

MECHANICAL SAFETIES 101

When shooters are convinced that their safety is operating “normally” **BEWARE!** “Normally” would indicate that the safety is operating like most safeties do. This brings up a basic discussion of the dangers of using mechanical safeties.

In a bolt action rifle, when a live round is left in the chamber with the bolt closed, the action is “cocked” and the firing pin is pointed directly at a live primer! The firearm is configured to fire, in spite of any other outside influences like a mechanical safety.

Personally, I will **never** place a safety lever in the “SAFE” position with a live round in the chamber, ALL KINDS of bad things can happen. First, it is possible that the safety lever and related parts may have tolerances which would prevent the safety from blocking the firing pin at all! Secondly, firearms can and DO discharge when safety levers are moved from “safe” to “fire”! This is common when triggers are adjusted with minimum sear engagement.

A safe firearm is achieved through safe handling techniques. To insure a bolt action firearm is safe with a live round in the chamber, it is only necessary to raise the bolt handle. A bolt action firearm cannot fire with the bolt raised in this manner.

It is especially important to instruct youngsters in safe firearm handling techniques when a live round is present in the chamber.

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