

**Town of Coventry  
Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Thursday Jan 16, 2024  
6:30 PM  
Conference Room B, 1712 Main Street  
Zoom Meeting Link Below**

1. Call To Order, Roll Call

2. Approval Of Minutes

A. Minutes, November 7, 2024

Documents:

[FSHRSC MEETING MINUTES, NOVEMBER 7.PDF](#)

3. Discussion Of Shooting Range Best Practices

Documents:

[HOME FIREARMS RANGE BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE USE AND DESIGN.PDF](#)

4. Review Of Comparable Municipal Ordinances

Documents:

[CITY OF NORWALK FIREARMS ORDINANCE.PDF](#)  
[TOWN OF NEWTOWN FIREARMS ORDINANCE.PDF](#)  
[TOWN OF STRATFORD FIREARMS ORDINANCE.PDF](#)  
[TOWN OF TOLLAND FIREARMS ORDINANCE.PDF](#)

5. Other Regulatory Concerns

6. Discussion Of Acceptable Limits On Noise

7. Proposed Schedule Of Meetings, 2025

Documents:

[PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE.PDF](#)

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

Topic: Firearms Safety- Home Shooting Range Comm.

Time: Jan 16, 2025 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87887809302?pwd=UYMgcu7gna4tln2SlnNgpVPBCuQpCS.1>

Meeting ID: 878 8780 9302

Passcode: 123

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One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

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- +1 309 205 3325 US
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 931 3860 US
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US
- +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 689 278 1000 US
- +1 719 359 4580 US
- +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
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**Town of Coventry  
Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Thursday November 7, 2024**

**1. Call To Order, Roll Call:**

By: Murray

Time: 6:34 p.m.

Place: Conference Room B & Zoom

		PRESENT	ABSENT
<b>REGULAR MEMBERS:</b>	Brian Murray, Chairperson	X	
	Brittany Debiase-Franco, Vice-Chairperson		X
	Dudley Brand	X	
	Kenneth Stein	X	
	Carolyn Batz		X
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jana Roberson, Director of Planning & Dev't.	X	
	Chief of Police Eric Peterson	X	

Also present: Jonathan Hand-Town Councilor/Steering Committee Chairperson, Erika Avellino, Alex Taylor-Special Projects Coordinator (Joined at 7:30 PM) and Jim Drumm-Town Manager (joined at 7:30 PM).

**2. Approval Of Minutes:**

**A. Minutes, October 17, 2024:**

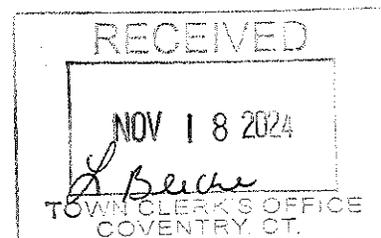
**Motion:** I move to accept the October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee Meeting Minutes.

By: Stein

Second: Brand

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimously in favor



### **3. Review of Incidents:**

Police Chief Peterson selected a few applicable firearm/shooting incident reports that the Coventry Police Department has received over the last 2 ½ to 3 years for the committee to review. However, over this time period there were at least 30 to 40 calls received by the department. Chief Peterson explained that every one of these calls uses department resources, and often times there is only so much they can do. Reports that were inconclusive or unsubstantial were not included in tonight's review.

Chief Peterson reminded that there are no real guidelines (in terms of berm height or range distance) when responding to these types of calls. The officers have to determine course of action/response by matter of opinion, which differs between officers. If there was an ordinance or statute in place, that would give the officers the ability to have consistent determinations/course of action.

#### **70 Riley Mountain Rd:**

This was one of the largest cases the Coventry Police Department dealt with due to safety concerns of the home shooting range. Several different officers responded to this address on different occasions as the situation became escalated. Chief Peterson explained that he went out to the property and found some issues. One of which was that the homeowner was shooting into a berm on his own property that Chief Peterson felt could have been higher. Without proper guidelines this is only a matter of opinion. He continued that several neighbors called about this property, and the main complaint is the noise from shooting. This case escalated to the point that the State Attorney got involved. The State Attorney confirmed that there are no state-wide guidelines or ordinances for these issues as it is preferred the towns address these matters through their own governments. Chief Peterson reminded that this committee could recommend to the Town Council or Town Manager to establish an ordinance for the Town of Coventry if deemed the best course of action/solution. As the situation escalated over time, the resident was eventually arrested for disorderly conduct for intentionally antagonizing by use of his firearms on his home range. Chief Peterson explained that for some of the cases they will charge for disorderly conduct/reckless endangerment as those are the only rules they can go by. Since those rules are a matter of opinion on a case-by-case basis this can lead to difficulties. He reiterated that the majority of calls are for noise complaints not necessarily safety issues, as seen in the incident reports. Without a town ordinance there is little action that can be taken on noise complaints related to shooting. It was noted that while firearms noise can be disruptive; it is a relief that there aren't many safety concerns. Chief Peterson explained that now the home shooting range at 70 Riley Mountain has been moved elsewhere on their property and is at a safer distance of 400-450 feet from the neighboring property.

