



Shooting Range Fire Prevention

As the owner of a shooting range, your business revenue depends upon customer use of your range. A fire could cause closure of your facility, resulting in loss of income and potentially customers. Fires can be devastating to life, property, and business vitality. However, by taking a proactive approach to safety and implementing a few best practices, you can reduce the possibility of devastating fire damage to your business.

Shooting ranges face unique fire risks, such as the use of inappropriate firearms, ammunition shot at the range, poor housekeeping, or improper maintenance of backstops. Working to help prevent fires is the responsibility of both the range owner and its customers. It is up to the owner to engage their customers in the process of fire prevention. Your risk management efforts should focus on firearms, ammunitions, and impact areas—these are some of the most common areas to experience fires.

Following are some best practices for firearms, ammunitions, and impact areas:

Firearms and Ammunitions

Ranges are designed to handle specific caliber firearms and ammunitions. Those that are not within the range specifications should not be allowed. Some simple ways to enforce this:

- Know the specifications of the types of firearms and ammunitions your range was built for, and develop, implement, and publicize safety policies on what is and not allowed to be used.
- Prohibit the use of tracer ammunition as it is beyond the specifications of most ranges.
- Depending on your range specifications, limit or prohibit use of full metal jacketed ammunition, high powered rifles or pistols, and fully automatic or rapid fire weapons.
- Enhance range rules signage at the range entrance as well as on the walls of an indoor range. Signage should:

- Clearly identifying the firearms and ammunition that are prohibited from the range.
- List pictures of unwanted ammunition with the universal red circle with the line through it.
- State that the range officers may inspect customers' firearms and ammunitions.

Impact Areas

Many fires start at the impact area. Safety efforts should be focused at the impact area to reduce the potential of a fire:

- Keep all impact areas free of debris.
- Put lead and brass in non-contaminated, metal containers separate from flammable/combustible trash and store it at a location away from the range.

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- Protect electrical outlets and fixtures from stray shots or ricochets. Low gauge bulletproof Plexiglas can be an inexpensive way to cover recessed lighting and fixtures.
- Use backstops made of range certified recycled rubber, reducing the chance of ricochets and frequency for cleaning. More traditional backstops should be cleaned daily to eliminate gunpowder residue.
- Keep range floors clean at all times.
- Wet mop indoor shooting area(s) regularly to reduce the buildup of dangerous residue.
- Remove any combustible debris.
- Clear any brush from around the impact area of an outdoor range to reduce fuel sources that could catch fire from heat of fired rounds.
- Maintain the appropriate size and number of fire extinguishers around the range.

By implementing these risk management best practices at your range, you could help protect your customer-base and reduce the potential for financial losses from fire.

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