

Pop & Throw Station Safety Guidelines

Rainier Hunting Retriever Club cannot host a successful hunting test without our crew of great workers. We appreciate your willingness to help and we want to keep you safe.

The Pop & Throw Station safety guidelines have one objective – to keep you safe while operating the equipment used in the test. Because this equipment can be dangerous and can malfunction, we want you to keep some key safety guidelines in mind when using the popper guns and shells, the popper stand, and the winger. You need to be aware of these safety guidelines at all times.

The foremost of these guidelines is common sense. If something seems wrong and unsafe or dangerous, let the judges or someone in charge know immediately.

- While things can be busy at a hunt test, our club will correct problems with people or equipment to keep you safe, healthy and coming back to work again.
- Always speak up if any equipment malfunctions or things don't look or seem right

1. Key Safety Guidelines for Safe Use of Popper Guns

The American Kennel Club requires that people operating popper guns must be 16 years of age and have completed a course in gun safety. Popper guns are real shotguns. Treat them that way. Occasionally the triggers can be quick to fire. This is called a hair trigger because it can be released by the weight of a hair.

The hammer that you pull back to hit the firing pin can unexpectedly release and fire the popper shell before you want it to fire

Even though the popper shells are called “blanks,” when shot from a gun they can injure or kill. If not used in a shotgun, they could cause disfigurement or severe burning.

When using a popper gun do not load the popper gun and pull the hammer back until just before you are ready to fire

- **Pay attention to this.** If for some reason the test is delayed and the gun is loaded and the hammer pulled back, you should disengage the popper gun and break it open. If you need help doing this, ask for it. A loaded and cocked popper gun poses a safety hazard.

Always use a popper gun stand when possible (see below for more detailed information). If one is not provided, observe these rules:

- Always keep the popper gun broken open until loaded. Never load and close until just before you are ready to fire the shot.
- Always keep the popper gun pointed toward the sky when it is loaded and ready to fire.
- Always aim the popper gun toward the sky and away from people, dogs, and objects.
- Never rest the popper gun on your foot.

Always wear ear protection. If you have none, the club will provide it.

Remember to speak up if something doesn't seem right.

- If the popper gun doesn't work right and fires before you want it to. Say something.
- If one of your friends messes around with the popper gun – takes it off the stand and wants to show you how it works and points the gun in what you think is a wrong direction. Say something.
- If someone walks away with a box of popper shells or with some individual shells. Say something.

2. Key Safety Guidelines for Use of Popper Gun Stands

Use the popper gun stand we provide for the safety of you and others. The stand holds both the popper gun and a box of popper shells. Please use the stand. And always walk in back of the stand not in front of it. Also,

- If a popper gun stand is not provided, ask for one.
- This stand keeps the gun elevated and pointed in the proper direction. Use it.
- Make sure the popper gun and the stand are aimed away from other pop and throw stations, and away from the winger and any person, dog or object.
- Never walk in front of the popper gun stand with a popper gun in it. **This is a serious safety risk.**

3. Use of Wingers (Bird Launchers)

Before you think about the safety issues when using wingers, you need to understand a few things about them.

- You must always have a Rainier club member check you out in the proper use of a winger.
- The winger is similar to a giant slingshot and consists of a frame and a basket attached to bungee straps that route through pulleys and have metal O-rings at the end. The winger can be operated manually or electronically. This will be explained to you at the hunt test.
- To operate the winger properly after it is set-up, pull the basket back to the firing mechanism at the bottom of the base and align the metal ring with the notch in the firing arm. Then pull the bungee cords down on one side, placing the rings onto the hooks on the side of the frame as you are directed by the stake chair or judge. The usual position is to put the bungee ring from the top pulley onto the upper hook and the bungee ring from the bottom pulley onto the lower hook. Then cross behind the winger and repeat the process on the other side of the winger frame. Place a bird in the basket as directed.

Because the wingers are meant to hurl birds 20 yards or more, they have a lot of force.

Therefore, if the winger is not used properly you could be injured.

Key Safety Guidelines to Keep in Mind When Using a Winger:

If the winger looks weird to you and you don't really know how to work it, ask the judges or someone in charge for help.

Never walk in front of or stand in front of a winger.

- This is a serious safety risk.
- Even without a bird in the basket, the basket itself can cause you injury.
- The metal O-rings on the rubber straps can be also be a danger to you.
- If your co-worker walks in front of the winger while putting the rubber straps on the frame rings - Say something.
 - This doesn't mean to argue with your co-work or start a fight. It means to ask someone to come and explain how to use the winger safely.

When you load the winger, always walk along the side of the winger to attach the rubber straps to both sides of the frame

- Even though it is faster to walk in front of the winger to reach both sides, don't do it. This puts you directly in front of both the basket and the straps.