Some of the safety concerns that are seen are that a resident may not have a berm and are simply target shooting. Without a backstop/berm, a bullet can travel a great distance before something stops it (i.e. a tree). Property surroundings should be evaluated to ensure there is plenty of distance for a home shooting range in all directions. It was noted that depending on the angle the firearm is fired from, gravity will take into effect and pull the bullet to the ground, which can be considered when looking at safe distances.

### **142/258 Root Road:**

Chief Peterson explained that this was an instance where the neighbor called with safety concerns. There seemed to be some misunderstanding of property lines, as well as a lack of an adequate backstop. The resident of 142 was on the property of 258, but it was resolved to being a mistake. Moving forward, the resident of 142 was reminded of safe shooting practices, including being aware of the surroundings, line of fire, as well as having a proper back stop. The neighbors agreed to communicate and make contact prior to shooting. The department has not been called back.

### **285 Brewster Street:**

The property size is significant, and the owner is shooting into the direction of the woods at a berm which has been deemed safe. There have been at least 3-4 calls from neighboring properties in regard to noise, as well as complaints from a resident to the Town Council during Audience of Citizens. The range is currently 1000 feet from any neighboring homes in the direction of fire; however, there are homes in close distance to the 285 Brewster Street property. There were additional concerns of a walking path along Ash Brook behind the property, but those turned out to be incorrect.

### **Merrow Road:**

A resident is shooting here, causing noise complaints to the shooting club on this street. The PD is often called out to this street for noise complaints.

### **South Street:**

The PD is often called out to this street for noise complaints. Some of the firearm noise could be coming from Nathan Hale State Forest where hunting is permitted. Chief Peterson reviewed several of the calls that came in from South Street, and confirmed that while they were spread out, many did not occur during hunting season.

### **Discussion:**

Chief Peterson reminded that a high percentage of the Firearm Shoot complaints are due to noise. He also stated that in most cases, he feels that the berms individuals are using are not high enough. Stein reminded that there are going to be differences between the berms used at a commercial gun club and those installed at a home shooting range due to a majority of factors like financial ability. Additionally, the recommendation for a berm at a commercial range is a height of 20 feet. A 20-foot berm would be too tall for a home shooting range.

Chief Peterson also explained that there have been calls where the shooting is going on during inappropriate times, where it is too dark or too late. It was noted that someone could be using their thermal imaging scope at that time to test it.

The police department response procedure was discussed. Peterson explained that they review the area, check the direction of fire, inspect if their range is near living areas or an area of safety concern. They also check to see if there is a berm or other stop for the bullets, as well as what is behind the berm or line of fire, like woods, uphill/downhill landscape, or residences.

It was questioned if an ordinance was developed, who would check the home ranges for safety and berm compliance. Chief Peterson explained that these would be checked on a case-by-case basis. It was suggested to have it checked ahead of time, and who would do the inspecting. Drumm explained that it would be a zoning enforcement officer's responsibility to ensure guidelines were followed.

Brand explained that Cromwell issues home shooting range permits, which are inspected by the Police Department. Other towns that have ordinances are Tolland and Winchester which cover home shooting range distances. Ordinances are hard to find for reference since very few towns have them. It was explained that simply having an ordinance does not fully resolve all safety and noise issues. Stein commented that one of the guidelines to be included in an ordinance or home shooting range permit is to ensure an area of safety concerns is not on the "same plane" as the range. The shooter should look left and right and not have anything adjacent, like a residence, playscape, pool, flammables, etc.

Brand commented that there are some colleges that have home shooting range designs which can be a resource for homeowners when constructing a new range or modifying an existing one.

