

MOUNTED SHOOTING EVENT EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES



**MOUNTED
SHOOTING
SUPPLIES**

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INTRODUCTION

This presentation is primarily focused on the equipment and supplies utilized for Mounted Shooting competition events.

It is important to have a good understanding of the equipment needed and the operational aspects of the equipment and supplies. Also it is important to be aware of the possible effects resulting from failure or problems with any of the equipment or supplies. There are several important things that are critical to running an event, which if not prepared for, can derail the entire event. These are noted in the applicable sections.

This book is provided by
Mounted Shooting Supplies .com
which has been supporting Clubs since the beginning of Mounted Shooting with equipment and supplies. We have seen most everything possible from good success to costly failures. Our mission is to help you be in the Top Success Category. In addition to the overview of the equipment and supplies described herein, there is additional helpful technical information provided for the respective products on **MountedShootingSupplies.com**. If we can be of additional help, please feel free to contact us:
info@mountedshootingsupplies.com
It does not need to be directly related to buying equipment or supplies. We are always glad to help!

*Steve
&
Arlene*



ARENA EQUIPMENT

The equipment and supplies needed for a Mounted Shooting Event consists of 10 main components:

Target Bases - 10 each
Balloon Poles - 10 each
Balloon Sticks/holders
Air Compressor or Pump
Balloons - Event Type

Blanks - 45LC
Timer System
Stop and Go Light
Barrels 2-3 each
Balloon Setters

TARGET BASES

Target Bases are utilized to position and hold the balloon targets in a defined pattern in the arena. There are several types of bases:



Hollow plastic bases



solid molded rubber



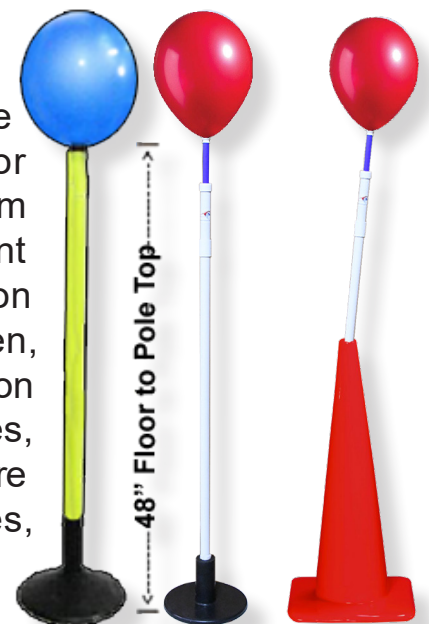
road cone

The “purpose designed” bases do a better job of holding the balloon poles straight and are more durable. The plastic bases utilize a 24” tube as a socket for holding the balloon pole. The solid rubber bases are molded to directly hold the balloon pole. If road cones are used, in the interest of safety, it is recommended not to use any heavy weights such as steel frames, hubs or cans of cement, inside the cone, for weight or to hold the balloon poles straight.

The target bases are durable, with a low probability of a show-stopping failure.

BALLOON POLES

Balloon Poles are inserted into the base or the cone to hold the balloon (on a Balloon Stick or Holder) at 48” height. The poles have a short upper socket section for holding the balloon stick or holder. The Shooting Stars Poles (available from mountedshootingsupplies.com) have an internal stop to prevent the balloon sticks from dropping down into the bottom section of the pole. While fairly durable, the PVC Poles can be broken, therefore several spares are recommended. To assist the balloon setters in placing the select color balloons on the proper poles, some clubs paint half of the poles to denote the balloon color. A more professional durable option is a half-set of solid red PVC poles, available from Mounted Shooting Supplies or add a band of colored tape to the desired poles.



BALLOON STICKS AND HOLDERS

Balloons are held by two different methods, either sticks or holders, which differ with the type of balloon inflation used.

Air Sticks - used with high-pressure air compressors.



Air Chuck



Air Compressor



The **Air Sticks** have a ring on top for attaching the balloon and an air valve-stem on the bottom for inflation. The balloon, un-inflated is first attached to the ring and then the valve-stem is inserted into an air chuck for inflation. (Similar to inflating a tire).

Balloon Holders are utilized with a low pressure - high volume pump. The balloon is first inflated on the pump air nozzle, then the inflated balloon stem is placed into the slot in the balloon holder head. This process is fairly simple, fast & efficient.



