

## CONCEALED AND OPEN CARRY

After discussing the issue with the membership at our last monthly meeting, the Board has adopted an amendment to our safety rules to address the issue of concealed and open carry. We will try this approach and assess how well it works. The new rule reads as follows:

4. Concealed and Open Carry: (A) Notwithstanding any provision of Rules 1, 2 and 3 above to the contrary, concealed carry at the range, **while discouraged**, is permitted by those Members possessing a valid Georgia Weapons Carry License (formerly Firearms Carry License) or other valid carry license/permit recognized by the state of Georgia. Concealed carry by guests is not permitted;

(B) Members' who carry concealed do so subject to the condition that the weapon must be completely concealed at all times **during that range session**;

(C) Open carry by either Members or guests, including off-duty law enforcement officers, is not permitted; and,

(D) The host Member has the responsibility of ensuring that his or her guests comply with this rule.

Several points are worth noting:

Firstly, we are essentially formalizing the unstated "don't ask, don't tell" policy that has existed. There is a certain tension between Members' general right to concealed carry and the restrictions necessary to ensure the safe operation of a gun range. The operation of a gun range differs significantly from other venues in that the actual firing of multiple guns by multiple people is regularly taking place, and the range must be made safe for all. This is particularly a concern when people are down range. Thus, we have sought to find an accommodation between two competing interests.

Secondly, in an effort to find that accommodation, concealed carry by Members will be permitted, but is discouraged. To discourage concealed carry is not a slight on our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment carry rights, but is merely a suggestion to Members that they weigh the need to exercise those rights against our need to operate a safe range. Concealed carry is an exception to the rules that otherwise govern a "cold" range; thus, if you do carry concealed, there are additional responsibilities assumed. Upon reflection, you may find that the need for concealed carry is lessened while at the range, since, by definition, there are other firearms readily at hand. As has been often stated, a handgun is necessary only when a long gun is not available. Also, depending on the weather, you may find it more convenient to leave your carry gun in your vehicle rather than deal with concealment issues. Nevertheless, the option of concealed carry is available if you chose it.

Thirdly, if you do carry concealed, the weapon must be fully concealed during the entire range session in order to comply with the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Concealed means just that - concealed. Thus, with the sole exception of responding to a need for self-defense, the carry weapon may not be removed from concealment during the range session for any reason, including, but not limited to, practice, competition or displaying the weapon to other shooters. Removing the weapon from concealment while on range property, would be a rule violation. If there is a possibility that you may want to practice

or compete with your usual carry weapon during that range session, then you should treat it as subject to Rules 1, 2 and 3 at all times while on range property.

Fourthly, open carry at the range will not be permitted. There does not seem to be any practical need or desire by Members for open carry, and the Board does not believe that there is a realistic accommodation that could be reached with our rules. In this regard, the rules do allow Match Directors to modify the rules as “appropriate for the shooting activity involved . . . consistent with good safety practice.”

Lastly, while not part of our Range Rules, the question of concealed carry at non-range events has been raised. The policy for non-range events will be that concealed carry by those members and guests possessing a valid Georgia Weapons Carry License or other valid license/permits recognized by the state of Georgia will be permitted, unless the venue dictates otherwise, e.g. meetings that have been and may in the future be held in the courthouse. Note that concealed carry by guests with an appropriate license is permitted. Although Georgia law apparently allows open carry by anyone with a Weapons Carry License, most, if not all, of our non-range events are at government or other facilities not owned or controlled by the Club; therefore, for that reason and as, perhaps more importantly, a matter of public perception/good will, open carry will not be permitted at such events.