It was discussed that there may be people calling with complaints due to the fact they are anti-gun. While this may be true, it will likely not be a majority of the calls, and it was not the case for Brewster Street as there were several complaints about noise and safety. Any of the calls regarding home shooting could be a complaint about noise, safety, or both. It was noted that with the difference in calibers, the bigger they are, the louder they are. This is important as any distance guidelines established in an ordinance may or may not resolve the noise issue.

Chief Peterson was asked what is something he wishes the town had to help resolve these issues. Peterson explained that he would like to have something on the books, for his officers to reference to ensure a home shooting range is safe. Additionally, he would like reasonable official guidelines for noise complaints in terms of appropriate shooting times and length of shooting. Stein explained the education is important as some of the main causes of firearms incidents are due to ignorance or recklessness.

#### **4. Review of State Statute:**

Section 53-203 covers the unlawful discharge of firearms, which states:

**Any person who intentionally, negligently or carelessly discharges any firearm in such a manner as to be likely to cause bodily injury or death to persons or domestic animals, or the wanton destruction of property, shall be guilty of a class C misdemeanor.**

This is used to determine whether or not a person is charged with reckless endangerment based on shooting practices. Reckless endangerment is outlined in section 53a-63 as:

(a) A person is guilty of reckless endangerment in the first degree when, with extreme indifference to human life, he recklessly engages in conduct which creates a risk of serious physical injury to another person.

(b) Reckless endangerment in the first degree is a class A misdemeanor.

Currently there are no state statutes around home shooting ranges, but there are hunting specifications which state:

(d) There shall be no hunting with firearms, discharging of firearms or carrying of loaded firearms within five hundred feet of any building occupied by people or domestic animals or used for storage of flammable or combustible materials, unless written permission of owner of such buildings is obtained and carried while hunting to allow closer shooting distances, except that the above referred to distance shall be not less than two hundred fifty feet unless written permission of owner of such buildings is obtained and carried while hunting to allow closer shooting distances when waterfowl is hunted in tidal water areas from land shooting positions or from floating blinds anchored adjacent to land or from rock formations. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to landowners, their spouses or lineal descendants when hunting within five hundred feet of buildings owned by them or, when hunting waterfowl, within two hundred fifty feet of such buildings, but shall apply when said persons are hunting within said distances of buildings not so-owned.

(e) No hunting weapon shall be discharged toward any person, building or domestic animal when the same is within range or from or across the traveled portion of any public roadway.

Roberson explained the difficulties with measuring the noise when noise complaints come in. It is hard to enforce, even with an ordinance. However, noise guidelines should be considered when looking at the appropriate use of a home shooting range.

It was discussed if the committee did develop an ordinance, if there are any situations that would be grandfathered in. Drumm and Roberson explained that while this is typical for zoning regulations, it would not be applicable for noise. It was discussed that if existing home shooting ranges were grandfathered in, then the existing problems would not be solved, and there is the potential that unsafe conditions would remain.

## **5. Discussion of Topics to Review/Research:**

The goal is to look into the best course of action to help resolve these problems in terms of safety and nuisance of home shooting range. Items to be research are:

1. Backstop/Berm Height and Material *\*Priority for Safety Reasons*
2. Best Home Shooting Range Practices *\*Priority for Safety Reasons*
3. Versions (Scalable) of Home Shooting Ranges

4. Other CT Town Ordinances/Policies-Taylor put together a memo of ordinances used in some other towns that will be shared with Roberson.
5. Neighborly Agreement-In terms of distance
6. EPA Documents for Shooting Ranges
7. Acceptable Noise Allowance
8. Shooting Frequencies
9. Number of Shooters Allowed

An educational public outreach was suggested to be hosted by the committee as things develop and the committee's work progresses. If an ordinance was developed, there would need to be a public hearing. Prior to the hearing, the committee can request public input on safety concerns, etc., This would also be a good time to educate the public on best practices for home shooting ranges, discuss ignorance versus recklessness, community safety, and guidelines for police department response.

Murray requested Roberson to reach out to Tolland regarding what their ordinance is, why they established one, and how successful it has been.

## **6. Other Business:**

A Meeting schedule needs to be established for 2025, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month is being suggested. The next meeting will be held December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 6:30 PM. At this meeting the 2025 Meeting dates need to be prepared. The first few meeting dates for 2025 will be Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup> and February 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned by consensus at 8:39 p.m.

