

# **Defensive Shotgun - Remington 870 Operator's Guide**

U.S. Department of Energy  
Safeguards and Security  
Central Training Academy

# **FIREARMS SAFETY**

Firearms safety is as important during daily activities as during range and training activities. Observing a few precautions when handling firearms in the field can help ensure your safety and that of those around you. It will also ensure you will be ready to protect yourself if necessary.

## **1. THE FOUR GENERAL SAFETY RULES**

- 1. ALL FIREARMS ARE ALWAYS LOADED.** No exceptions. Don't pretend this is true; be deadly serious about it.
- 2. NEVER POINT A FIREARM AT ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO DESTROY.**
- 3. KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF OF THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET.**
- 4. BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET.** Know what it is, what is in line with it, and what is behind it. Never shoot anything that you have not positively identified.

## **2. ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS**

1. Upon returning to base or after completion of a training session, each weapon shall be physically examined by yourself and your partner to ensure that it is unloaded and safe.
2. Do not take live ammunition into the cleaning area.
3. Carry the gun unslung if there is any chance of a close conflict with a bear.
4. Always control the muzzle of your gun, even if you stumble, lose your balance, or fall.
5. Always be sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions. If you fall or the gun hits the ground, snow, or ice, always unload and check for obstructions.
6. Never attempt to shoot out an obstruction; the barrel could explode.
7. To prevent plugging of the barrel, cover the muzzle with plastic wrap secured by a rubber band or tape. Bullets will shoot through this type of cover.

# NOMENCLATURE

The standard Remington Model 870 is a 12-gauge, slide-operated, shoulder-fired, repeating shotgun. This shotgun may be fitted with an extended magazine tube that holds seven rounds; a side saddle that holds six easily accessible rounds; and a fore arm mounted light for dim light or no light shooting.

## 1. Barrel

The barrel is composed of the muzzle, choke, bore, forcing cone, chamber, and barrel extension. On the lower side of the barrel is the barrel ring, which slides over the magazine tube attaching the barrel to the receiver.

## 2. Fore end

The fore end contains the slide and action bars, which provide the means of cycling the action.

## 3. Bolt assembly

The bolt assembly consists of the breech bolt (with extractor and locking block) and slide.

## 4. Receiver

The receiver contains an ejection port, loading port, ejector magazine tube (with follower, spring, and retainer) and shell latches.

## 5. Trigger assembly

The trigger assembly contains the trigger, safety, action bar lock, and hammer.

## 6. Stock

A fixed stock is attached to the rear of the receiver.

## 7. Sights

The sights on this shotgun are ramp and bead. But it may be fitted with "Ghost Ring" sights. "Ghost Ring" sites have a front sight post and the rear sight is an aperture. The rear sight is adjustable for elevation and windage, which improves firing accuracy.

## **DISASSEMBLY**

1. Ensure that the chamber and magazine are empty and the safety is on.
  2. Depress the action bar lock and open the bolt approximately halfway.
  3. Remove the magazine cap or extension tube.
  4. Remove the barrel from the receiver.
  5. Remove the fore end by sliding it forward and simultaneously pressing the left shell latch.
  6. Remove the bolt assembly from the action bars.
  7. Punch out the trigger plate pins and remove the trigger plate assembly from the receiver.
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## **CARE AND CLEANING**

1. Clean the barrel with the appropriate gauge bore brush, solvent, and patches.
  2. Clean the inside of the receiver and bolt with a cleaning brush, solvent, and patches.
  3. Brush off the trigger plate assembly. Lightly lubricate the moving parts and wipe the exterior lightly with a light lubricant, such as Tetra or Tri Flow.
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## **ASSEMBLY**

1. Replace the trigger plate assembly in receiver.
2. Slide the fore end over the magazine tube.
3. Replace the bolt assembly on the action bars.
4. Slowly slide the action bars and bolt assembly into the receiver. Depress the right and then the left shell latches to completely seat the bolt assembly in the receiver.
5. Depress the action bar lock and open the action.
6. Replace the barrel on the receiver.
7. Replace the magazine cap or extension tube. Make sure the cap or extension tube is tight; if it is loose, the barrel extension and receiver may be damaged.

# FUNCTION CHECK

After reassembly, a function check must be performed.

1. Point the shotgun in a safe direction.
2. Depress the action bar lock and cycle the action. The action should cycle smoothly. This ensures the action bars are not bent.
3. Close the action, put the safety on, and pull the trigger. The hammer must not fall.
4. With the action closed, safety off, pull the trigger and hold it to the rear while cycling the action. Release the trigger and pull it. The hammer must fall. This check ensures the hammer is properly engaging the sear.