See video of the Compact Pump with balloon holders in action on [HTTP://www.mountedshooting supplies.com/store/product477.html](http://www.mountedshooting supplies.com/store/product477.html)

Generally, 30 balloon sticks or holders are needed to support the balloons recycling needs for a medium size event (25 Riders), increasing to 50 for larger events.

Note: The air valve in the balloon sticks is exposed to a lot of dirt ingestion. Occasionally, dirt will lodge in the valve seat. Sometimes embedding in the rubber seat seal, which will result in quick balloon deflation. Sometimes requiring a balloon change for the rider-run. The balloon stick can usually be cleaned out with a blast of high pressure air or repaired by the replacement of the air (Schrader) valve. Available inexpensively at an automotive store.

SHOTGUN CLASS BALLOON HOLDERS

The **Shotgun Class**, on the rundown segment, positions the balloons in two clusters:



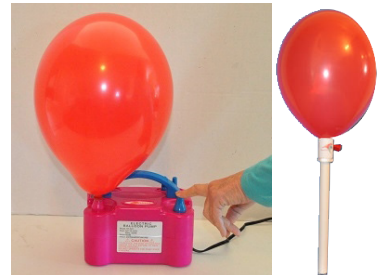
One, with 3 balloons and the other with 2 balloons. Specialized balloon holders are utilized to adapt the clusters to a single balloon pole. The adapters mount on top of a single balloon pole and have sockets for 3 or 2 balloon sticks or balloon holders.



BALLOON INFLATION SYSTEMS

Air Pumps – Two Types:

Low Pressure system utilizes a compact low-pressure balloon inflation pump where the balloon is first inflated by the pump and then attached to a quick attach balloon holder (No knot required). The low-pressure pumps are fast and are compact, portable and inexpensive.



For medium size events 2 - 3 pumps are needed.

For larger events, additional pumps are recommended.



The **High-Pressure system** (utilized with Balloon Sticks) uses a larger air compressor. The compressor should have a minimum pumping capacity of 5 CFM @90 PSI or alternatively use several units totaling 6 - 8 CFM.

Important Note:

An anemic air compressor, or failure of the air compressor can bring the event to a stop. So when defining your setup, consider a backup solution.

BALLOONS

Most everyone regards the Balloons as a pretty simple component of mounted shooting. But there are some aspects of balloons that need added attention, if you don't want to experience a "Show-Stopper"!



The balloons utilized in Mounted Shooting are 9" Latex **Helium Grade**, Bio Degradable (a requirement for most arenas). This size and type of balloon is the optimum balance between Target Size, ease of handling (event processing), cost and Biodegradability. Larger diameter balloons cost more, have thicker latex and take longer to disintegrate. Event balloons should be purchased from suppliers who are familiar with Mounted Shooting use of balloons. The generic balloons, sold as party balloons in consumer stores, usually are not well suited for use in mounted shooting. Party balloons have longer stems to allow for knot tying and string attachment. This longer stem will cause the balloon to lay on its side or blow around excessively when placed on a Balloon Stick. The generic "party balloons" may not be Helium Quality and are often beyond the manufacturer's recommended shelf-life and probably have not been stored in favorable conditions. Also the small quantity packaging adds process handling time and creates a mess in the balloon setters area.

Operational Note:

In fairness to all riders, the "Balloon Setters" should be instructed to inflate the balloons to a consistent size throughout the event. It is possible to over-inflate a 9" balloon to as much as 14" diameter with an elongated stem. Usually posting a picture of a properly inflated (Round – 9" diameter) in the balloon setters area, will help.

BALLOON INFLATION

1. Over-Inflation is the most frequent cause of balloon failures. The Balloons are designed and produced to be inflated to 9" Diameter. Without some guidance instruction, Balloon Setters will typically overinflate balloons to a point just short of popping (learned by trial & error).

The thickness of the balloon latex is directly correlated to the balloons inflation diameter size. If overinflated, they may pop – often at a later point in time. If the balloons are inflated to the point of resembling an **inverted Pear shape**, they are over-inflated, with a high probability of popping, creating delays and inconvenience for event operations.



