

Comparison

IPSC Handgun Competition Rules

To

USPSA Competition Rules

(2025 version)

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Purpose:

This document outlines the differences between IPSC and USPSA Handgun Rules. It does not address differences for Pistol Caliber Carbine. USPSA incorporates PCC as part of the handgun rules while IPSC uses a separate rulebook for PCC. Any analysis for PCC will be addressed as a supplement to this document at some future date when a comparison is made. As always, refer to the actual wording in each set of rules for authoritative information.

Methodology:

Comparisons will be made chapter-by-chapter and select appendices noting pertinent differences. Minor differences in punctuation or wording will be disregarded if there is little to no difference in application.

The original version of this document was prepared in 2024. There have been some changes in both rule sets effective for 2025. Those changes will be noted in this analysis in the comments presented in *Italics*. *Green italics denote changes in USPSA rules*. *Red italics denote changes in IPSC rules*.

Reference Documents:

- International Practical Shooting Confederation, Handgun Competition Rules, January 2024 Edition
- *International Practical Shooting Confederation, Handgun Competition Rules, January 2025 Edition*
- USPSA Competition Rules, 29 February 2024
- *USPSA Competition Rules, January 2025 Edition*

Chapter 1: Course Design

1.1 General Principles

Only minor differences ... IPSC grants leeway in freestyle and round count limitations for L1 and L2 matches ... USPSA limits this to L1 matches only.

IPSC allows specifying the use of SHO or WHO in all courses of fire. USPSA limits this to Medium and Long courses and then for no more than the last 6 rounds required. (However, see USPSA Speed shoots, Standard Exercises, and Classifiers.)

USPSA added 1.1.5.3 ... Specifies that short courses may specify SHO/WHO for the entire CoF ... However, if it is WHO the CoF can be no more than 8 rounds.

USPSA added 1.1.5.5 ... For use in Level 1 matches ONLY – The WSB may require the shooter to remain in the shooting area for the entire CoF. The penalties are the same as in an IPSC match under shortcut rules.

1.2 Types of Courses

General Courses of Fire

IPSC

USPSA

Short Courses

Maximum of 12 rounds	1 to 12 rounds
No more than 9 rounds from any location or view	No more than 8 rounds from any location or view

Medium Courses

Maximum of 24 rounds	13 to 20 rounds
No more than 9 rounds from any location or view	No more than 8 rounds from any location or view

Long Courses

Maximum of 32 rounds	Minimum of 21 rounds, Maximum of 32 in L3
No more than 9 rounds from any location or view	No more than 8 rounds from any location or view

IPSC Includes Classifiers and Shoot-Offs as types of courses.

USPSA Includes Classifiers, Standard Exercises, and Speed Shoots as types of courses. See the USPS Rules for definitions and requirements for these types. USPSA also allows for Shoot-Offs.

1.3 Sanctioning

Requirements are similar for each but one must follow the proper guidance for each organization. Additionally, IPSC requires (1.3.2) adherence to the Target Array Book, the current version of which is available at <https://www.ipsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Target-Arrays-2019.pdf>. There is also a requirement for course mix 3/2/1 ratio and limits on empty starts (25%) ... 1.2.1.4 and 1.2.1.5.

Chapter 2: Range and Course Construction

(Course Construction and Modification)

2.1 General Regulations

Substantially the same, however:

IPSC allows for increasing or decreasing “safe angles of fire” under some circumstances and can also restrict muzzle angles over the berm, if warranted.

IPSC will allow the IPSC target to be placed 90° rotated from vertical where USPSA limits this to 45°.

2.2 Course Construction Criteria

A few differences:

IPSC expects the shooter to remain in the shooting area at ALL times. Taking a “shortcut” earns a per shot penalty from the start of the shortcut until the last shot fired. As a corollary, starting positions from outside the shooting area and use of multiple shooting areas are never approved. This stems from the premise in 1.1.5 of allowing the shooter to engage any and all targets “as and when visible – starting immediately at the beep. If you can see a target at the beep, you can shoot it ... you cannot require the shooter to step into a shooting area first. Similarly, you cannot prohibit the shooter from shooting visible targets while transitioning from one authorized shooting area to another.

By contrast, USPSA will allow the shooter free roam to exit and enter the shooting area unless there are “Off-Limit Lines” posted. Violations of these earn the shooter a zero for the stage. (The practical effects are generally the same ...) See each set of rules for the definitions of “shortcut” or construction of “Off-Limits Lines.”

