

How To Become An NRA/NMLRA Certified Muzzleloader Instructor



As Americans, our heritage is firmly based in the use of muzzleloading guns. Our love and passion for muzzleloaders is broadcast every time we go to the range, head into the woods, or eagerly open our new copy of *Muzzle Blasts* magazine. The best way we can honor the history

and tradition of muzzleloaders, is to pass on our knowledge to our fellow citizens and the next generation by becoming an NRA/NMLRA Certified Muzzleloader Instructor.



The process of becoming a NRA/NMLRA Certified Muzzleloader Instructor is a challenging and rewarding process that starts the first time you pressed the trigger of your favorite muzzleloading gun. The first pre-qualification of becoming an official instructor is to have the love for all things traditional and primitive, have the skills, patience, and attentiveness needed to safely, efficiently, and proficiently use all things muzzleloader: flintlocks, percussion cap-locks, rifles, pistols, shotguns, fowlers, cap and ball revolvers, and yes even those new-fangled modern inlines.

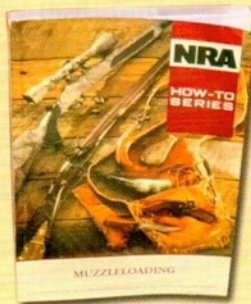
Years ago, thanks to the cooperation of leadership within the training divisions of both organizations, the NRA and NMLRA agreed to share the same curriculum. The current "Certified Muzzleloader" curriculum, written by former NMLRA President Marty Murphy, covers all types of muzzleloading guns. As an instructor, you must be proficient with muzzleloading rifles, pistols and shotguns, in order to be certified to teach the curriculum.

The next step is to find an NMLRA trainer or NRA training counselor who is capable of certifying Muzzleloader Instructors. I happen to be able to certify both NRA and NMLRA Instructors. I like to get to know my Instructor Candidates before the class by working with or meeting them (when possible), phone conversations,

questionnaires, and email correspondence. It is part of my job to "vet" each Instructor Candidate and determine if they will be safe, responsible educators and ambassadors of proper muzzleloading gun usage.

I run my Instructor Certification courses in three (very long) days. I can do this because I like to keep my classes small and I have the ability to customize my schedule as long as I meet the objectives set by the NRA/NMLRA. The following is an account of how I run my three-day certification course. Other Trainers and Training Counselors may schedule things slightly differently based upon class size and range availability, but regardless of whom you train under, you should receive the same information and meet the same objectives.

Day one is spent entirely in the classroom and starts off with Instructor Candidates completing the written test from the end user "student" class. This is a required part of the "Pre-Qualification" process. This test is given "cold" without any preparation. Instructor Candidates must pass this written test with a score of 90% or better.



The student textbook used in the Certified Muzzleloader Course is the *NRA How-To Series: Muzzleloading Book* by Marty Murphy. You will be supplied a copy of all student and instructor materials by your Trainer or Training Counselor, however, it is not a bad idea to pick up a copy of this excellent text prior to the course so that you can study the proper nomenclature and procedures. The book can be purchased at the NRA Program Material Center, materials.nrahq.org.



Next we embark on the NRA's main contribution: the NRA B.I.T. (Basic Instructor Training). The B.I.T. is the NRA's (and NMLRA's adopted) Rules, Regulations, Policies, Procedures, and Teaching Methods to be used when administering the Certified Muzzleloader Course. This module gets into the best practices for teaching new

shooters, children and adults, the safe and proper use of muzzleloading guns. There is a written "Trainer's Exam" that is administered after the B.I.T. is fully presented. Instructor Candidates must pass the test with a minimum score of 90%.

After the B.I.T. is completed, we do a thorough walk through the NRA/NMLRA Certified Muzzleloader Course Lesson Plan and student handbook. We cover the specific materials needed to teach the class, review the format and content of the lessons, and discuss the steps to take with students on the range.



During the Instructor Training, we do quite a bit of role-playing. During "teach backs", Instructor Candidates will teach portions of the Certified Muzzleloader Course to the other Instructor Candidates. While an Instructor Candidate is playing the role of an Instructor, the other Instructor Candidates are playing a dual role. First they are

acting as students and participating in conversations and practical exercises. Secondly, they follow along with the Lesson Plan and take notes so that we all as a group can offer effective evaluations to help one other become better presenters, instructors, educators, demonstrators, and coaches. After the Lesson Plan walk through, I assign teach-back assignments to be presented over the remaining days of Instructor Training. Now Instructor Candidates have their assignments and can study for their teach-backs overnight. We can start

fresh in the morning!

