Dry Practice: Practicing basic marksmanship techniques and gun manipulation with an

unloaded (empty) gun in such a way that it does not fire.

Marksmanship is a skill based on manual dexterity and as such, it depends upon programmed responses. The more deeply the responses are programmed, the less continuous practice is necessary to maintain a satisfactory level of proficiency. "Dry practice" is essential to programming those deep responses and maintaining that proficiency level. However, it must be conducted with safety foremost in mind. It is essential that you can apply total concentration, without outside distractions. Short sessions (10 to 20 minutes) are better than longer ones that are mentally and physically taxing.

DRY PRACTICE CHECKLIST: Acquire a "Dry Practice Container". The container type is irrelevant, a coffee can or Mason jar, but what is critical is that it is never used for any other purpose.

1. Unload the weapon and all magazines. Place ALL live ammunition into your dry practice container. Then put the container in a room or place totally separate from where you intend to conduct your dry practice.

2. Go to your designated dry practice area, i.e. bedroom, garage, etc. It should be a quiet area where you can practice undisturbed. Dry practice should be done only in that area, and the practice target should only be visible during the practice session. The backstop you practice against MUST meet the "Safe Direction" requirement, and MUST be able to contain a bullet if a negligent discharge (ND) did occur.

3. Check your weapon one last time to be sure it is unloaded.

4. Mentally enter the "Dry Practice Mode". Concentrate on the dry practice drills and avoid all distractions. If at· any point you are interrupted, i.e. a phone call, immediately cease dry practice. If you decide to continue after the interruption, go back to Step 1 and start over.

5. "Point in" at something which will sustain minimal damage and contain a bullet if an ND occurred, i.e. fireplace, block wall, etc. This is where you should place your dry practice target if you intend to use one. "Click off" as many times as it takes to cycle the weapon to its capacity (one for autos, six for revolvers). Do not use a mirror as a dry practice target, as you will tend to look at your reflection rather than the front sight. Dry practice on the desired techniques for 10 to 20 minutes. Be sure to practice the techniques properly; it does not help to reinforce bad habit.

6. Once you have made the decision to end your dry practice, STOP! DO NOT CONTINUE! You must leave "Dry Practice Mode" at once. Put the weapon in whatever condition you wish (loaded or unloaded) and leave it alone. The session is finished -- NO "ONE MORE TIME"!

NOTE: There are two points during which the risk of a negligent discharge is highest:

1. Failing at the beginning to ensure that the weapon is unloaded.

2. Ending the session, reloading, and taking "just one more dry shot".

POST THIS HANDOUT IN YOUR PRACTICE AREA AS A REMINDER, AND NEVER HAVE A NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE WHILE DRY PRACTICING.