Barriers ... or walls – Both sets of rules specify a similar height whereby the walls are deemed to extend upwards to infinity. However, USPSA also specifies that the walls also go from the ground to the height built. Hence, in USPSA, one cannot shoot under a wall even if there is a gap (unless specified in the WSB as a port. In IPSC there is no such verbiage in the rules, hence, a shooter may shoot under a wall if he can see the target to so do. ~~There is no provision to modify this in the WSB.~~

I have been given a clarification on this point ... If you are using USPSA style walls (i.e. the ones where typically there is about a 2' gap underneath, but by USPSA rules are deemed to go all the way to the ground), you MAY specify in the individual WSB for the stage that the walls DO go to the ground and treat them as such. However, failure to specify this in the WSB could leave it open to some enterprising competitor to shoot under the wall if he feels it advantageous and it would be perfectly legal!

2.3 Modifications to Course Construction

Under USPSA Rules, if a modification to a course is necessary (but impracticable, for some reason) the RM may declare what a shooter did (or is desiring to do) a “Forbidden Action” and require him to reshoot the CoF. It is then written into the WSB for all future shooters. The wording allowing this is lengthy and limited in scope ... A review of the USPSA rule is necessary when implementing this. There is no equivalent rule in IPSC for this. Essentially, if it is that big a safety issue, a modification to the course must be made (with concomitant reshoots, as needed) or the stage is tossed.

One additional VERY IMPORTANT NOTE ... IPSC rules provide a potential path for a shooter who was DQ'd to be reinstated under certain circumstances:

2.3.4.1 *A competitor who incurred a disqualification in a stage which is subsequently deleted, may be entitled to reinstatement, if the highest level of appeal pursued by the competitor (i.e. the Range Master or the Arbitration Committee, as the case may be), deems that the disqualification was directly attributable to the reasons for the stage being deleted.*

One potential example of this could be – A target is placed such that it is visible past 90° in violation of 2.1.4 and the shooter engages it “as and when visible” per 1.1.5. The shooter is disqualified per 10.5.2 but appeals the target placement as illegal under 2.1.4. The Committee finds in favor of the shooter and the stage is withdrawn under 2.3.4 per the committee’s recommendations. The shooter may then request reinstatement per 2.3.4.1. Under USPSA rule 11.1.2 the shooter’s actions would have been barred in the first place as he could not have appealed the stage BECAUSE he had already shot it and was DQ’d.

2.4 Safety Areas

Though worded slightly differently, the requirements here are substantially the same under each set of rules.

Other Issues

IPSC provides requirements for a Test Firing/Sighting-In Bay to be supervised by a Range Officer ... USPSA has no comparable rule.

Both sets of rules provide for Vendor Areas. IPSC has this at 2.6. USPSA has it at Appendix F1. The requirements are essentially the same.

IPSC recommends Hygiene Areas near lavatories and entrances to food service areas. USPSA rules are silent on this topic.

Chapter 3: Course Information

There is very little difference between the two rule sets here, except:

IPSC does not require the WSB to specify the scoring method since **everything** is scored Comstock. There is no Virginia Count or Fixed Time in an IPSC Match.

USPSA explicitly states a WSB must comply with current rules. IPSC does not address this, but it is uniformly understood that the WSB cannot contravene the rules.

USPSA explains that when a competitor contravenes the course requirements and it constitutes a safety issue it may result in a Forbidden Action being declared. (See USPSA 2.3.1.1.) There is no Forbidden Action in IPSC rules.

Chapter 4: Range Equipment

This gets involved and is best understood by referring to each set of rules and their respective diagrams (Appendix Bx in each) for exact specification of allowable targets. However, the following is a good general guideline:

All IPSC targets are allowable in USPSA competition. The USPSA (humanoid) targets and Pepper Poppers (with “heads”) are not allowed in IPSC matches. Additionally, USPSA allows even-sided plates (e.g., hexagons, octagons) whereas IPSC does not.

IPSC has strict guidelines on what targets can and cannot be mixed in the same target array ... Large and small targets may be mixed if they are different target types. You cannot mix large and small paper targets together, or large and small Poppers together. (See also the Target Array Book, previously referred to.)

USPSA has restrictions prohibiting the overlapping of targets (brown-brown or white to white) for VC or FT stages. Review USPSA 4.2.6 if you are designing or setting up a VC or FT stage.

Both sets of rules require at least a portion of the A-Zone be available on all scoring targets ... IPSC does not address what the minimum portion is while USPSA defines it as 25% for full size targets and 50% for mini targets.

Frangible targets are not allowed under either set of rules. Both sets of rules allow for synthetic targets in lower-level matches, especially on indoor ranges.

USPSA bans the use of metal plates at L2 or higher matches. IPSC permits them at all levels of matches but they must be designed and set up such that they cannot turn sideways or edge on when hit. Failure in this regard can spell decertification of an IPSC match.

Range Equipment Failure is essentially the same under both sets of rules, except for metal plates. In USPSA any hit on a plate which does not take it down is REF. In IPSC, shoot it until it falls!