2. The compressed-air output temperature from a small air compressor, when working continuously, will usually be hot = 90 Degrees Plus. Which, when used in an over inflated balloon will often result in a delayed pop. This typically occurs when the Air Compressor is a smaller volume unit and is working harder to supply the balloon air demands of the event. The air compressor, should have a minimum rated capacity of **5 cubic feet per minute (CFM) @ 90 PSI**. Also the compressor should not be exposed to direct sunlight at **high ambient temperatures (90 Deg. +)** when under high flow demand. When the hot air is injected into the balloon, the temperature increase over several minutes, can expand the balloon size just enough to the popping point.

3. Worse yet, the combination of the above factors, balloon over inflation, with hot compressor air and then exposed to direct hot sunlight while awaiting to be used, there is a high likelihood of a pop. It only takes a few extra degrees of heat to exceed the bursting point of an over-inflated balloon. The time for this occurrence varies depending on the degree of balloon over inflation. So the cause of the pop is not realized or associated with the combined over inflation and the hot air expansion effect.

4. One other occasional problem, is the type of Balloon Sticks being used. Early generation or homemade balloon sticks utilize a fairly large style head or cap for attaching the balloon. The larger size of the caps tend to stretch the balloon latex, therefore creating a thinner - weaker zone. When coupled with over inflation and heat, will contribute to balloon failure, again often delayed.

5. Balloon storage is another not so obvious factor. Balloons should be stored in a dark environment at temperatures of 75 degrees or less and humidity of less than 50%. Under these conditions, the manufacturers recommended balloon shelf Life is generally 1 year. If these storage conditions are exceeded, the shelf life, exponentially diminishes very quickly.

6. To reduce shipping cost, the balloons are packed tightly. Normally this isn't a problem for Mounted Shooting use, as they are typically unpacked and used in less than one-month. But if they are going to be stored longer, then unpack and distribute them into several larger boxes to relieve the weight and pressure load, especially on the balloons in the bottom of the carton.

BALLOON STORAGE

Balloons are critical to an event and importance of storage conditions should not be overlooked. Over the years of providing millions of Balloons for events, Mounted Shooting Supplies has noted numerous instances of Balloon deterioration due to improper balloon storage.



Latex Balloons have a shelf life of approximately 1 year, when stored in proper conditions as follows:

1. Balloons are shipped in boxes packed tightly for shipping economy. This is okay for short periods of 1 month. Balloons packed too tightly, for extended time periods, tend to flatten-out on bottom layers. Also when exposed to excessive heat or humidity, Balloons can deteriorate quickly and can actually become sticky or gummy.
2. If Balloons are to be stored longer than 1 month, we recommend re-boxing Balloons into a long or larger box or container, loosely packed in a layer approximately 3 Inch deep.
3. Store at a temperature of less than 75 degrees and humidity 50% or less.
4. Store in dark closet or area out of direct sunlight.

Mounted Shooting Supplies stocks and stores Balloons in the above prescribed conditions, until packed for shipping. Our recommendation is, buy only the estimated number of Balloons needed for the event plus 50%. Buying and storing large quantities of Balloons for a series of events is not recommended. Mounted Shooting Supplies stocks and ships balloons within hours of receipt of order. Plus you will get high quality fresh Balloons specifically for Mounted Shooting.



AMMO BLANKS

Be sure to order the blanks needed for the event several weeks ahead of the event. In the situation of a lost shipment, ammo (unlike balloons) cannot be expedited. So, make sure the blanks are in-hand one to two weeks in advance. It is a real “Hassle” to have to cancel the event (and refund everyone’s entry fees) because of missing Blanks or Balloons!



Blanks must be protected against getting wet. Another “Event Wrecker”. The associations have specific rules and procedures regarding, certification and control, distribution and return of the ammo blanks at events. They are based on safety and liability considerations. Make sure you are in compliance with the requirements. Also make sure you are familiar and in-compliance with any Federal & State Storage and Transportation Laws for the Blanks.



Note: Best to refrain anyone from using the Term **Bullets! Always use the term **Blanks**. (Can cause undesirable confusion and concerns!)**

TIMER SYSTEM

A high Quality timer system is fundamental for official competition events. The FarmTek Timer system is prevalent and is typically Interfaced with a portable computer for record keeping and where instantaneous results and standing is needed. Generally a time display is utilized for display of the rider’s run-time or adjusted (Penalties) score. The display is expensive, but certainly makes for a more enjoyable and upscale event, for both riders and audience. Most larger arenas provide timers and scoreboards. But if you plan on holding events in smaller arenas, this will be an important consideration.