Submitted by,

*Nicole Archambault*

Nicole Archambault

Minutes Clerk

***PLEASE NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Committee at the next meeting. Please see the next Committee meeting minutes for approval or changes.***

# Home Firearms Range Best Practices for Safe Use and Design

This presentation will separate safe use and design of a home firearms range into two sections:

- 1) Shooter safety
- 2) Range safety

Both are integral parts of the whole equation, relying on each other to ensure a safe environment for all.

The information presented here may be found in various publications throughout the firearms industry. Anyone interested in shooter or range safety may contact the National Rifle Association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the United States Concealed Carry Association, a certified shooting instructor or range safety officer, or a hunter education/firearms safety program.

The suggestions herein are the most common. Many people may have additional ideas that can be effective as well.

# Shooter Safety

The number one safety feature on any range is the shooter. It is imperative that they are knowledgeable in the basic rules of safe shooting. The National Rifle Association lists three rules for safe gun handling (NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting textbook, pp. 12-13). They are:

- 1) **Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.** This means the gun is to be pointed downrange, towards the target. An exception may be when loading or unloading a revolver. This requires pointing at the ground to load and the sky to unload, assuming all other safety measures are met. It should be noted that handling a firearm may occur in locations other than a range, such as removing it from a safe in one's home, or placing it in a holster on one's belt. In these situations, the person handling the gun must determine a safe direction based upon the surrounding area.
- 2) **Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.** At no time other than when a gun is pointed at a target the shooter intends to engage, should their finger be on the trigger. This can prevent unintended discharges, both on the range and in the home. For example, if a gun owner keeps their finger in the trigger guard when holstering or unholstering a handgun, they may cause an unintended discharge that can hit their leg.
- 3) **Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.** Many people place their firearms on a range bench or table. Under no circumstances should it be loaded while lying there. It should only be loaded after picking it up to shoot, and unloaded prior to returning it to the bench. The gun should also be left open when on a bench or table, so that all present can see that it is unloaded.

This will render it inoperable in case a round was left in the chamber.

These three rules of safe gun handling are designed to keep the shooter and all those nearby safe, even if one of them fails. There is a fourth rule to note (NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting textbook, p. 15):

**Know your target and what is beyond.** This instructs the shooter and any spectators to watch the target area and anything beyond, ensuring that no people, animals, structures, or other unintended targets are in danger. As many home shooting ranges are directed towards a wooded area, it is possible for people, wildlife, or domestic animals to travel into the bullet impact area and what is beyond, at an inopportune time, without realizing what they are doing. All people on the range, even if they are not shooting, have a responsibility to watch for this.

Other safety items a shooter must address include, but are not limited to (NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting textbook, pp. 15-17):

- 1) Ensure the safe mechanical condition of all firearms.
- 2) Ensure any other shooters on their range follow all safety rules and procedures.
- 3) Ensure they are physically able to operate a firearm.
- 4) Ensure everyone on the range uses eye and ear protection at all times, even when not shooting.
- 5) Ensure that no one is under the influence of any substance that would cause them to be dangerous while handling a firearm. This includes, alcohol, illegal/illicit, prescription, over the counter, or recreational/medicinal drugs.

# Range Safety

There are a number of considerations in constructing a range. Each factor plays an important role to ensure a safe yet fun shooting experience. This information may be found in the National Rifle Association Range Source Book (RSB), Section II, Chapter 9 pp.129-139.

- 1) Range orientation:** The direction of fire should be toward an area that is away from any people, animals (domestic or wild-unless hunting) buildings, structures, vehicles, pools, backyard playsets, or areas that may be expected to be used for outdoor activities by others. Additionally, a shooting station should be forward of anything that should not be shot if a bullet were to travel sideways from the station. The shooter should be able to look 180 degrees to both their right and left and not see any person, object, area, etc. in which a bullet should not impact. This includes looking beyond their own property lines if the proximity to their neighbor could be a factor.
- 2) Proper backstops:** The most common and, usually, least expensive backstop is an **earthen berm** free of large rocks and other debris that could contribute to a ricochet. It must be of sufficient depth and strength to stop any size projectile the user intends to shoot, either now or in the future. Its height must be sufficient to contain any shot fired from any position the shooter will use. The RSB states that backstops can be up to 20 feet high in some situations. It is important to note that the RSB's primary focus is on commercial or club ranges, where a 20 foot berm may be much more practical than in a backyard range. Backyard berm designs may vary on a case by case basis, with the RSB stating that the size of a range for a

private owner may differ and vary from commercial situations (p.291) . It further states that if there will be a low volume of shooting, perhaps just to sight in a gun for hunting, testing, or making adjustments to it, a 55 gallon drum filled with sand may be a suitable backstop, assuming all other safety rules are followed.