Chapter 5: Competitor Equipment

5.1 Firearms

There are no substantial differences in the rules here. Differences in Divisions (Appendix Dx in each set of the rules) will be discussed later.

IPSC added at 5.1.3.3 that laser sights are not permitted in IPSC matches. USPSA shooters who have WML/lasers need to remove them if they include a laser. I suspect the enforcement mechanism would be a DQ for “prohibited firearm” under 10.5.16.

5.2 Holster and Other Competitor Equipment

IPSC allows virtually any style of holster in all divisions. USPSA specifies the holster must be one “Suitable for everyday use. Race Gun type holsters prohibited.” for Production, Carry Optics, and Single Stack divisions.

Both sets of rules require handguns to be carried unloaded and hammer down other than when in a course of fire. Under USPSA rules, a shooter who is found to have a cocked gun in the holster will be escorted to a safe place and directed to correct the situation. Under IPSC rules, he will be escorted to a

safe area and corrected plus a warning given. **Any subsequent occurrence during the match will result in a 10.6.1 disqualification.**

USPSA prohibits carrying of magazines in the mouth. IPSC is silent on that issue.

The measurement of distances from gun /magazines to the belt/shooter are done differently under each set of rules. USPSA also allows more distance than does IPSC and in USPSA that distance varies by division. In general, the results are that IPSC requires competitor equipment be somewhat closer to the shooter than does USPSA. Keep this in mind when inspecting shooters.

IPSC 5.2.2 provides an exception to handling a firearm prior to being told to “Load and Make Ready”:

Exception: a competitor, who is under the supervision of a Range Officer and mistakenly unholsters his firearm while awaiting the "Load And Make Ready" or "Make Ready" command will (provided that no other safety infraction or prohibited activity has been committed) incur a warning for the first occurrence, but will be subject to Rule 10.5.1 for subsequent occurrences in the same match.

5.3 Appropriate Dress

IPSC discourages the wear of camouflage or similar garment unless the competitor is law enforcement or military. Both sets of rules grant the MD final authority on this subject.

5.4 Eye and Hearing Protection

No substantive differences here.

5.5 Ammunition and Related Equipment

No substantive differences here.

5.6 Chronograph and Power Factors

IPSC describes the procedures here in Chapter 5 ... USPSA describes them (with somewhat more detail) in Appendix C2. The next results are substantially the same for each, so I will not discuss the differences here. If you are setting up and/or running the Chronograph station, refer to the appropriate rules set and follow those directions. They are **very** similar, but not quite the same. (The procedure in the USPSA rules are substantially more detailed, FWIW.)

Under IPSC rules one should also download and review the IROA Chronograph Manual which can be found at <https://www.ipsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/IROA-Chronograph-Manual-2021.pdf>. This is a substantially complete guide and closely mirrors USPSA procedures.

5.7 Malfunctions – Competitor’s Equipment

Though worded slightly differently and organized differently, the rules here are the same ... **EXCEPT** – Under USPSA rules it is expressly forbidden for the shooter to attempt to clear a squib during a CoF. Any such attempt shall result in disqualification.

5.8 Certified Ammunition

This is more fully discussed under an appendix in each set of rules.

Chapter 6: Match Structure

6.1 General Principles

Few differences here, except

There are no “Strings” in IPSC since there are no “Standards” courses.

In addition to a Tournament IPSC has rules for a Grand Tournament and has a separate rule book covering this topic.

USPSA lists “Shoot-Off” which is defined elsewhere in IPSC.

IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE:

IPSC 6.1.7 *A Region affiliated to IPSC cannot actively or passively sanction a shooting match of any type or format within the geographical boundaries of another Region without the advance and written approval of the Regional Director of the Region where the match is to be held. A Region in violation is subject to Section 5.9 of the IPSC Constitution.*

(Personal observation – USPSA ran afoul of this some years back which is how this rule came to be.)

6.2 Match Divisions

These rules are substantially the same, however, Divisions are defined differently. This will be discussed later.

USPSA at 6.2.4.1 now allows competitors to enter more than one division for official score in Level 1 matches ONLY.

6.3 Match Categories

Discussion of the match categories will take place later when analyzing the Categories. However, while USPSA will allow the shooter to declare any and all categories to which entitled, IPSC will only allow a shooter to declare one category for the match.

6.4 Regional Teams (IPSC Rules only)

This applies only to IPSC matches at Level 4 or higher. Review only if necessary to your match.

6.5 (IPSC) 6.4 (USPSA) Competitor Status and Credentials

Each describes eligibility requirements for competitors, generally based on residency and Regional requirements. IPSC’s rules are somewhat more specific and restrictive while USPSA’s are somewhat looser. Match organizers and potentially shooters need to review these provisions to ensure compliance. (Special note to US Match organizers ... Even if a shooter has a USPSA membership, if they are from another Regions (e.g., Canada) and shooting an IPSC match you must verify their status in their home Region (e.g., Canada. This is the same for any Officials working the match.)