# MARKSMANSHIP FUNDAMENTALS

## 1. Aiming

During the aiming process, you are concerned with correctly pointing the shotgun so the slug will hit the target in the desired spot.

### 1. Sight Alignment

You achieve correct sight alignment when the opt of the front sight post is exactly in the center of the rear sight aperature. If an imaginary horizontal line is drawn through the center of the rear sight aperature, the top of the front sight post will appear to touch that line. If an imaginary vertical line is drawn through the center of the rear sight aperature, the line will appear to bisect the front sight post. To obtain perfect sight alignment, focus on the front sight post. The rear sight post will appear fuzzy.

### 2. Sight Picture

You obtain correct sight picture when the sights are correctly aligned and the front sight is placed in the center of the aiming area. This center is commonly called "center hold" or "center of mass".

### 3. Flash Sight Picture

In a close-range encounter, you get flash sight picture by quickly verifying that the front sight is on the target's center of mass.

## 2. Holding

Several factors affect your ability to hold the shotgun steady while firing. These factors are the same for all firing positions.

### 1. Grip of the weak hand

The weak hand and elbow should be under the shotgun as much as possible. The strong hand grasps the pistol grip so that the grip rests in the "V" formed by the thumb and the trigger finger.

### 2. Grip of the strong hand

The strong thumb is correctly placed when it lies along the stock, NOT if it is wrapped around the wrist of the stock. If the thumb is wrapped around the wrist, during recoil you may hit your nose with the thumb, especially in the lower positions. The trigger finger is placed alongside the receiver and does not touch the trigger until the sights are on the target. The last three fingers around the pistol

grip are quite sufficient to hold the shotgun exerting a firm rearward pull to keep the buttstock in the "pocket" of the strong shoulder.

### 3. Buttstock in the pocket of the shoulder

Correct placement of the buttstock in the shoulder pocket lessens the effect of recoil and helps steady the weapon allowing faster follow-up shots. Here's how to find your shoulder pocket: raise the strong elbow above the shoulder, place the fingers of your other hand under your raised armpit, and feel for the pocket with the thumb.

### 4. Strong side elbow

Mounting the elbow when firing helps keep the buttstock in the "pocket" of the shoulder. Always mount the elbow when you mount the shotgun. If the elbow isn't kept high, the pocket disappears and the shotgun can slide out onto the shoulder or biceps.

### 5. Stockweld

By consistently placing your cheek against the stock in the same place each time, you maintain a consistent relationship between the sights and your eyes. This consistency leads to increased accuracy. When a shooter's cheek is placed firmly against the stock, the shotgun and the shooter recoil together. This reduces the amount of time needed to recover between shots and aim again.

### 6. Lean into the shotgun

The action of bending your forward knee and leaning into the shotgun helps you make faster follow-up shots. Keep your rear leg straight, allowing it to act as a shock absorber.

### 3. Squeezing (pressing)

This is the act of manipulating the trigger, causing the shotgun to fire. This can and should be done without disturbing the alignment of the shotgun to the target. During the firing process, increase pressure straight to the rear on the trigger while maintaining sight alignment and sight picture. When you compress the time required to squeeze the trigger, this is called a "compressed surprise break."

### 4. Follow through

Following through means continuing to apply the fundamentals of marksmanship after firing a shot. This helps ensure good shot placement and allows quicker follow-up shots if necessary.

## ZEROING

Shotgun sights should be adjusted so that the point of impact is the same as the point of aim. A shotgun should have a 50-yard point of aim, point of impact zero. The definition of a zero is: *The sight setting, in elevation and windage, required to place a shot or group of shots in the center of a target from a specific range with no wind blowing.*

To adjust the sights, (1) fire a round, (2) loosen the rear sight with the Allen wrench, (3) move the sight in the direction that you want the impact to move, i.e. move the sight left to move the impact to the left, move the sight up to move the impact up, etc.



# LOADING

## 1. Half load

In this configuration, the chamber is empty and the magazine tube is loaded with the desired number of shells. Half load as follows:

1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction, ensuring that the chamber is empty with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
  2. Close the action.
  3. Hold the shotgun with its ejection port up.
  4. Obtain a shell and hold it in the strong hand with the brass end against your thumb.
  5. Bring the shell to the front of the trigger guard. Using the trigger guard as a guide, slide the shell forward into the loading port.
  6. With your thumb, push the shell forward into the magazine until the shell rim engages the shell latches.
- ## 2. Full load from half load
1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
  2. Depress the action bar lock.
  3. Cycle the action.

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# CHAMBER CHECKING

Use this procedure whenever the chamber's condition needs to be checked.

1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
2. Depress the action bar lock and slightly open the action.
3. Visually check the chamber for a shell.
4. In low light, use a finger to feel for a shell.
5. Close the action.

