

HALF SAFE IS UNSAFE.



The safeties and triggers on bolt-action rifles can, in some cases, be manipulated in a way that will cause the gun to fire when the safety is released. For example, an accidental discharge can sometimes be caused by placing the safety somewhere between the "fire" and "safe" positions, pulling the trigger, and then moving the safety to the "fire" position.

Clearly, placing and leaving the safety mechanism in a position between "fire" and "safe" violates good safety procedures. This sequence also points up the critical factor in any potentially dangerous activity: the human factor. No mechanical device, be it a rifle safety, or the guard around a power-saw blade, is of any value unless the person operating it uses it properly.

No mechanical device can guarantee safety if it is improperly used; and no individual is completely safe if he or she does not follow *all* necessary safety procedures. The mechanical device used as a gun safety should never be relied upon as foolproof, but should be used as a part of a complete system of safe gun handling, including the following:

- ❑ Always have the gun pointed in a safe direction
 - when handling, carrying or firing,
 - when moving the safety to the "fire" position for firing or unloading.
- ❑ Always operate the safety by placing it in the "safe" or "fire" locations — never in between them.
- ❑ Never pull the trigger when the safety is on "safe" or in between "safe" and "fire."
- ❑ Always unload the gun before entering a vehicle or a building.
- ❑ Never have a finger near the trigger when the safety is being moved to the "fire" position.
- ❑ Remember that a safety cannot prevent all accidental firings, and act accordingly.
- ❑ *The instant a hunter or shooter picks up a gun, he or she becomes part of the system — both in terms of operation and safe handling. From that point on, no consideration of the system's function can ignore what the shooter does, for the shooter is the only part of the system that has control over the operations that can make a gun safe — or unsafe.*

After all, the gun operator is the primary "safety": to rely entirely upon mechanical devices is to be, at best, only half safe.

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