Important note:

The timer system is a critical event component. Lose the ability to time and the event is basically over! While failures of the FarmTek timer console are rare, the eyes have batteries which need replacing at intervals. Occasionally, the eyes and tripod stands get damaged by horses or tractors. So first make sure you have spare batteries and preferably at minimum, a spare set of timer eyes. Better yet, a complete back-up system. A lot less expensive than refunding everyone’s entry fees! Many clubs/events utilize dual timer systems (arena eyes stacked) which, quickly will pay for itself with the saved cost of reruns and rider frustration and provides a backup system.





STOP AND GO LIGHT

A Stop and Go Light is the preferred method of signaling riders when they are authorized to begin the run.



Range Master hand signals are varied and the confusion or misinterpretation by the riders have led to many a safety problem and to rider frustration. New LED light products have improved visibility and their extreme (very) bright color changing led lights project over a large distance, providing an unmistakable stop/go signal. (Available inexpensively from Mounted Shooting Supplies). The savings of using Hand-Signals isn't worth the associated potential problems. As an alternative to a Stop and Go light at minimum, Red and Green Flags can be used.

BARRELS

55-gallon plastic, steel, or fabric barrels are used for competition (plastic is preferred and easier on the riders and horses legs). Collapsible fabric barrels are available but used mostly for practice (providing ease of portability & storage). Usually the arena facilities have barrels available.



Note: Barrels are a prime visual focal point in any event. For a small one-time cost, you can buy custom barrel covers with your club logo. These will enhance your club credibility, and quality image. Probably one of the least expensive techniques of "Branding" your club image. Companies spend large amounts to build their Brand Image. Here you can build your brand for a relative small cost and hide a dirty rusty barrel!

BALLOON SETTERS WORK STATION

Balloon setters are one of the top **“Make or Break”** and **labor intensive** components of a successful event. The setup needs to be well thought-out, in aspects of Safety, efficiency and effectiveness and needed crew size.

The balloon processing area (preparation, inflation and next round storage) should have adequate space for the crew to operate without being crowded or cramped and to allow easy access to the arena. The balloon inflation process, should operate like an assembly line, being organized for easy flow of balloons from the box or container onto tables with a multi-station air distribution system (available from Mounted Shooting Supplies) or compact pumps, then placed in a balloon holding station, ready for the next round – rider.

The balloon setters pace is pretty arduous. So, provide some chairs for the setters to sit for a few moments between runs. Also be sure to provide them with water or refreshments. Most important, make sure you have an adequate sized crew, (number of crew and physical size - not small children!), for the size of the event.



If the balloon station is exposed to the arena, it is very important to utilize protective panels to enclose the balloon setter area. The panels should be covered with banners or some other means to prevent flying dirt or debris (horseshoes) from entering the work area. Generally this is an ideal location for Club or sponsor banners, typically 4'x 8' – 10' wide work best. Also, banners are important, to

prevent the horses from seeing and being distracted or concerned about what's going on in the balloon crew station.

Operational Note:

In fairness to all riders, the “Balloon Setters” should be instructed to inflate the balloons to a consistent size throughout the event. It is possible to over-inflate a 9” balloon to as much as 14” diameter with an elongated stem. Usually posting a picture of a properly inflated (Round – 9” diameter) in the balloon setters area, will help.



EVENT IMAGE ENHANCEMENT

While this section isn't critical to the operation of an event, if you are interested in attracting new members-riders and being recognized for "First Class Events", one of the easiest things to do is to add colorful banners to the arena and areas which provide high impact visibility to both riders and audience and other influential dignitaries.



Banners are one of the most inexpensive things you can add to your event to demonstrate the credibility of your club

and additionally gain support from your sponsors. You can charge the sponsors for display of their banners, but the most important priority of the banners is not to generate meager income, but to enhance the impression of your clubs credibility and success.



Also as mentioned above, use club or sponsor logo barrel covers to add more impact to the event. If you had to pay for that kind of advertising and promotion you would be broke! So create a club banner(s) and get your sponsors (even if no \$ input) to provide a high quality large banner (3' x 6' to 4' x 8' generally cost under \$100). **Mounted Shooting Supplies provides free Custom Made Club Banners to Sponsored Clubs.**



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The ideas expressed are meant to
enlighten those interested in
organizing and providing smooth running
top-notch mounted shooting events.

Thoughts are borne out of experience,
both successful and reflective failure,
to provide insightful actions that
support highly successful events.

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