**Bullet traps** are another form of backstop. They are steel boxes constructed of armor plating and in such a manner as to stop a bullet and collect it in a bin for retrieval and recycling. They are commercially available via a number of manufacturers. Many offer models of the appropriate size for homeowners, but they can range in weight from 150-1100+ pounds and cost several hundred dollars for the smallest ones that only stop .22 caliber rimfire bullets, to several thousand dollars for models that stop large handgun and rifle bullets. Some manufacturers have models of such size and weight that they have wheels attached so that they may be moved into place. Even if a bullet trap is used, it must be considered that the shooter may miss it, with the projectile landing elsewhere. An additional form of backstop placed behind the trap could be warranted. Below are pictures of various bullet traps for reference purposes. An internet search for them will produce several different manufacturers and show what they have to offer.



- 3) **Side berms:** The RSB suggests that side berms, running parallel to the direction of fire, about 8 feet or higher can be used when warranted. This may be easier and more practical for a commercial range to accomplish than a homeowner in their backyard and is not necessary in all cases.
  
- 4) **Natural contours of the land:** It is possible that the natural contours of the land may form a suitable backstop. This, of course, will have to be evaluated on a case by case basis.
  
- 5) **Space for shooting station:** The RSB suggests that a shooting area have such space as to allow the shooter to move freely while handling a firearm. This will vary widely depending upon the style of shooting. A shooter sitting at a stationary bench may require less space than one lying down in the prone

position and rifle shooters may need more space than pistol shooters. The RSB states that 3-6ft for pistols and 6-10ft for rifles may suffice.

- 6) **Range Flags:** A raised red flag at the entrance to a range is a signal that it is active. Alternatively, clubs and commercial ranges can use red lights, or signage for the same purpose. If a homeowner wanted to communicate to others that they are entering an active range, they could put signage in place around the bullet impact areas and beyond. A red flag could be raised from either a pole or a tree in the woods, however, its meaning may not be realized by someone unfamiliar with firearms safety.
  
- 7) **Sound abatement:** Distance is likely the easiest and most readily available sound abatement technique for a home range. The RSB (p. 92) states that “The sound of gunfire decreases by 10 dB for each doubling of distance from the shooting range.” This indicates that placing the shooting station as far from a neighboring property as practicable could help to curb noise issues. The surrounding environment may contribute to sound abatement, as well. Vegetation such as trees, bushes, and shrubs may block or soften some of the sound from a range. The natural contours of the land may also help, especially if there are hilly areas that can absorb or redirect the sound.
  
- 8) **Emergency Procedures:** It is important for any range, whether club, commercial, or home to be prepared for an emergency. Minor issues such as small cuts or abrasions may be tended to

with simple first aid techniques. More serious problems such as gunshot wounds should be planned for as well. A first aid/trauma kit should be readily available to those on the range. In addition to supplies that can be found in basic first aid kits, items that can quickly stop bleeding in case of a gunshot wound should be included. Tourniquets and clotting compounds sold under various names are recommended. Use of these items is dependent upon an individual's level of training and ability to do so. If it becomes necessary to call first responders to a range, it is imperative to make sure they have unimpeded access to it. If a home range is in a fenced backyard someone must make sure the gate is unlocked and open. If the range is further into the woods and perhaps not close to or visible from the house, someone must wait by the road for first responders to lead them to the range. When building such a range, the homeowner might consider ensuring a path of suitable size for emergency response. If the call for help is made by someone other than the residents of the home in which the range is located, such as a spectator or friend invited there to shoot, it is important for them to know the exact address so that they are able to tell responders where to go. A sign or sticker on the shooting bench, a tree, or a post, is good practice to this end.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Stein

NRA Certified Chief Range Safety Officer and Instructor

City of Norwalk, CT  
Monday, December 16, 2024

## Chapter 38. Explosives

### Article I. General

#### § 38-1. License.

No person shall hereafter keep, sell or expose for sale torpedoes, gunpowder or other explosives without first obtaining a license from the City Clerk, which license shall be good for one year and for which a fee of \$5 shall be paid.