The 2nd day of training is the Range Day. We begins with "Pre-Quals" and then conclude with teach backs of the live fire portion of the Certified Muzzleloader Course.

The "quals" consist of handling, clearing, loading, unloading, cleaning, and shooting muzzleloading rifles, pistols, and shotguns.

All activities are supervised and scored. I always supply Instructor Candidates the pre-qualification criteria when they sign up for the course, so they know exactly what is expected of them. Day 2 is a long and challenging day,



but what better way to spend a day than enjoying the fellowship of others and smelling the black powder smoke while you shoot guns!

The Shooting Qualifications are as follows:



Pistol: A minimum of 8 out of 10 hits on a 9" paper target at 15 yards using a Muzzleloading Revolver and a one or two-handed grip in an unsupported standing position.



Rifle: A minimum of 8 out of 10 hits on a 9" paper target at 25 yards using a Muzzleloading Rifle; 5 shots from a bench and 5 shots from an unsupported standing position.

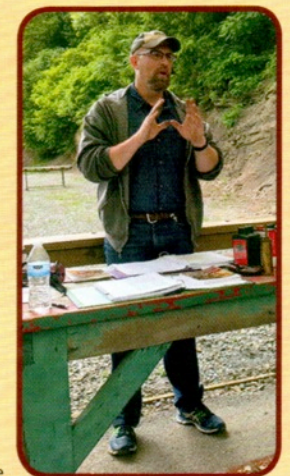


Shotgun: A minimum of 5 out of 10 straightaway clay targets, 10 yards from the thrower, using a flintlock or percussion cap muzzleloading shotgun.

After the pre-quals are concluded, we begin with the teach backs. Depending on scheduling and range availability, and daylight (day-

light savings makes for a longer range day) we might start with the live fire exercises from the Certified Course, or we might retire to the classroom and start with classroom exercise Lesson 1. Either way, we will maximize our time and begin the role-play of Instructor and students, teaching portions of the end user class, and giving evaluations at the conclusion of each module.

This process will take us into Day 3 as we





will teach back the entire “end user” Certified Muzzleloader Course. In addition, I offer lecture modules on the Basic Muzzleloading Instructional “Method and Evaluating” and “Improving Beginning Muzzleloader Shooters.”

The lessons taught in the “end user” Certified Muzzleloader Course are:

Lesson 1: General Muzzleloader Knowledge and Safe Gun Handling

Lesson 2: Black Powder and Loading Muzzleloading Guns

Lesson 3: Firing and Cleaning a Muzzleloader

Lesson 4: Shooting a Muzzleloader from the Cross Sticks (or an alternate) Position

Lesson 5: Shooting a Muzzleloader from the Offhand or Standing Position

Lesson 6: Muzzleloading Shooting Opportunities and Selecting a Muzzleloader



Certified Muzzleloader Course with rifles, pistols, and shotguns, all three, or a combination of the three. The course could be done in one day or multiple days based upon what types of muzzleloaders are being taught, range availability, and class size. The official NRA/NMLRA Certificate notates what types of muzzleloaders were covered.

After all of the teach backs are completed and all of the evaluations are given, there is yet another final written exam. This is the Certified Muzzleloader Instructor Exam. Instructor Candidates must score 90% or better in order to pass. The exam is used together with other evaluation tools to determine whether candidates have successfully completed the instructor training course.



The very last module of instruction that I give, is an informal walk through the NRA Instructor website where Instructor Candidates will finalize their credentials with the NRA and administer classes using the online portal. I cover the procedures to finalize the credentials with the NMLRA as well.

Instructor Candidates are now official NRA/NMLRA Certified Instructors and can go out into the world and spread the word on the safe and correct use of muzzleloading guns, share the history and heritage, and pass on the knowledge to help a new generation of Americans develop the skills to use muzzleloaders on the range, in the woods, and just for fun!



Pictured: Martin Liebschner, Ray Henderson, Paula Parsons, Klint Macro and in front, “Official Assistant Helper”, Augie Macro

About the author: Klint Macro is an NMLRA Trainer and NRA Training Counselor based in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. Klint is also the founder of “The Trigger Pressers Union.” For more information visit www.triggerpressersunion.com. MB