

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 2709.14 – Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources
Chapter 70 - Target Ranges and Other Outdoor Recreation Improvements**

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Responsible Staff:

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Superseded Document(s):

Digest: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

70: Establishes code, chapter caption, and sets forth direction for “Target Ranges and Other Outdoor Recreation Improvements.”

71: Establishes codes, captions, and sets forth direction for “Target Ranges.”

72: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Park, Playground.”

73: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Golf Course.”

74: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Cave, Cavern.”

75: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Racetrack.”

76: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Miscellaneous Day Use Facilities (Picnic Area, Trailhead, Scenic Overlook, Rest Area).”

77: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Visitor Center.”

78: Establishes and reserves code and caption “Hunting Enhancement.”

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71 - Target Ranges

1. Sections 71.1 through 71.9b provide direction on proposed and authorized target ranges, including pistol, rifle, shotgun, trap, skeet, sporting clay, and archery ranges, on National Forest System lands. For further direction, see FSM 2335.4, 2340.3, 2343.9, and 2721.71
2. If the proposal involves a military range, consult with the Office of the General Counsel (OGC), including OGC's Pollution Control Team, before issuing the authorization to ensure that issues associated with Department of Defense rules and policies regarding the cleanup of ranges, including future land use issues, are adequately addressed in the proposed permit language.

71.1 - Authority

Processing of proposals and applications for target ranges and issuance, administration, and monitoring of special use permits for target ranges on National Forest System lands are subject to the Forest Service special use regulations at 36 CFR part 251, Subpart B, and related agency direction in FSM 2330, 2340, 2700, and 2720, FSH 1909.15, and other chapters of this handbook.

71.2 - Policy

Allow target ranges on National Forest System lands where they would be consistent with the standards and guidelines in the applicable land management plan and would enhance forest management by improving public safety, providing recreational opportunities, providing firearms or archery safety and hunter educational training for the community, or consolidating dispersed target shooting. When State and local governments submit proposals for target ranges, consider a land exchange to enhance long-term management of the activity (see also FSM 2335.4, 2340.3, 2343.9, 2721.71.)

71.3 - Scope

Sections 71.1 through 71.9b apply to proposals, applications, and authorizations for:

1. A new target range;
2. An existing target range when the permit is terminating and the holder wants a new permit; and
3. An existing target range when the permit is to be amended to address a change in the authorized use or improvements.

71.4 - Application Requirements

1. A proposal that meets the second-level screening criteria (36 CFR 251.54) and is accepted as an application is subject to the Agency's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures (FSH 1909.15).
2. Once a proposal is accepted as an application, require the applicant to submit a safety plan (SP) and (unless the application is for an archery range) an environmental stewardship plan (ESP), provided that if the application involves selection of a site, an ESP and SP do not have to be submitted until a site is selected.

71.5 - References

Consult the following references for guidance in reviewing the design and operation of target ranges and in reviewing environmental stewardship plans (ESPs) and safety plans (SPs) for target ranges. In addition, advise target range applicants and holders to consult the following references for guidance in designing and operating target ranges and in developing ESPs and SPs required for target ranges. Copies of the following documents are available for inspection at each forest supervisor's office that administers permits for target ranges.

1. Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council. *Environmental Management at Operating Outdoor Small Arms Firing Ranges (SMART-2)*. 2005. 125 p. Available online at <http://www.itrcweb.org>.
2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2. *Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges*. EPA-902-B-01-001. June 2005 or Latest Edition. 82 p. Available on the internet at www.epa.gov/region2/
3. "Do You Use Best Management Practices for Lead at Your Outdoor Shooting Range?" EPA-902-F-00-001, Fact Sheet. Available online at www.epa.gov/region2/
4. National Rifle Association of America. *Range Technical Team Program*. Fairfax, VA.
5. National Rifle Association of America. *NRA Range Source Book*. Fairfax, VA. 1999 or latest edition. 525 p. Available on the internet at www.nrahq.org/shootingrange/
6. National Shooting Sports Foundation. *Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management of Outdoor Shooting Ranges*. Newtown, CT. 1997. 139 p. Available online at www.rangeinfo.org
7. National Shooting Sports Foundation. *Environmental Stewardship Plan Development Program*. Newtown, CT. 2005. CD-ROM.
8. International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Wildlife Management Institute, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (sponsors).

Proceedings of the Third National Shooting Range Symposium or latest edition. Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D.C. 1996. 509 p.

9. Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute. *Lead Mobility at Shooting Ranges*. Newtown, CT. 1995. 118 p.

10. U.S. Department of the Army. Military Handbook - Range Facilities and Miscellaneous Training Facilities Other Than Buildings. 1992. 130 p. (applicable to military ranges only).

The following references provide information on archery ranges:

11. Davison, Paul H. *NFAA and IFAA Archery and Bowhunter Range Guidelines*. 2000. 21 p. Available online at www.texasarchery.org

12. Federation Internationale de Tir a l'Arc. *FITA Constitution and Rules Book 2: Outdoor Target Archery*. 2004. See pp. 1 and 37. Available online at www.archery.org.

