

MINUTES OF MEETING
TASK FORCE ON SHOOTING SAFETY
O'HARE RAMADA INN, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1979

PRESENT:

J. P. McAndrews, Chairman
W. B. Horn
E. S. McCawley, Jr.
A. I. Mossberg
R. A. Partnoy, Acting Secretary
W. E. Talley

The meeting convened at 11:30 a.m.

The Chairman stated that the meeting was held pursuant to instructions of the Executive Committee to develop a program for communicating more effectively with consumers and the general public concerning safe usage of sporting firearms and ammunition.

Reference was made to recommendations made by Hill and Knowlton, Inc., a public relations/public affairs counseling firm engaged by Remington to provide suggestions on this subject. (See attached Exhibit I.) The Task Force reviewed these suggestions and concluded that many of the ideas presented are feasible and can be readily implemented. Some of them, such as the use of ammunition packages for publicizing these messages, can be implemented directly by member companies. Others can be implemented with SAAMI funding through the National Shooting Sports Foundation. However, in order to move forward with this program, the safety messages to be publicized must first be developed.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Technical Director should provide recommendations regarding the safety messages to be publicized. Each message should be specific and should deal with a major problem concerning safe usage of sporting firearms and ammunition. In this respect, the messages would be similar to the safety messages on automobile usage published by the Shell Oil Company. Possible messages included the need for proper eye and ear protection, the dangers of loading a firearm in a vehicle or in the home, the limitations of a safety, the ranges of various cartridges, and the dangers of keeping a loaded round in the chamber. W. B. Horn was delegated to contact the Technical Director and advise him of the Task Force's considerations on this matter.

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In order to expedite the program, it was decided that implementation planning should begin on the basis of a sample safety message without waiting for all of the messages to be developed and approved. Since the message concerning the limitations of a safety is one which inevitably will be included in the final list of messages to be publicized, this message was selected for initial planning with NSSF. W. E. Talley and E. S. McCawley, Jr., were delegated to meet with the Executive Director of NSSF and commence such planning.

E. S. McCawley, Jr., reported that an article on the limitations of firearms safeties has been written by Col. E. B. Crossman. The article is still in manuscript, but E. S. McCawley, Jr., will contact Col. Crossman to suggest distribution of copies to SAAMI members and to discuss the feasibility of publication in The American Rifleman. E. S. McCawley, Jr., also outlined the concept of a single-issue magazine devoted to safe firearms usage and said he would discuss this with Aqua-Field Publications to obtain cost information.

There was general agreement that this program is important and should be implemented as soon as possible. The intention is to have a budgeted program ready for presentation to the Executive Committee at the June meeting in New Haven. A further meeting of the Task Force will be held in approximately three weeks to receive reports on recommended messages and proposed means of publicity and to prepare the presentation to the Executive Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

SP:CK
Enachment

FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION INDUSTRY
SHOOTING SAFETY PROGRAM

Accidents stemming from violations of safe gun handling practices have been increasing in recent years. Such accidents are of obvious concern to everyone involved in the shooting sports and in the production, marketing and sales of sporting firearms and ammunition. In an effort to reduce them, it is proposed that the industry conduct a public relations campaign designed to reemphasize the basic rules of safe gun handling to hunters and shooters.

Ancillary to this goal is the objective of making all those associated with the sale and maintenance of firearms and ammunition aware of the part they should play in promoting hunting and shooting safety. An added benefit of such a campaign would be to reduce the vulnerability of manufacturers, wholesalers and dealers to product liability suits in which contributory negligence of the plaintiff or a third party may be a factor.

Such a campaign would reinforce an image which reflects the current reality--of an industry that is deeply concerned with safety and is doing all it can to promote safe hunting and shooting practices.

The following program ideas are suggested in order to meet these general objectives:

- 1.) Generation of specific-audience news releases and magazine articles relating to safe gun handling and the proper use of firearms safeties.

RESULT: Widespread dissemination of such information would reinforce the fact that safeties are not foolproof and should be used as an adjunct to a complete system of safe gun handling.

ACTION: These releases could be issued by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and by individual companies. Direct contact with editorial personnel at hunting and shooting publications should help to generate specific articles.

- 2.) Technical article for the AMERICAN RIFLEMAN or a similar publication on firearms safeties, their design and use and how they relate to safe gun handling.

RESULT: Increase shooters' knowledge of the function and limitations of safeties. Emphasize industry's concern with safety in general.

ACTION: Remington's Public Relations Department would make initial contact with George Martin, the NRA's Executive Director of Publications, to determine their interest and to suggest possible authors. If the RIFLEMAN is not interested, contacts would be made with other publications.

- 3.) Motto or identifying logo for safe gun handling campaign.

RESULT: Easy audience identification and concomitant attention to campaign.

ACTION: An NSSF committee would be set up to coordinate this and other aspects of the campaign. The committee would work with outside agency personnel as appropriate.

- 4.) Paid advertisements, posters, handouts, etc., dealing with general shooting safety.

RESULT: Would help spread the message to the widest possible audience. Reinforce public's perception of the industry's concern.

ACTION: NSSF could prepare materials of this kind for use by member companies and publications. Individual members of SAAMI and NSSF could incorporate the theme in other materials they distribute.

- 5.) Warning on ammunition packages about proper use of safeties and general safe gun handling.

RESULT: This would reach as wide an audience as possible with the message

without the fear that the warning will be discarded by dealers. The ammunition box is the one place every gun user must go and a safety message here is as unavoidable as possible.

ACTION: Individual ammunition loading companies would incorporate this message on their packaging.

- 6.) Trigger hanger safe gun handling message on guns, accompanied by literature to dealers stressing importance of keeping this information with guns.

RESULT: Greater dealer cooperation and increased trade awareness.

ACTION: SAAMI firearms manufacturers would prepare their own materials for this purpose.

- 7.) Contact with hunter safety instructors, shooting and hunting organizations, youth groups, schools, camps, etc., to enlist their assistance.

RESULT: This would serve to spread the message to the widest possible audience.

ACTION: Contacts could be made by NSSF and individuals members of NSSF and SAAMI.

8.) Giveaway magazine for distribution through dealers. Such a magazine could include general interest articles on hunting and shooting with the safety message worked in wherever possible. Possible publishers would be Aqua Field who have done similar magazines for Remington, Colt, Daisy, etc.

RESULT: Greater audience response to the general message.

ACTION: NSSF could be the coordinating agency with support coming from interested member companies.

9.) Production of public service television and radio spot announcements for distribution in areas of the country where hunting and shooting are most popular. These spots could feature a name personality. Cooperation with the National Safety Council and use of their name is a possibility.

RESULT: Exposure of the basic message to the widest possible audience. National Safety Council participation would gain broader station acceptance and use.

ACTION: NSSF in cooperation with National Safety Council.