

PCC Is (Still) Not A Crime

By Troy McManus, DNROI

Now that the shooting season is starting to ramp up, I've had some complaints and conversations about how some match officials are handling PCC. Confusion about start positions, (Hint: if you spell them out, there will be no confusion. Don't get lazy and just use some term you heard), target setting (we'll put these targets way out there so that the PCC guys have to aim hard), ability to shoot "from the hip" so to speak (yes, it's legal), handling rules, and uprange starts seem to be the biggest issues encountered so far. None of this is hard, folks. But, let's talk a little about each.

Start Positions: spell them out, period—this goes for handgun as well. Buttstock on belt, held in both hands, muzzle generally downrange, safety on is an acceptable start position for PCC. Buttstock on belt, strong hand naturally at side (or wrist below belt), PCC held in weak hand, muzzle downrange, safety on, is another. "Port Arms" is no good—too many variations in what people have been taught or practiced during their military service, or what they saw on TV. "Low Ready" is generally accepted as having the carbine shouldered, and the muzzle pointing downrange, below horizontal, but it's not good enough—spell it out exactly as you would have the competitor start. Anything you can come up with for a PCC start position, as long as the competitor IS NOT HOLDING THE CARBINE AND FACING UPRANGE is fine, as long as you can define it and it can be consistently enforced. Weird carry methods, such as "trail carry" are not authorized for handling or for start positions. Default start positions are not reliable, cause confusion, and are never enforced consistently. Keep them simple, straightforward, and enforceable.

Start Conditions: This is where you specify loaded, unloaded, etc. Easy enough, right? But, some course designers want to have a different condition for the carbine, such as unloaded when all other divisions are loaded. This is not legal. Remember that all handgun rules apply, except where there is a specific PCC rule. There is no rule allowing different start conditions for different divisions in either set of rules. Just don't do it. If you're doing that or anything else because you think you need to equalize the PCC competitors with competitors who have to draw a handgun, that's silly. The divisions do not compete against one another, and if you are still stuck on thinking that overall combined means anything, well, get out of 1987. No match awards anything based on that placement—if they do, they're violating the rules.

Handling: still an issue at some places. It's pretty simple, really—you may not case or uncase unless you are facing a side berm or a backstop, or are in a safety area. This includes uncasing to place your PCC in a cart, and taking the PCC out of, or placing it back into, a cart. Muzzle angle is important if using some sort of conveyance, and if that PCC is not in a case, you can't carry it horizontally across a wagon or cart, even if it's flagged. The flag is there to allow you to carry that carbine from a staging area to the start position and to carry it around while your targets are being scored. It's not a license to sweep your fellow competitors. Speaking of sweeping, if you carry that flagged carbine muzzle down, you still can't sweep yourself with it either. Keep that in mind, and maybe change that bad habit to a muzzle up mode of carrying it.

Match officials need to designate side berms as staging areas, so don't just assume that you can go over and pick it up—some matches require you to come to the line cased, and to re-case the PCC when you are done shooting. Follow the directions of the match officials and you'll be fine. Likewise, if you are producing a match, make the conditions known to all competitors. Nobody likes to play “gotcha” with the rules.

Target Placement: I've had reports of some matches placing targets at a distance or using the maximum coverage they can achieve with a no-shoot in order to make it harder for PCC competitors. This only puts your handgun competitors in the same boat. Seriously, just put the targets out there and let people play the game.

Equipment confusion: Some people are still confused about whether lasers, more than one optic, and flashlights are legal in PCC. Yes, they are all legal. Starting with the PCC in the prescribed start position, but with the laser on and pointing at a target, then shooting that target from the start position is legal, as long as it's done safely. Pointing the laser is aiming and is no different than hip shooting a close target with a handgun. You don't like it and want to eliminate it? Fine, make a better start position.

The **P** in USPSA doesn't stand for Pistol—it stands for Practical. While some ranges and clubs still don't recognize or allow PCC; that's fine. The rules don't require all divisions to be recognized. But, if you are going to recognize the division, treat the competitors who choose to shoot it fairly and equitably with all the others.