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# UNLOADING

## 1. From half load

1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
2. Depress the action bar lock.

3. Pull the fore-end all the way to the rear. This moves the first shell from the magazine onto the shell carrier.
  4. Roll the shotgun to the right, which allows the shell to roll out of the ejection port.
  5. Push the shell carrier up until it stays up and turn the shotgun upside down.
  6. Depress the shell latch located on the ejection port side of the gun. This will release a shell from the magazine through the loading port.
  7. Continue until the weapon is unloaded.
  8. Visually and manually inspect the chamber and magazine to ensure that they are empty.
  9. In low light conditions, use a finger to feel the chamber and magazine tube.
2. From full load
    1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
    2. Depress the action bar lock.
    3. Ease the fore-end slowly to the rear until the front of the shell just clears the forward edge of the ejection port.
    4. Remove the shell.
    5. Pull the fore-end all the way to the rear. This moves the first shell from the magazine onto the shell carrier.
    6. Roll the shotgun to the right, which allows the shell to roll out of the ejection port.
    7. Push the shell carrier up until it stays up and turn the shotgun upside down.
    8. Depress the shell latch located on the ejection port side of the gun. This will release a shell from the magazine through the loading port.
    9. Continue until the weapon is unloaded.
    10. Visually and manually inspect the chamber and magazine to ensure that they are empty.
    11. In low light conditions, use a finger to feel the chamber and magazine tube.
3. Half load from full load
    1. Point the muzzle in a safe direction with the safety on. (The safety remains on throughout the entire process.)
    2. Depress the action bar lock.
    3. Ease the fore-end slowly to the rear until the front of the shell just clears the forward edge of the ejection port.
    4. Remove the shell.
    5. Pull the fore-end all the way to the rear. This moves the first shell from the magazine onto the shell carrier.
    6. Roll the shotgun to the right, which allows the shell to roll out of the ejection port.
    7. Close the action, and then chamber check to ensure that the chamber is empty.

## **CONDITION-ONE MALFUNCTION: FAILURE TO FIRE**

The trigger is pressed and the hammer falls without the weapon firing.

1. Causes
  1. Failure to cycle action.
  2. Defective ammunition.
2. Indicators

The hammer drops and you hear a click.

3. Clearance
    1. Identify the malfunction.
    2. Cycle the action.
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## **CONDITION TWO MALFUNCTION: FAILURE TO EJECT**

This condition-two malfunction is also known as a smokestack or stovepipe. The spent shell will remain in the ejection port, usually with the shell sticking out the side.

1. Causes
    1. Failure to fully cycle the action.
    2. Worn or broken ejector.
  2. Indicators
    1. Slack in the trigger.
    2. Case partially ejected.
    3. Open breech.
  3. Clearance
    1. Identify the malfunction.
    2. With the weak hand, reach under the receiver and attempt to strip the case from the port. You may need to cycle the action to clear. Rolling the weapon slightly to the right while cycling the action may assist in clearing the weapon.
    3. Close the action.
    4. Return the weak hand to the proper position and attempt to fire.
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# CONDITION-THREE MALFUNCTION: FAILURE TO EXTRACT

This condition is sometimes called a double-feed, meaning the spent case has not been ejected or extracted.

1. Causes
  1. Worn shell stops.
  2. Shell stops unstaked.
2. Indicators
  1. Slack trigger.
  2. Slide won't operate forward or rearward.
3. Clearance
  1. Identify the malfunction.
  2. With a Remington 870 equipped with a flexi-tab kit, depress the action bar lock and hold it while cycling the action firmly.
  3. If the Remington doesn't have a flexi-tab kit, the method given above in "failure to eject" may clear the weapon.
  4. If the above method doesn't work, an alternative is
    1. Depress and hold the action bar lock.
    2. Hold the fore end.
    3. Strike the buttstock firmly on the ground. Be careful not to strike the toe of the stock on the ground because this can break the stock at the wrist.

Note: Ensure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction during the above procedure.

# READY POSITIONS

1. Low-ready
  1. Assume the Weaver stance.
  2. Place the buttstock in the shoulder pocket, lower the muzzle to about a 45-degree angle, and maintain a proper grip with the trigger finger straight.
  3. To mount the weapon from the low ready
    1. Come to a full load.
    2. As you raise the muzzle to the eyes' line of sight, shift focus to the front sight and obtain a correct sight picture.
    3. Simultaneously straighten the rear leg, lean forward, and bend the leading leg slightly. This helps absorb recoil and allows faster follow-up shots.
    4. Pull the weapon into the shoulder pocket and achieve a stockweld. The weak elbow will be under the shotgun and the strong elbow will be parallel to the ground.
    5. Disengage the safety and fire if necessary.

Note: During a field situation perform steps 1 through 3 simultaneously.

