad the stage walk-through for their stage(s). Have them run as many shooters as possible for their stage(s).
- 4) Equipment check and chronograph staff. This also provides a good opportunity to accommodate requested shooter checks before the match.

**g. Match Day Sign-In**

- 1) Verify name, division and classification with the shooters.
- 2) Collect signed liability waivers from guests.
- 3) Hand out shooters' packets.

**h. Competitor Shoot**

- 1) Calibrate reactive/steel targets before match.
- 2) The Area Coordinator and Match Director(s) should circulate through the bays checking, verifying, and mentoring the staff and helping the shooters enjoy the match.
- 3) Run partial match results a couple times during the day to verify there are no issues.
- 4) Print and post several complete results to begin the 1-hour protest period.
- 5) While waiting for the 1-hour protest period, the prize table drawings are usually done.
- 6) Reconcile any scoring issues during the protest period.
- 7) Close the protest period.
- 8) Give out the awards and announce match bumps.
- 9) Thank everyone for attending and invite them back next year.

**i. Other Items To Consider**

- 1) Solicit prize table donations. This is a lot of work and needs to be done very early in the process.
- 2) Identify and implement the plan to keep the shooters hydrated.
- 3) Identify onsite first responders and equipment to be used.
- 4) Locate sufficient radios and channels to be used during the match.
- 5) Identify/locate shade to be used or set up on each bay/stage.

**j. Notes**

- 1) These timeframes are guidelines and will change based on match Tier, range, staff, and Area Coordinator recommendations.
- 2) The list is not necessarily in perfect order and some tasks can be completed earlier or later. The Match Director(s) should be verifying task completion and communicating with the staff.
- 3) If you have any questions, please contact your Area Coordinator.

## 17. Closing Thoughts

Thank you again for volunteering to make IDPA great, and to provide learning and entertainment to others. It is a rewarding job that will build life-long friendships.