



SHOOT ORGANISERS' CODE OF PRACTICE

The SA Wingshooters Association supports the concept of Community Shoots as an important component of natural resource based rural development. This is especially important in rural areas with limited economies and reduced employment opportunities. In such shoots, which are usually held for the benefit of a local school or church (gun-free zones in terms of current gun control legislation) and where school children may come into contact with wingshooters and their gundogs (and alcohol is consumed at the evening functions), the shoot organisers and the wingshooters have to be **very careful** of the consequences of ill-considered actions.

Wingshooting has become an accepted part of agricultural practice in many commercial farming areas globally. For this reason, the education of landowners, shoot organisers, guides and professional hunters is a high priority. The pocketbook of SA Wingshooters on Codes of Conduct (and especially on Firearm Safety) is thus considered prescribed reading for shoot organisers. Also, because long travelling distances are often involved, the need for reliable and competent shoot organisers and hunting guides with good gundogs is paramount.

Here is a basic code of practice for shoot organisers:



1. Clear date of shoot with SA Wingshooters

This helps to prevent shoot dates clashing with other shoots, sometimes even in adjacent areas. The Association will advise the organisers on provincial hunting seasons, protected birds, etc.

2. Inform the Police and Provincial Authority

This is particularly important in view of the Firearms Control Act and the requirement to keep certain public areas (i.e. schools) gun free. Most provincial conservation authorities are helpful and officials may even agree to attend the shoot and issue hunting licences.

3. Conduct a bird census and survey

It is really impossible to hold a viable large shoot without some basic groundwork, and reliable bird counts are the first essential. The general position of coveys must be known and, in the case of waterfowl, the flight-lines and feeding places. Contact SA Wingshooters for advice.

4. Set realistic bag limits

The Association supports bag limits as part of hunter ethics. Reasonable bag limits per gun or better still per team must be set and **must** be within with the provincial regulations at all times. No public displays of shot dead birds should be allowed. Avoid upsetting minors and non-shooting members of the community.

5. Each team must have a good guide

The guide must know all the selected farms and the neighbouring farms and must provide a signed letter of permission from the landowner to each shooter. He must have the authority to enforce safety and to discipline shooters if necessary. The guide or landowner or their friends may not shoot with the paying guests.

6. No prizes for shooting birds!

The Association **emphatically condemns all forms of competition** to reward those who killed the most birds. Even novelty prizes (e.g. for the 'longest spurs on a francolin' or the 'longest comb on a guinea fowl') are forbidden. The word 'prize' may never be used. **The clay target shooting range is the place for shooting competitions.**

7. No Alcohol before and during the shoot

This must specifically be stated and enforced by the organisers. In the case of an accident, an accused who has consumed any alcohol, even if only one beer, will find it very difficult to defend himself in a criminal court and so will the shoot organiser who allowed it. The presence of minors is another important consideration. Drunken behaviour must be reported to the Police immediately and the persons escorted from the premises.

8. Use indemnity forms

The S.A. Wingshooters Association can be contacted for a copy of a reasonably comprehensive and suitable form.

9. Report those misbehaving

Organisers must be strict and take decisive action when someone misbehaves or acts unsafely. SA Wingshooters must be informed immediately and provided with the names and particulars. Anyone who acts threateningly or violently **must be reported to the Police at once.** This is not negotiable and there are no first warnings.

10. No riot guns

All legal requirements about magazine capacity and the use of semi-autos for shooting gamebirds must be observed. Riot guns are not allowed — they are considered unethical because of poor patterns and high wounding rates.

11. No shooting at furred game!

Birdshot is totally unsuitable for furred game like jackals or warthogs and the use of rifles in a wingshooting line is absolutely forbidden. All shots at gamebirds should be aimed at 'blue sky'. Absolutely no shooting from vehicles — this is dangerous and also in breach of provincial hunting legislation.

12. Gundogs recommended

Depending on the type of shoot, gundogs are recommended or may be compulsory. SA Wingshooters will assist organisers to approach suitable field trail associations and gundog clubs.