#### § 38-2. Firearms.

No air rifles, air pistols, cannons, guns, pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns or other firearms shall be discharged within the limits of the city, except as follows:

- A. This section shall not apply to the discharge of air rifles, air pistols, pistols, revolvers, rifles or shotguns when discharged on a range licensed under this Article or operated by the Police Department of the City of Norwalk or by or under the authority of any state or federal agency.  
[Amended 6-10-1980]
- B. This section shall not apply to the discharge of shotguns when discharged by a duly licensed hunter of the state using a load not heavier than No. 4 shot when discharged in the Norwalk Harbor or on land along the shore of Norwalk Harbor or on land along the shore of Norwalk Harbor or Long Island Sound when permission has been obtained from the owner of such land.
- C. (Reserved)<sup>[1]</sup>  
[1] *Editor's Note: Former Subsection C, pertaining to land north of the Post Road, was repealed 6-9-1998.*
- D. This section shall not apply to the discharge of firearms to protect life or property.
- E. This section shall not apply to the discharge of firearms by property owners, their employees or agents to kill vermin or wild animals which are destroying property.
- F. The discharge of shotguns as provided in § **38-2B** and 2C shall not be within 100 feet of a public or private highway or within 500 feet of a dwelling.

#### § 38-3. Rifle and skeet ranges; license; Commission.

[Amended 6-10-1980]

The Mayor, subject to the approval of the Common Council, shall appoint a Commission to license rifle, pistol and skeet and trap shooting ranges consisting of three members, one to hold office until the second Tuesday in November 1948, one to hold office until the second Tuesday in November 1949 and one to hold office until the second Tuesday in November 1950. The terms of such Commissioners shall begin on the day of their appointments. Annually thereafter, the Mayor shall appoint, in the manner hereinbefore provided, one Commissioner of such Commission to serve for a term of three years. Any

vacancy which may occur in the membership of such Commission shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term in the manner hereinbefore provided. The members of such Commission shall serve without compensation. The members of such Commission shall make rules and regulations for the licensing of rifle, pistol and skeet and trap shooting ranges, including fees, and such rules and regulations shall have the same force and effect as though incorporated in this Article when such rules and regulations have been approved by the Mayor and Common Council.

## § 38-4. (Reserved)

[1] *Editor's Note: Former § 38-4, Enforcement, was repealed 6-10-1980.*

## § 38-5. (Reserved)

[1] *Editor's Note: Former § 38-5, Carrying firearms, was repealed 6-10-1980.*

## § 38-6. Distribution of Article.

Copies of this Article shall be furnished to the office of the Town Clerk of the city, and he shall give a copy to each person to whom he issues a hunting license.

*Town of Newtown, CT  
Monday, December 16, 2024*

## Chapter 128. Firearms

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Legislative Council of the Town of Newtown 8-7-1991 by Ord. No. 71; amended 9-17-2003; 9-4-2013. Subsequent amendments noted where applicable.]

### § 128-1. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to regulate the discharge of firearms in the Town of Newtown.

### § 128-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

#### **BACKSTOP**

A device constructed to stop, redirect, and/or contain bullets fired on a range.

#### **BIRDSHOT**

A type of shotgun ammunition typically used for bird hunting.

#### **CLAY PIGEON SHOOTING**

The activity of shooting a firearm up into the air at special flying targets, known as clay pigeons or clay targets, provided that the activity is in full compliance with all other federal, state and local laws.

#### **FIREARM**

Any sawed-off shotgun, machine gun, rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver or other weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged.

#### **SCHOOL**

Any boarding, day or night school or college, including one conducted by the Town of Newtown or State of Connecticut, in which full-time academic instruction is offered for one or more grades.

#### **SPORTSMAN'S ORGANIZATION**

A group of individuals or association of individuals approved by the First Selectman and Chief of Police based on the presentation of proof that the organization satisfies all of the following criteria:

- A. The organization has centralized management;
- B. The organization has implemented adequate regulations to ensure safety in the discharge of firearms;
- C. The organization has implemented regulations to ensure individuals discharging firearms have adequate safety training and comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws concerning the possession and discharge of firearms;
- D. The organization requires the presence of an individual trained in firearms safety to oversee and supervise the discharge of firearms at all times;
- E. The organization maintains adequate insurance coverage;

- F. The organization has established membership criteria to ensure safety in the discharge of firearms; and
- G. The organization has taken adequate measures, including the construction of improvements, to ensure all shots, debris and discharge is confined to the target area on the property on which firearms are to be discharged and there is no danger or risk of injury to persons and property.