6.6 (IPSC) 6.5 (USPSA) Competitor Scheduling and Squadding

The most significant difference here is that in an IPSC match ONLY limited people are permitted to shoot the pre-match. See IPSC 6.6.2 for who is authorized. No other competitors should be allowed to register and shoot in the pre-match!

Also – Best Practice: Any competitor being allowed to shoot a stage or stages (e.g., a speed pass) should be given written permission from the MD or RM. This will avoid confusion and potential “hurt feelings” by competitors who have been granted permission but no one bothered to inform the CRO(s) of the affected stage(s.)

6.7 (IPSC) International Classification System (“ICS”)

Both sets of rules provide for a classification system. This is noted in Chapter 1 for USPSA and here for IPSC. Match Directors need to familiarize themselves with the applicable system if they intend to run and submit scores for classifier stages.

Chapter 7: Match Management

7.1 Match Officials

The duties and titles for each match official is virtually identical under both sets of rules, except:

USPSA separately lists a Chrono Officer – Listed or not, the duties and responsibilities of the RO running the Chronograph are essentially that of a CRO in charge of a non-scoring stage called “Chrono.”

Both sets of rules describe the “Stats Officer” duties in terms of running a match using paper score sheets and teams of people inputting data into the computer(s). Let’s face facts: Virtually NO ONE uses paper scoring systems anymore! This position needs to be updated under BOTH sets of rules to reflect duties to include electronic scoring platforms and their concomitant support requirements.

USPSA rules specify that if the DNROI is present and working the match, he has the same authority as both the MD and RM (combined.) There is no comparable rule under IPSC, though personnel such as the President of IROA carries considerable weight if he is present.

7.2 Discipline of Match Officials

Substantially no differences here. If there is an issue, refer to this section for the proper reporting channels.

7.3 Appointment of Officials

The only significant difference here is that under IPSC rules (7.3.3) *“A person acting as a Match Official is prohibited from having a holstered firearm while directly accompanying and timing a competitor during his attempt at a COF. Violations are subject to Rule 7.2.2.”* In simple English: You cannot be on the timer running a shooter AND be wearing a gun. (No exceptions!)

Chapter 8: The Course of Fire

8.1 Firearm Ready Conditions

Though there is a lot of wording differences, the only discernable differences here are:

IPSC prohibits the use of single action revolvers. USPSA allows them (with notes on how to have them start.) FWIW: In 30+ years of doing this, I’ve never witnessed anyone using a Single Action Revolver in USPSA ...

IPSC specifies that when a self-loading pistol is prepared “magazine inserted and chamber empty” a revolver is fully loaded. I can find not instruction for a default loading condition for revolvers in this circumstance under USPSA rules, though it may be implied at USPSA 8.1.1.2.

USPSA goes into a long diatribe on thumb safeties and 1911 type guns ... The net effects are no different from IPSC rules.

At 8.1.6 USPSA rules now specify that for a firearm start on a surface (e.g., a table start) the firearm may NOT be prepped/supported by anything not a part of the firearm.

8.2 Competitor Ready Condition

These are substantially the same for both sets of rules ... **EXCEPT:** Under IPSC rules the competitor must assume the standard starting condition (per Appendix E2) unless otherwise directed in the WSB. USPSA allows the shooter to assume any position or posture he wants unless otherwise specified in the WSB (so long as he is NOT touching the gun or magazines.) Effectively, under IPSC “Freestyle” starts at the beep ... Under USPSA “Freestyle” starts at “Standby.”

8.3 Range Communication

Essentially, the range commands are identical, except:

IPSC uses “Load and Make Ready” unless the gun is to be totally empty, then they use “Make Ready.” USPSA uses “Make Ready” for everything.

In IPSC the CoF ends after the shooter holstered his cleared and empty handgun (8.3.7.3.) Specifically – *Once the competitor's hands are clear of the holstered handgun, the course of fire is deemed to have ended.* In USPSA the CoF ends after the command “Range is Clear” is issued. So ... Under IPSC rules the RO needs to ensure the competitor lets go of his gun in the holster BEFORE he issues the Range is Clear command, otherwise the CoF is not over. Under USPSA rules the RO must always remember to loudly and clearly announce “Range is Clear” in order to terminate the CoF.

USPSA now specifies (8.3.1.1 and referenced at 8.7.1) that a shooter is permitted to take a sight picture from the make ready position under the supervision of the RO. (Formerly this was worded as the start position.)

8.4 through 8.6 (Loading, Reloading, Unloading During a Course of Fire; Movement; and Assistance or Interference)

Little to no differences here.

