

## Basic Archery Safety

Being conscious of safety while shooting arrows from bows seems like it would be common sense but it is not. Archery is not an unsafe sport, but archers can make it unsafe. When we shoot we need to be aware of the safety rules of the archery range or field. Also we need to be considerate of other archers around us. We need be cautious of those who might act in an unsafe manner, and of unsafe equipment, and even unsafe shooting conditions.

Do not take chances with yourself or your archery equipment. Goofing around can cause serious harm to you or others and could damage your equipment. When you first arrive at new archery range always ask to see and obey the rules of the range. If you are shooting at your own range at home, make some rules for the range, so that others will know what is appropriate at your range. Make sure that there is proper supervision, especially when there are beginning archers around. Never point a nocked arrow anywhere but at a target.

**Equipment.** It is important to check your equipment frequently to ensure its safe use. The first thing to look for is that the bowstring is securely fitted into the grooves of the limbs. If it is not, unstring your bow and then restring it so that the string fits properly into the grooves. Check your arrows for any problems, especially carbon arrows, to see if they are bent or for chips or cracks that might cause the arrow to shatter. Also look for cracked nocks or loose or missing vanes. These could cause the arrow to fly poorly. Also check your string for a loose serving or if your string is frayed or excessively worn. This could cause your string to break at full draw, potentially causing serious harm to you or to other archers around you, let alone the damage it might cause an expensive bow. Check your riser look for a loose arrow rest, or loose sight, also check for cracks or chips in the riser. You should check all these things before you shoot each time.

Take proper care of your bow. Never store your bow in a hot environment, especially in dry heat, as this can cause your limbs to warp or even break. Carry your equipment in a hard case so that it cannot be easily damaged in transit. Wax your bow strings regularly, this can help to prolong the life of your string. Always wipe down your bow, especially if it has gotten wet to prevent water damage. Never dry fire your bow (This means to never let go of your string with no arrow on it.).

**Clothing.** Your clothing can also become a safety concern. Wear comfortable shoes, ones that protect your feet if you might accidentally step on an arrow while searching for it. Shirts and blouses should fit well. Baggy shirts should not be worn. They can cause the string to catch on any excess material and cause your arrow to fly improperly. You can prevent some of this by using a chest protector. This helps to keep the string away from your shirt or blouse. If you have long hair, always tie your it back behind your head.

**Rules Of The Range.** On the range, always have adequate distance behind the targets or a backstop to stop any arrows that miss the target. Only have archers on the shooting line. Never advance down range from the shooting line if anyone is still shooting. Only nook an arrow while on the shooting line and only point that arrow toward an approved target. Allow enough space on the line between each shooter and behind the shooting line for archers and archer`s equipment. Always make sure that you are not crowding others on the shooting line.

If you have to go behind the target to look for arrows, let all archers know that you are there. Prop a bow or a quiver in front of the target so no one will mistake the target for being open. Use

a quiver. This not only makes picking and sorting your arrows easier but also more convenient. When pulling arrows out of the target, remember to always pull each arrow out straight. If needed put your hand on the target mat and pull the arrow out with the other hand. Never stand directly behind someone who is pulling arrows, an arrow may come out rapidly, often at eye level.

If you keep archery safety first in your mind, you should rarely have problems. If archery safety is always the first consideration when shooting, then archery can be fun.