## § 128-3. Exceptions.

- A. The Provisions of this chapter shall not apply to a peace officer, as defined in Section 53a-3(9) of the Connecticut General Statutes, when acting within the scope of his/her duties.
- B. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to hunting as defined in Section 26-1(12) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as the same may be amended from time to time.
- C. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to the discharge of firearms on property owned or leased by the Pequot Fish and Game Club, Newtown Fish and Game Club, Fairfield County Fish and Game Protective Association or any sportsman's organization duly approved by the First Selectman and Chief of Police pursuant to the definition of "sportman's organization" in § 128-2 of this chapter.
- D. The use of birdshot for the purpose of clay pigeon shooting shall be exempt from the requirement to use a backstop per § 128-5C of this chapter.
- E. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to the use of a firearm by an individual:
  - (1) Discharging blank cartridges in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws;
  - (2) Acting to defend himself or herself or a third person from physical force in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws;
  - (3) Performing nuisance animal control in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws;
  - (4) Engaging in a memorial ceremony in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws; or
  - (5) Engaging in an official parade or ceremony in a manner consistent with all federal, state and local laws.

## § 128-4. Safety practices.

- A. Persons participating in the discharging of a firearm must be the owner of the property the discharge is taking place on, an invited guest of the owner who is present, or have written permission from the property owner.
- B. Persons discharging a firearm shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws concerning the possession and discharge of firearms and possess and carry, or be supervised by an individual who possesses and carries, one or more of the following:
  - (1) Connecticut hunting license.
  - (2) Connecticut certificate of possession.
  - (3) Connecticut permit to carry pistols or revolvers.
  - (4) Connecticut Long Gun Eligibility Certificate.

- (5) A certificate issued after successfully completing a course approved by the Connecticut Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection in the safety and use of firearms, including, but not limited to:
    - (a) A safety training course in the use of firearms available to the public offered by a law enforcement agency, a private or public educational institution or a firearms training school, utilizing instructors certified by the National Rifle Association or the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection; and
    - (b) A safety or training course in the use of firearms conducted by an instructor certified by the state or the National Rifle Association.
  - (6) Active duty U.S. military members or individuals honorably discharged from the U.S. military are exempt from § 128-4B(1) through (5).
- C. Persons not possessing a license or certificate as provided in Subsection **B** above may be permitted to discharge a firearm provided they are supervised at all times by a person licensed or certified as provided in Subsection **B** above and are in compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws concerning the possession and discharge of firearms. No more than four (4) such unlicensed or uncertified persons may participate in shooting under the supervision of a person so licensed or certified at the same time.
  - D. No more than one firearm may be fired at a time by any group of individuals engaged in discharging firearms as permitted under this chapter.
  - E. All firearms, not in active use, located in an area being used for discharging firearms, on or off the shooting line, must be unloaded with the action open.

## § 128-5. Regulations.

- A. No person shall discharge a firearm before 8:00 a.m. or after sunset.
- B. Any person who wishes to discharge a firearm must notify the Newtown Police Department by telephone of his or her intent to discharge a firearm 15 minutes prior to beginning such activity. Fifteen minutes after the time of the phone call as recorded in the Newtown Police log shall begin a four-hour window in which such activity will be allowed on the subject property each day.
- C. Any discharge of a firearm must be directed at a natural or man-made backstop sufficient to contain the projectiles from the firearm being discharged with a minimum height of 10 feet above the top of the intended target.
- D. It is prohibited to discharge a firearm within 500 feet of any building occupied by people or domestic animals, unless written permission for lesser distances is obtained from the owner of such building and carried with the person discharging the firearm. The provisions of this section shall not apply to owners, owners' spouses or owners' lineal descendants when discharging a firearm within 500 of buildings owned by them, but shall apply when said persons are discharging a firearm within said distances of buildings not so owned. For the purposes of this section, a building is presumed to be occupied unless it appears from a reasonable inspection of the interior portions of the building that it is in fact unoccupied.
- E. It is prohibited to discharge a firearm in the direction of any visible building occupied by people or domestic animals unless written permission is obtained from the owner of such building and carried with the person discharging the firearm.
- F. Targets that may induce a secondary reaction, including, but not limited to, exploding targets, fuel canisters, and Tannerite®, are prohibited.
- G. Discharging a firearm across property boundaries is prohibited unless contiguous properties are owned by the person discharging the firearm or written permission is obtained from the contiguous property owner.