8.7 Sight Pictures, (Dry Firing) and (Course) Range Inspection

Similar, BUT:

IPSC prohibits sight pictures and/or dry firing prior to the start signal. Violations incur a warning on the first offence and a procedural penalty thereafter. Electronic sights may be adjusted by pointing at the ground (NOT at the Berm!) directly in front of them, but not on a target. USPSA will allow sight pictures and dry firing within one step from the make ready location, no penalties.

People walking through stages without permission in IPSC will receive a warning for the first offence but may be subject to a 10.6 DQ for subsequent offences. USPSA is somewhat less stringent on this.

Chapter 9: Scoring

9.1 General Regulations

Generally the same except for rounds passing wholly through hard cover and striking a scoring or penalty paper target. Under USPSA rules, If it cannot be determined which hit(s) on the scoring area of a scoring paper target or no-shoot are the result of shots fired through hard cover a reshoot **MUST** be ordered. Under IPSC rules, the scoring paper target or no shoot will be scored by ignoring the applicable number of highest scoring hit(s). (This is a significant difference ... and can seriously impact the flow of a squad through a stage in some circumstances.)

9.2 Scoring Method(s)

ALL Courses in IPSC are scored Comstock. There is no Virginia Count or Fixed Time. This is easy for a US RO working an Internation match but requires some additional training for an Internation RO on VC and FT courses before working a USPSA match.

9.3 Scoring Ties

Identical ...

9.4 Target Scoring and Penalty Values

This is generally the same except for no shoot penalties. IPSC will limit NS penalties to 2 per NS target regardless of the number of actual hits. (General practice will be to limit it to one if only one hit per scoring target is required, though this is not stated in the rules. USPSA will penalize each and every NS hit ... even if you dump a full mag on the NS!)

As previously stated, the IPSC trained RO will need additional training on VC and FT scoring under USPSA rules in order to get scores and penalties correct.

9.5 Scoring Policy

Some different wording here, but basically very little difference in actual practice.

9.6 Score Verification and Challenge

Substantially identical here ...

9.7 Score Sheets

Substantially identical here ...

9.8 Scoring Responsibility

Only minor differences here, but the end results are similar. Follow the rules for the particular match you're running.

9.9 Scoring of Disappearing (Activated) Targets

Some different wording here, but basically very little difference in actual practice except that USPSA requires a minimum of 25% of a target to be available in order to qualify as non-disappearing ... IPSC does not specify a specific amount, only that “a portion of the A zone” be available.

9.10 Official Time

Requirements are the same, except USPSA adds *“A competitor who reacts to a start signal but for any reason does not fire a shot or continue the attempt at the course of fire and fails to have an official time recorded on the timing device operated by the Range Officer will be given a zero time and zero score for that course of fire. This constitutes a “did Not Fire” or DNF for the stage.”* For practical purposes, this is what happens in an IPSC match as well ...

9.11 Scoring Programs

IPSC requires the use of WinMSS or the IPSC ESS for level 4 or higher matches, but allows Regional Directors to specify something else for level 3 and below. USPSA specifies the use of PractiScore. USPSA also spells out requirements for paper copies of results to be given to competitors at the completion of each stage.

Chapter 10: Penalties

10.1 Procedural Penalties – General Regulations

No significant differences here ...

10.2 Procedural Penalties – Specific Examples

USPSA goes into some detail (here and in the glossary) as to what constitutes “significant advantage.” Clearly, while authoritative in a USPSA match they are only interesting reading and perhaps some insight for use in an IPSC match. They are NOT binding in an IPSC match!

Some additional clarification is given in 10.2.2 under USPSA rules to prevent multiple penalties being applied for the same infraction under VC of FT stages.

There are slight differences in the application of a “Special penalty” under 10.2.10, however the RM is the sole authority on the application here. (Hint: RMs of the world, know how to compute this for the match you are supervising!) The difference is chiefly computational and is generally handled by the scoring program.

Though not expressly addressed in USPSA rules, any shot over a wall of 5’9” minimum height (2.2.3.3) should not count for score or penalty as the wall is considered to extend upwards and is impenetrable. Under IPSC rules (10.2.11) a procedural penalty is applied for simply firing the shot over the wall.

10.3 Disqualification – General Regulations

Little difference here except that in the case of a DQ caused by a medical condition the DNROI must be notified immediately. USPSA also adds commission of a “Forbidden Action” here as well as climbing or standing on an object that is not specifically designed and intended for that purpose and identified in the WSB as NOT permitted to be used for that purpose, shall result in a match disqualification.

10.4 Disqualification – Accidental Discharge

Substantially the same here ... However:

IPSC still allows a “broken part” alibi under 10.4.8 in the case of an AD. See the wording in this rule for when it applies and the procedure that MUST be followed. USPSA did away with this alibi years ago.

USPSA specifies that “*A shot which occurs while retrieving a staged firearm, when the competitor is not engaging targets, and the shot does not strike a target.*” Is disqualified.