71.6 - Siting Decisions

When establishing a new site for or adding facilities to a target range, consult reference materials related to siting decisions early, preferably during the screening process, to determine whether the areas proposed are suitable. Consult chapter 3, section 3.5, of the National Shooting Sports Foundation's *Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management of Outdoor Shooting Ranges* (sec. 71.5), which provides information on range siting and orientation and includes a site checklist, a summary of ecological criteria for range siting, and recommendations about the type of sites to avoid when locating target ranges. Also consult the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s *Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual* and section 1, chapter 3, article 2, of the *NRA Range Source Book* (sec. 71.5) for further information about making siting decisions.

71.7 - Environmental Stewardship

1. Baseline Site Condition Assessment. A site condition assessment must be completed to establish a baseline condition prior to issuance of a special use permit for a target range other than for archery (see EM-2160-2, *Forest Service Guide to Land Transactions*, pp. 25-29 and worksheet 5, for guidance in conducting a site inspection). It may be advisable to conduct the inspection earlier in the process to identify any factors that might result in reconsideration of the site by the proponent.

2. Environmental Stewardship Plan (ESP). Except as provided in section 71.4, authorized officers shall advise all proponents that they must submit an ESP before their application can be processed for target ranges (other than archery ranges), including a new target range, a new authorization for an existing target range, and modification of an authorization for an existing target range. A Forest Service regional environmental engineer shall review the ESP prior to acceptance by the agency. Alternatively, the

applicant may submit an EPA certificate of recognition indicating that the proposed ESP is consistent with EPA's *Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges*, and either certify that there are no changes or identify any changes made in response to EPA's review. Information about obtaining the certificate of recognition is available by calling (212) 637-4133 or online at www.epa.gov/region2/waste/. When the Forest Service reviews an ESP, the following provisions shall apply:

a. Recommend that the proponent read chapter 6 of the National Shooting Sports Foundation's publication, *Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management of Outdoor Shooting Ranges* (sec. 71.5), which provides information on development and implementation of an ESP. In addition, recommend that the proponent follow the format on pages 6-11 of that publication in developing an ESP. Appendix C of the document has sample ESPs for shotgun, rifle, and pistol ranges that may be helpful in developing site-specific plans.

b. Instruct the proponent to utilize and follow *Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges* (sec. 71.5), and to include all of the following in the ESP:

(1) Discussion of the physical characteristics of the proposed range, including range size, soil pH, existence of wetlands, evidence of and potential for erosion in the area of proposed lead deposition, and other site specific factors that will affect design.

(2) Operational characteristics, including expected use of the range, volume of lead accumulation, size of bullets to be used, shooting directions and patterns, and life expectancy of the range.

(3) Design features and siting decisions aimed at preventing or minimizing the release of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants into the environment.

(4) Planned bullet and shot containment techniques.

(5) Design or operating procedures to keep lead in the planned area of deposition and in its metallic form.

(6) Planned, periodic recovery, reclamation, and recycling of spent ammunition and other substances, including availability of resources and cost to implement the proposal.

(7) Noise control measures, such as siting, vegetative management, and engineering technology, and, where applicable, provisions for compliance with State and local law regarding noise control.

Ensure that the applicant corrects any deficiencies in the ESP identified by the Forest Service or EPA. Utilize *Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management of Outdoor Shooting Ranges* and the EPA's *Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges* (listed in sec. 71.5) as guides. Ensure that the applicant attests

in the ESP that the applicant will maintain or improve the condition of the site as identified in the baseline site condition assessment.

3. Operating Plan. Ensure that the operating plan for a target range contains the following:

- a. Litter control measures.
- b. A requirement for periodic monitoring by the Forest Service to ensure effectiveness of the ESP. The monitoring must be reviewed by a Forest Service regional environmental engineer or by a contractor with comparable experience. Base the frequency and scope of the monitoring on site-specific conditions, but at a minimum, monitoring must be conducted every 5 years. Include monitoring of soil at the site and monitoring of any surface water at the site. Monitoring is subject to cost recovery as provided by 36 CFR 251.58(d)(1) through (d)(4) and (g)(4). Consult the applicable land management plan or project implementation decision, associated NEPA documentation, and *Environmental Management at Operating Outdoor Small Arms Firing Ranges (SMART-2)* (listed in sec. 71.5) in determining the frequency and scope of monitoring appropriate for the type of range and site conditions. The monitoring shall take place prior to termination or reissuance of the permit so as to inform the end-of-term site condition assessment (sec. 71.7, para. 4).
- c. A requirement for preparation of a monitoring report by the Forest Service.
- d. A statement signed by the holder's authorized agent attesting to compliance with the monitoring requirements in sec. 71.7, paragraph 3b. At a minimum, this statement must include the following:

Pursuant to Forest Service Handbook 2709.14 section 71.7, paragraph 3, and the special use permit for [name] Target Range, the Forest Service has monitored the permit area to determine the compliance of [name] Target Range with all applicable environmental laws and with generally accepted standards of environmental stewardship, including but not limited to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Best Management Practices for Lead at Outdoor Shooting Ranges and the standards in the National Shooting Sports Foundation's Environmental Aspects of Construction and Management of Outdoor Shooting Ranges and has prepared a monitoring report. We have received the results of that report and have made and documented corrections of all deficiencies noted by the monitor. [Name] Target Range is ready for public use as of [date].