2. High-ready
  1. Assume the Weaver stance.
  2. Raise the muzzle to the eyes' line of sight. Place the stock along your forearm and hold it roughly at waist level, depending on your build. Keep your eyes on the threat.
  3. To mount the weapon, the stock must clear the armpit.
    1. Raise the stock by pushing forward to clear the armpit. Pull back into the pocket of the shoulder and obtain a stockweld.
    2. Stance and fundamentals of marksmanship are identical to the low-ready steps.

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# CARRIES

A sling is mandatory for every shotgun. It should be attached only to the sling swivels. Two different carries are recommended.

1. American Carry

The individual's weapon is placed on the strong-side shoulder, muzzle up. The strong hand grips the sling about midway.

1. To sling the weapon
  1. Put the safety on.
  2. Elevate the muzzle.

3. With the weak hand, grasp the sling next to the forward sling swivel.
  4. Insert your strong arm between the weapon and the sling, allowing the sling to rest on your strong shoulder.
  5. Release the sling with your weak hand and grasp it with your strong hand about midway up.
2. To dismount the weapon
    1. Move the sling slightly outboard using the strong hand.
    2. Reach between the body and the sling with the weak hand and grasp the fore end.
    3. Release the sling with the strong hand as you pull the weapon off your shoulder and start the weapon toward the threat with the weak hand.
    4. Come around with the strong hand and grasp the pistol grip.
    5. Rotate the stock up and pull it back into your shoulder; go to a full load.
    6. Disengage the safety and fire if necessary.
    7. Before putting the weapon back in the American carry, ensure the safety is on.
2. African Carry

This carry places the weapon muzzle down on the weak-side shoulder. This carry has the advantage of protecting the muzzle during inclement weather. The weak hand grasps the fore end.

1. To sling the weapon
  1. While at the low ready, release the grip of the strong hand and grasp the sling at the lower sling swivel.
  2. Release the weak hand and extend it between the sling and the buttstock, bringing the weapon up onto the shoulder.
  3. Release the strong hand and grasp the fore end with the weak hand.
2. To dismount the weapon
  1. With the weak hand, rotate the muzzle up, twisting the weapon off the shoulder.
  2. Bring the strong hand over and grasp the pistol grip as the weapon comes off the shoulder.
  3. Bring the stock back into the shoulder; go to a full load.
  4. Disengage the safety and fire if necessary.
  5. Before putting the weapon back in the African carry, ensure that the safety is on.

# STANDING

To assume this position

1. Address the target in the Weaver stance in a ready position.
  2. Lean forward, bend the weak knee, and mount the weapon.
  3. Achieve bone support by keeping the weak elbow low under the weapon and the strong elbow up to create a pocket (elbow parallel to the ground).
  4. To absorb recoil, keep the weak knee bent and the strong leg straight.
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# KNEELING

## 1. Braced kneeling

Bone support is used to steady the weapon. The braced kneeling position offers the shooter maximum stability, and is achieved as follows:

1. Address the target in a ready position, at approximately a 45 degree angle.
  2. With the weak leg, take a step forward and to the strong side (left leg to the right for right handed shooters).
  3. Drop straight down, with the strong knee contacting the ground at as close to a 90 degree angle as possible to the weak leg. This action creates a stable firing platform.
  4. With the weak elbow, make contact forward of the knee with the triceps area above the elbow joint. This action avoids joint-to-joint contact, which causes instability.
  5. Pull the neck of the stock into the pocket of the shoulder, attaining a stockweld. Placement of the strong foot is optional and varies from individual to individual. Options available are:
    1. Sitting on heel with toes curled (best for mobility).
    2. Top of foot flat on the ground.
    3. Foot turned on its side.
- ## 2. Speed kneeling

This position is unsupported but offers the advantage of speed. The speed-kneeling position is a trade off involving speed and accuracy. Limit its use to close engagements in which maximum stability is not an absolute requirement. The position is attained as follows:

1. With the weak leg, step forward.
2. Simultaneously drop the body straight down, bring the weapon up.
3. The upper torso remains upright.

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## **SITTING**

The open leg sitting position is the easiest sitting position to get into and the easiest to recover from. It is assumed in the following way:

1. While keeping the muzzle pointed downrange, extend the weak or strong hand to the rear to brace yourself.
2. Sit down.
3. Place your feet comfortably, extending away from the body.
4. Keep your heels on the ground.
5. Place your elbows on your knees.

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## **BARRICADE**

All the basics of marksmanship and position apply when shooting from behind a barricade, such as a vehicle or a wall. The following must also be considered:

1. Never rest the barrel on a barricade. The you rest the fore end on the barricade.
2. When you are behind a barricade, ensure that the muzzle is clear before firing.