10.5 Disqualification – Unsafe Gun Handling

Differences include:

A limited exemption for prematurely drawing a gun from the holster prior to LAMR under IPSC rules ... See previous discussion under 5.2.2.

Under IPSC rules safe angles of fire may be declared greater or lesser than 90° for the purposes of 10.5.2 and may also be limited vertically.

USPSA rules are slightly more strict on sweeping. There, if one for example sweeps the fingers of his weak hand while holstering a loaded firearm he is disqualified as the fingers are not part “of the lower extremities.” IPSC rules are not quite that specific on this point so it is possible such an action could escape a DQ.

Both sets of rules will DQ for using prohibited and/or unsafe ammunition. IPSC also specifies a DQ for use of a prohibited and/or unsafe firearm. USPSA is silent on this.

USPSA will DQ the shooter for drawing a handgun while facing uprange (10.5.16, see full wording there.) IPSC is silent on this, however, it is almost impossible to do this without violating 10.5.2 in the process.

USPSA specifies a DQ as UGH for engaging a metal target at less than the specified safe distance (23 ft., 10.5.16). IPSC considers this an AD under 10.4.7. The net effect is the same, just a different rule is used to affect the DQ. (Be sure to quote the correct rule when necessary!)

USPSA will issue a DQ if the shooter attempts to clear a squib during a CoF (10.5.20.) IPSC effectively does not allow this. *The competitor must not use rods or other tools to verify or correct the malfunction. Violations will result in a zero score for the stage.* (5.7.1) I’m not certain how one would clear a squib WITHOUT the use of a rod or tool ... unless it was to deliberately load another round and fire it. Were a shooter in an IPSC match to attempt this I would stop him and issue a DQ for, if nothing else, criminal stupidity ... but more likely rely on the 10.5 opening wording of: *Examples of unsafe gun handling include, **but are not limited to:***

10.6 Disqualification – Unsportsmanlike Conduct

The orders of these rules are different, but they are substantially the same. ALWAYS contact the RM and potentially the MD when such an incident is unfolding. Reports to higher offices MAY be required as well.

10.7 Disqualification – Prohibited Substances

These are virtually identical ...

Chapter 11: Arbitration and Interpretation of Rules

11.1 General Principles

Generally the same, but:

Under USPSA 11.1.2 a shooter may not challenge the construction, layout, safety, (etc.) of a CoF AFTER he attempts the CoF. See the previous discussion under 5.2 of how this can differ in IPSC and the implications therein.

~~USPSA prohibits the use of video or audio recordings as evidence. IPSC allows them (11.1.5)~~

USPSA now allows for the use of video/digital evidence in the appeals/arbitration process. See USPSA Chapter 11 for details. IPSC has allowed this for years.

11.2 Composition of Committee

Generally the same, but WHEN you find yourself in this situation go to the applicable rule set to ensure you follow the requirements exactly.

One recommendation ... In a Level 3 or higher match (under either set of rules) it can be a good idea to preselect a pool of potential committee members from which a committee can be formed if needed.

11.3 Time Limits and Sequences

These are virtually identical ...

11.4 Fees

These are virtually identical, though pay attention to the distribution of the fees if the competitor loses the appeal.

11.5 Rules of Procedure

These are virtually identical ...

11.6 Verdict and Subsequent Action

Generally the same except that under USPSA rules the committee must cite the rule(s) on which the decision is based. The MD and/or RM may return the initial decision to the committee if necessary requesting why the decision does not comply with the rules. (In effect, an appeal ...) The MD and/or RM must then accept the committee's next decision. IPSC is silent on this point, but in my experience follows it in spirit.

11.7 Third Party Appeals

No differences here.

11.8 Interpretation of Rules

Substantially the same here ...

Chapter 12: Miscellaneous Matters

Virtually the same, however note that IPSC includes the Glossary here whereas USPSA has the Glossary listed as an Appendix. This analysis will not attempt to go line-by-line through the various definitions in each glossary as that would require another 30 pages ... However, it should be noted that the USPSA Glossary is substantially longer and covers more terminology than does the IPSC Glossary. (It would be useful if these two glossaries could be merged and standardized!)

Appendix A(x)

A1 – Match Levels

Very similar requirements between the two. Review and refer to the appropriate set of rules for compliance depending on the rule set you're using. Note that Level 4 and 5 matches ARE NOT available to individual regions. These are Continental and World Championships managed by IPSC.

A2 – Recognition

The recognition of Divisions and Categories are very similar under both sets of rules. The chief differences are that IPSC will only allow a shooter to choose one category ... USPSA will allow the shooter to choose any and all categories for which they qualify. Other differences include slightly different age ranges for Junior and Senior Categories. IPSC does NOT recognize Military or Law as Categories. IPSC also provides for Team Categories. Obviously, review the appropriate list depending on which set of rules the match is being run under.