- H. Discharging a firearm on or into property owned by the Town of Newtown is prohibited.
- I. Discharge of firearms is prohibited within 1/2 mile of any school during regular school hours.

## § 128-6. Penalties for offenses.

Any violation of this chapter shall constitute an offense and be punishable by a fine of \$99 per offense.

## § 128-7. Appeal procedure.

If a person who is issued a citation does not make an uncontested payment of the fine(s), penalties, costs, or fees due for noncompliance as specified by the citation, to the Town, he or she shall adhere to the procedure in the "Code of the Town of Newtown" § **132-10**, Appeals procedure, Subsections **B** through **E**.

*Town of Stratford, CT  
Monday, December 16, 2024*

## Chapter 212. Weapons

### Article II. Discharge of Firearms

[Adopted 5-13-1968]

#### § 212-4. Prohibited activity; penalties for offenses.

[Amended 12-8-2005 by Ord. No. 05-23]

Any person who discharges any firearm within the Town, or any bow and arrow or crossbow within 300 feet of any structure used, zoned or occupied for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes or within 300 feet from the property line of any structure used, zoned or occupied for educational purposes, including, but not limited to, any public school within the Town, except as provided hereinafter, shall be fined no more than \$100.

#### § 212-5. Exceptions.

The provisions of this article shall not apply to:

- A. Persons having hunting licenses issued by the state and who hunt on land owned or leased by the state for such purposes.
- B. Persons who discharge firearms on property owned by themselves or any person who has received permission from the landowner to discharge such firearms for hunting purposes and who has been issued lawful hunting licenses, without causing the spent bullet or pellet to pass over the adjoining property of another.
- C. Law enforcement officers, security guards or other persons employed to protect public or private property while in the performance of such duties.
- D. Persons who discharge firearms on pistol, rifle or shotgun ranges, established prior to June 12, 1968, and located within the Town.
- E. Persons who discharge any paintmarker or paintball marker which is designed and used exclusively for the sport of paintball and upon or within private property with the permission of the owner thereof and without causing any spent pellet to pass over the adjoining property of another.

[Added 4-11-2005 by Ord. No. 05-04]

*Town of Tolland, CT  
Monday, December 16, 2024*

## Chapter 79. Firearms

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Tolland 3-9-2010. Amendments noted where applicable.]

### **GENERAL REFERENCES**

Discharge of firearms in parks — See Ch. **112**, § **112-5**.

### **STATE LAW REFERENCES**

Penalty for ordinance violations — See C.G.S. § 7-148(c)(10)(A).

Unlawful discharge of firearms — See C.G.S. § 53-203.

Hunting or discharge firearm from public highway — See C.G.S. § 53-204.

Carrying of dangerous weapons prohibited — See C.G.S. § 53-206.

### § 79-1. Discharge by minors.

No minor under 16 years of age shall discharge any firearm within the limits of the Town, unless such discharge shall be in the presence and under the supervision of an adult (18 years of age or older) or of the parent or legal guardian of such minor, or a qualified instructor.

### § 79-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

#### **FIREARM**

Any weapon that is designed to expel any projectile by the action of an explosive; or the frame or receiver of any such weapon.

### § 79-3. Discharge outdoors.

Unless otherwise permitted by law, no person shall discharge any firearm outdoors within 250 feet of any building or from or across any public road, street or highway situated anywhere in the Town, except as to buildings on his or her own land or on land used in conjunction with a military funeral, duly organized fish and game and/or gun club, or such discharge is with the written permission of the owners or occupants of all buildings within 250 feet. "Building" is defined as any building or commercial or municipal building.

### § 79-4. Discharge with consent of property owner.

A landowner may extend to others, by written consent, the right to use his or her property for hunting, target practice or other purposes requiring the use of firearms in accordance with § **79-3** above.

### § 79-5. Penalties for offenses.

Any person violating any provision of this chapter, or an adult or parent or legal guardian or qualified instructor permitting violation by a minor less than 16 years of age, shall be fined \$100. Each day such violation shall continue after notice to the owner may be deemed a separate offense.

## § 79-6. Exceptions.

This chapter shall not apply to any person who shall discharge any firearm in reasonable defense of his or her person or property or in the defense of others or in the performance of any legal duty or to put down an otherwise injured animal on his or her own property.

**Firearms Safety/Home Shooting Range Study Committee Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule:**

Dates:

- January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025
- July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Time: 6:30 PM

Location: Coventry Town Hall, Conference Room B