ECR update: rifle safety marker

Safety first:

Safety requirements around rifle handling are constantly growing, with increasing expectations from both within and outside the sport. The IBU is committed to enhancing these standards year by year to ensure the **highest level of safety** in biathlon and to **maintain public trust and acceptance** of our sport.

Event and Competition Rules (ECR) updates:

To support this goal, the IBU Technical Committee has decided to implement new rules aimed at improving rifle safety across all events. The following additions and updates have been made to the ECR (changes are highlighted in red)

ECR 8.5.1:

General

When a rifle is brought into or is taken out of the stadium area, it must be in a case or a cover bag. As a visible sign that there is no cartridge in the chamber, an additional safety marker (colored flag or lock) must be attached. The marker may only be removed as of Art. 8.5.1.1

Shooting is only permitted on the shooting range, during officially authorized times. Making rifle movements that might endanger others or the competitors themselves, regardless of whether the rifle is loaded or not, is forbidden. Situations considered as safe are: carrying the rifle on the back or having the bolt open. The rifle muzzle must be over the forward edge of the shooting ramp (firing line) from the beginning to the end of the shooting bout. At no time while being on the mat it is allowed for the athlete to deliberately point the rifle muzzle towards him/herself or others. When the range is open for shooting, no one (with no part of the body) is permitted to be forward of that line. Officials, TV crew members and photographers must take responsibility for their own safety if they enter this area. At all times, competitors will be responsible for the safety of their actions and rifles.

ECR 8.5.1.1:

Safety marker

The safety marker (colored flag or lock) has to be used in all rifles when entering the stadium.
It has to remain in place until the athlete reaches the shooting range, where it might be removed for training or competing.
Training: when leaving the range after training, the safety marker needs to be inserted again
Rifle controls: all rifles must be presented at the rifle control with the safety marker inserted, regardless of when such inspection occurs. Control personnel might remove the marker for control purposes, but the rifle has to leave the control again with inserted safety marker.
Zeroing: as with training, when leaving the range after zeroing the safety marker must be inserted in the chamber. It is only removed by the official at the final check before the start.
Competition end: after arriving in the finish/passing the mixed zone, the safety flag has to be inserted again as soon as possible, but in any case when leaving the finish exit area/returning to warm-up area (rifle racks). The marker must then remain in the rifle at all times until the process begins again.
Only exception: for dry shooting the safety flag might be removed, but must be inserted right after again.
For dry shooting safety the use of a so called „rubber bullet" is recommended.

Safety markers:
The intended safety marker consists of a plastic cartridge attached to a brightly colored strip or flag, ensuring it remains clearly visible to everyone at all times



Alternatively, a lock can also be used.

Practical Handling of Safety Markers
Athletes are permitted to use their personal safety markers. Additionally, the IBU will provide standardized safety markers free of charge at all IBU event series, including the World Cup, IBU Cup and Junior Cup.

Distribution and use:

- At the first material control of the season (preliminary material control), each athlete will receive a safety marker from the IBU
- From that point onward, athletes are required to use the safety marker in accordance with ECR 8.5.1.1 whenever entering the stadium

On-Venue procedure:
To simplify the use of safety markers during training and competitions, the following procedure will apply:
Rifle inspection:

- The rifle must be presented at each rifle inspection with the safety marker inserted

Training and zeroing:

- A designated bowl may be placed at the exit of the shooting range (near lane 1)
- When beginning training or zeroing, athletes may remove the safety marker and place it in the bowl or alternatively, the athlete may carry it with them
- Upon completing their session, they must retrieve and reattach the marker before leaving the range

Competition:

- When entering the start area, athletes need to have the safety marker inserted
- At the final check before the start, when checking the rifle, the official will remove the safety marker (ECR 4.2.2.4.d)
- The safety marker will be preserved and brought to the finish, or alternatively, the athlete may carry it with them

- During the competition, safety markers will be transferred to the finish area by event staff
- At the exit of the finish zone, safety markers will be available for athletes to retrieve and reapply them to the rifle before the finish inspection (ECR 4.2.3)

This procedure may be adjusted over time, as determined by the respective Race Directors.

NOTE: in case athletes want to use their personal/own safety marker exclusively, they need to store it themselves and make sure that it is available for them whenever needed.

Sanctions/consequences:

- Not proper handling of safety marker protocols for the first time will lead to a reprimand (ECR 11.1.d)
- Appearing at final start control without rifle safety marker after already receiving reprimand as of 11.1.d in the same event series, will lead to a 30-second penalty (ECR 11.3.1.e)
- If the responsibility lies with the team (e.g., reserve rifles, relay athletes) and/or the violation occurs on a training day, a fine may be imposed instead. The competition jury will make the final decision