- e. A provision stating that the Forest Service reserves the right to approve the selection of the monitor. The Forest Service shall notify the holder of the reasons for rejecting a monitor.

4. End-of-Term Site Condition Assessment.

- a. The special use permit must contain a provision that requires an on-site inspection by the authorized officer, the regional environmental engineer, and the holder at least 180 days prior to termination. The inspection is considered routine administration and consists of a site walk-through and evaluation of results from monitoring to identify site conditions that must be addressed either in a final restoration and response plan (if the use will not be reauthorized) or prior to issuance of a new permit. Compare the condition of the site at the end of the permit term to the baseline condition to determine appropriate restoration and response measures that are the responsibility of the holder.
- b. The response plan should provide for investigation, engineering evaluation, cost analysis, an action plan, and removal and remedial action. The response plan must include measures to prevent release into the environment of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants following expiration of the authorization. If the use will not be reauthorized, the response plan must provide for restoration of the site upon termination of the permit.

71.8 - Safety Measures

1. Safety Plan (SP).

- a. Except as provided in section 71.4, authorized officers shall advise all proponents for target ranges that they shall submit an SP before their application may be processed. The SP must address safety in the context of design and operation of the proposed target range. The SP must identify design and operational specifications, such as range rules, the number of safety officers, and projectile containment within the intended area. In establishing the permit area for a target range, utilize natural features, such as hills or high rocks, to enclose the site.
- b. Require the applicant to have an on-site review of the proposed design conducted by a disinterested range technical advisor. Additionally, require documentation of the on-site review that identifies any deficiencies. Before authorizing commencement of operations, require that the deficiencies be corrected and that the disinterested range technical advisor attest that the design and proposed operation of the target range meet generally accepted guidelines of safety, including the guidelines in the National Rifle Association's *The Range Source Book*, and is ready for public use.

2. Operating Plan. The operating plan for a target range must include provisions governing safety evaluations, including:

- a. A provision requiring that a safety evaluation of the target range be conducted at the holder's expense at least every 5 years by a disinterested range technical adviser to verify design and maintenance work as planned. This provision also must require that the range technical adviser prepare an evaluation report and submit it to the

authorized officer. The Forest Service reserves the right to approve the selection of the range technical adviser. However, the Agency shall provide a rationale for its rejection.

b. A provision requiring that after each safety evaluation of the target range, the holder submit a statement, signed by an authorized agent of the holder, of compliance with the safety evaluation requirements in section 41.46h, paragraph 2a. At a minimum, this statement must include the following:

Pursuant to Forest Service Handbook 2709.14 section 71.8, paragraph 2a, and the special use permit for [name] Target Range, we have had an evaluation to determine the compliance of [name] Target Range with generally accepted standards of safety, including the guidance in the National Rifle Association's *NRA Range Source Book*. We have received the results of that evaluation and have made and documented corrections of all deficiencies noted by the range technical adviser. [Name] Target Range is ready for public use as of [date].

c. A provision requiring that an annual self-evaluation of operations be conducted by a safety officer with the requisite education or training and experience. This provision also must require that the safety officer prepare an evaluation report and submit it to the authorized officer.

d. A provision requiring the holder to report to the authorized officer all accidents at the target range caused by discharge of a firearm or release of an arrow that result in property damage, personal injury, or death as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than 24 hours after the accident occurs. This provision also must require the holder to complete a written report of the accident and submit it to the authorized officer.

71.9a - Administration

1. Authorized officers shall follow procedures found in FSM 2716 for administering target range authorizations.
2. The authorized officer shall make every effort to resolve any noncompliance with the terms and conditions of a target range permit with respect to hazardous materials. Pursuant to FSM 2160.41, prior to any revocation, non-emergency suspension, or non-emergency hazardous substance cleanup activities that may result in Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority being invoked, the authorized officer shall consult with the Directors of Recreation and Heritage Resources and Engineering in the Washington Office and the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) Pollution Control Team through the Washington Office for concurrence that remedial management options have been explored.
3. Encourage holders of target range permits to develop an Environmental Stewardship Plans (ESP) and submit it to the Forest Service for review (or submit an EPA certificate

of recognition) prior to expiration of their permit (sec. 71.7) if reauthorization of the use is sought.

71.9b - Agreements Pertaining to Specific Target Ranges

Forest Service units may enter into agreements with other entities, including State or local governments or private organizations, related to specific target ranges to address technical assistance, siting, design, safety, administrative oversight, financing, maintenance, operations, and other issues concerning target ranges (FSM 1580; FSH 1509.11). These agreements should be reviewed by OGC, including OGC's Pollution Control Team, before they are executed.

72 - Park, Playground [Reserved]

73 - Golf Course [Reserved]

74 - Cave, Cavern [Reserved]

75 - Racetrack [Reserved]

76 - Miscellaneous Day Use Facilities - Picnic Area, Trailhead, Scenic Overlook, Rest Area [Reserved]

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78 - Hunting Enhancement [Reserved]