USPSA added a new definition in A3, "Make ready position" - The position on the stage where the Range Official gives the "Make Ready" command to a competitor. This position does not need to be the same as the start position. (This ties in to revisions in Chapter 8, see above.)

Other Appendices

IPSC Appendix A3 is a J ladder for use in shoot-offs.

IPSC Appendix A4 list the approve 3/2/1 stage ratios for matches with 12-30 stages. This must be followed or risk loss of match sanctioning! (1.2.1.4)

Appendix B(x) (Targets)

IPSC includes cardboard targets in App B and metal targets in App C. USPSA shows all in App B. I will discuss all here.

IPSC recommends trimming the tops of target sticks for an improved presentation. This is fine, unless your match is likely to experience rain! If it's likely to rain, leave them high in order to support bags such that they do not bend the targets over.

USPSA allows the use of all targets, USPSA design or IPSC design. IPSC allows ONLY the use of the IPSC targets. The main issue here is that in many Regions the use of humanoid targets is forbidden by law or custom.

IPSC has restrictions on the inclusion of full and reduced size targets (cardboard or metal) in all stages. See the discussion of that under IPSC 4.1.1.2 and the Target Array Book. USPSA allows for all

sizes of metal targets in any stage/array but does not allow the mixing of full and reduced size cardboard targets in the same stage.

USPSA prohibits the use of plates at any match above Level 1. IPSC allows them at all levels but MANDATES they cannot turn or spin. Failure in this may cause a match to be decertified. (4.3.1.1)

It should be noted that the USPSA “Half-size IPSC Target” is slightly smaller than the official “IPSC Mini Target.” It is possible that use of the USPSA “Half-size IPSC Target” could result in an IPSC match being decertified under 1.3 and 4.1.1 ... It would be wise for any match using these targets to seek a variance in advance.

USPSA clearly spells out the minimum available areas of A zone to be available for each target ... IPSC is silent on just how much is considered adequate.

Appendix C(x)

C1 – Calibration of Poppers

The procedures here are almost identical. This is due to the fact these were adopted by IPSC from the USPSA rules. Some differences:

IPSC calibration ammo must be between 120 and 125 PF to qualify. USPSA recommends between 115 and 125.

The rules for when a popper can be challenged are identical. However, the procedure is different. IPSC uses the old shot it once and it passes or fails approach. USPSA has a newer 2-step approach. Follow the correct procedure for the type of match and do not confuse the two.

Chronograph (IPSC 5.6 and USPSA Appendix C2)

These are largely the same, again since IPSC copied and incorporated the USPSA procedures several years ago. Rather discuss them here, just ensure the Chrono Officer is familiar with the applicable version and sets things up and operates them accordingly.

Official Match Ammunition (IPSC 5.8 and USPSA Appendix C3)

These rules are VERY different. Under IPSC, OMA is generally exempt from chronograph requirements, but may be selected for testing anyway. There does not appear to be any guidance on what to do if it doesn't meet power factor however ... USPSA has a specified regimen for testing OMA and tolerances for pass/fail on power factor. Again, ensure your Chrono Officer knows the procedures for the type of match you are running and follows them.

Appendix D(x) Divisions

Overall guidance for ALL Divisions in either rule book ... READ the division requirements in the proper rule book CAREFULLY to ensure you are in compliance for the match you are shooting.

Note that a functional Weapon Mounted Light is considered an Optical Sight under IPSC rules and is ONLY allowable in Open.

Distance allowed from firearm/accessories to the shooter's torso is 50mm for all Divisions in IPSC. In USPSA the measurement is to the inside of the belt (not the torso) and varies by Division ... either the width of a scoring overlay, or the length of a scoring overlay.

IPSC allows virtually any type of holster in all Divisions. USPSA specifies a holster that is "*Suitable for everyday use. Race Gun type holsters prohibited.*" in certain Divisions. This applies to Production, Carry Optics, and Single Stack.

In all cases for IPSC, refer to the "IPSC Equipment Check Handbook – [Current version]" for additional guidance.

Open

Very similar in both sets of rules, but:

IPSC maximum magazine length 170mm ... USPSA is 171.25mm.

IPSC Major PF is 160 ... USPSA is 165.

IPSC minimum bullet weight for Major is 120g ... USPSA is 112g.

Standard (Limited)

IPSC requires the gun w/empty mag fit wholly in the IPSC box. USPSA does not use a box but limits magazine length to 141.25mm (171.25mm if single stack mag.)

IPSC Major PF is 170 ... USPSA is 165.

IPSC restricts gun and magazines to behind the hip (App. E2) ... USPSA has no restrictions.

There is no equivalent for Limited 10 in IPSC ... Such guns generally fall under Standard rules ...

Classic (Single Stack)

IPSC requires the gun w/empty mag fit wholly in the IPSC box, plus additional measurements. USPSA does not use a box but limits magazine length to 141.25mm (171.25mm if single stack mag.)

IPSC Major PF is 170 ... USPSA is 165.

IPSC restricts gun and magazines to behind the hip (App. E2) ... USPSA has no restrictions.

IPSC does not prohibit the use of a frame mounted weight, but USPSA prohibits them ... Although, USPSA allows the use of a functional Weapon Mounted Light.

USPSA prohibits the use of bull barrels ... IPSC does not.

Production

Each set of rules uses its own "approved List" for Production guns. It is IMPERATIVE you check the proper lists as **they are similar, but NOT identical!** One example is the CZ ... Both lists allow most of the CZ models, HOWEVER: IPSC specifically excludes certain models (approved on the USPSA list), e.g., **NOT APPROVED:** CZ-USA and CZ Custom Shop variants (e.g. SP-01 Shadow Target, CZ 75 Shadow T, CZ 75 SP01 ACCU Shadow etc.) (Editorial note: I show CZ here as an example ONLY ... The shooter and the officials doing the equipment check MUST be cognizant of the approved guns on the PROPER list!)

IPSC rules are comparatively restrictive as to what is and isn't allowed for Production. USPSA rules covering this span **5 pages!** Generally speaking, If your gun is on the applicable approved list AND otherwise meets IPSC requirements, it's probably good to go for USPSA, but that's not a guarantee. The reverse is decidedly NOT true. (DO YOUR HOMEWORK!)

USPSA has a fit in the box requirement and a maximum weight requirement (59 ounces with empty magazine inserted). IPSC relies on the gun being on the approve list and VERY LIMITED modification approved.

The differences in Production between the two rules sets is far too vast to address in this document ... One MUST study the applicable rule set to ensure compliance for a given match.

Production Optics (Carry Optics)

Substantially similar to the discussion above for Production, but note:

IPSC limits rounds loaded to 15, just as in Production ... USPSA allows the use of magazines up to 141.25mm fully loaded. (Mine holds 24 ...)

As in Production, study the applicable rule set to ensure compliance for a given match.

Revolver

Almost identical, except:

IPSC Major PF is 170 ... USPSA is 165.

IPSC restrictions on revolvers eligible for Major is based on cylinder capacity, i.e., *No limit on cylinder capacity. Revolvers with a capacity of 7 rounds or more do not qualify for Major, even if rounds achieve Major power factor during testing by chronograph.* USPSA restrictions are based on rounds fired, i.e., *maximum of 6 rounds fired before reload if Major PF declared, 8 if minor PF declared.*

Limited Optics (USPSA)

~~There is NO equivalent Division for this in IPSC. If the firearm otherwise qualifies for IPSC Production Optics it may be registered there. Otherwise, the only available Division is Open.~~

IPSC has added 2 provisional divisions effective 4 March 2025, on a trial basis, in certain regions. These two are VERY similar, so pay attention to the differences and WHERE you are competing:

New App D2a, Standard Optics Division – This is substantially identical to the current IPSC Standard Division except that an optical sight on the rear of the slide is mandatory. It allows for both Major and minor scoring.

New App D6, Optics Division – (Don't let the name fool you. This is different from the above!) This is a virtual clone of USPSA Limited Optics rules (right down to magazine limits and minor only scoring) except the wearing of the gun and magazines are subject to the behind the hip rules in IPSC.

(Do not ask me what regions are testing which ... I do not have the list! Just be sure to check before you go to a given match.)

Other Appendices

E1 – Magazine Measurement

Virtually identical.

IPSC E2 – Diagram of Equipment Position

Shows the limits of gun and magazine placement behind the hip bone. It also displays arms “hanging naturally” at sides. (Does not exist under USPSA Rules.)

USPSA E2 – Equipment Measurement

Shows examples of how to measure distances under USPSA rules. IPSC rules are defined differently and this appendix does not exist under those rules.

IPSC E3a and E3b

Diagram showing boundaries of where one can place grip tape under IPSC Production and Production Optics rules. This is not applicable under USPSA rules as tape may be placed in other areas as well.

Diagram showing the height of the heel of the butt of the handgun ... Technically applicable under both sets of rules though USPSA does not have a diagram illustrating it.

Other IPSC Appendices not in USPSA Rules

Trigger pull testing procedure – Applicable under IPSC rules but has no equivalent under USPSA rules.

Barrel length measurement protocol – Applicable under IPSC rules but has no equivalent under USPSA rules.

Equipment check sheet – Applicable under IPSC rules but has no equivalent under USPSA rules.

Scoring hand signals – Applicable under IPSC rules but has no equivalent under USPSA rules. (However, it can be useful ...)