



VSRPA

454 South Main Street, Northfield, VT 05663
(802) 485-6818 www.vsrpa.org

Maj. Gen. Gregory C Knight
Office of the Adjutant General
789 Vermont National Guard Road
Colchester, VT 05446-3099

DATE: May 17, 2021

RE: New Civilian Short-Term Lease (STL) Policy @ EAFR/CEATS

Dear General Knight -

My name is Chris Bradley and I contact you in my capacity as Secretary / Treasurer of the Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association (VSRPA). If you are not aware of the VSRPA, we were created in 1938, we are a 501(c)(7), and since our inception we have had the honor and privilege of using the ranges at the Ethan Allen Firing Range / Camp Ethan Allen Training Site (EAFR/CEATS).

For over 82 years, the VSRPA has enjoyed a very close working relationship with the Vermont Guard, both in regard to our interaction with the Guard members who staff EAFR/CEATS, and also with the many guard members who shoot with us in the pursuit of excellence in marksmanship at the matches we run at EAFR/CEATS.

Across the many years that the VSRPA has used EAFR/CEATS, we have never been charged anything for that use, and to the best of our knowledge we have never been the source of any problems, issues or accidents at EAFR/CEATS.

Per [10 USC 7409](#), civilian use of military ranges is fully supported, with this statute recognizing that US citizens financially support these ranges through our tax dollars. While this statute does indicate that the Secretary of the Army (SA) can impose reasonable fees on civilian use, it however dictates that those fees should be set to *“cover the material and supply costs incurred by the armed forces to make that rifle range available.”*

As a point of information: The VSRPA cannot typically use any range at EAFR/CEATS unless Range Control (RC) is already staffed in support of a higher-priority unit (such as Guard, Military, Law Enforcement, Federal Employees, etc.). In requisitioning a range, we do not use any utilities, and in fact are only given a range flag, a range radio (to communicate with RC), and a Standard Operations Procedure (SOP) manual that details the range procedures. Referring back to 10 USC 4709 then, and given the extremely limited scope of *“materials and supply costs incurred”* that allow us to utilize a given range, we believe these costs are negligible.

The issue at hand is that the Vermont State Rifle & Pistol Association is in receipt of a new [Short Term License \(STL\) Policy](#) forwarded to us by the Military Property and Installation Office (MPIO) which we received on 5/6/2021.

According to this new policy, the MPIO has decided to start charging for the civilian use of the ranges on a Federal facility, and are implementing a fee structure that will, in all likelihood, force the VSRPA to dissolve. Not only will this new policy likely kill the VSRPA, it will also likely kill the Burlington Rifle & Pistol Club (BRPC), which is another civilian organization that utilizes the ranges at EAFR/CEATS, and has existed since 1937.

Per this new “policy”, two types of civilian activities are recognized, with fees associated with that use:

- **General Use Practice / Shooting**
This use is to be billed at \$5 per person, per day
- **Event Use**
This use is to be billed at a flat rate of \$140 per day

For the VSRPA, the majority of our use is for the purpose of running competitive matches that follow either National Rifle Association (NRA) or Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) rules. Both types of matches require that they be registered with the corresponding organization, with fees associated with that registration, as well as additional fees for reporting the match results. A typical match fee to a competitor is approximately \$20-\$30 depending on the type of match. In considering those match fees: Please remember that beyond those expenses, the VSRPA has to raise funds to pay for our Insurance (annual cost \$1,300+); we have expendable supplies (targets, target supplies, paste, etc.); we also try to set aside money for new equipment; and our mission is to provide funds for Junior Shooting Groups.

A first major issue with the new “Policy” is the fact the MPIO has opined that ALL of our matches are “Events”, which means a \$140 per day charge. Using the VT State Championship Matches as an example: This is a 3-day event where we would be charged \$420. This cost would have to then be split amongst however many shooters showed up for each day, and would be ON TOP of the \$20-\$30 charged for the match fee.

A second major issue is that the VSRPA runs “Rifle Clinics”, which are venues designed to introduce new shooters into our sport, and while we provide all of the equipment they need to learn (match rifle, jacket, scope, mat, sling & glove, and one-on-one instruction), we additionally have to provide ammunition, so we have to charge a nominal fee for that training. However: With the new “policy”, this would be prohibited, as “making money...training an individual” is prohibited.

The third major issue is the \$5 per person cost, which – while not unduly oppressive – is not in line with the fees for other facilities as it is the only use that has a “per person” charge. For example: Cram Dining Facility can be rented for \$45 a day, no matter how many people are using it, and it’s use would be inclusive to the costs of the utilities that are consumed while using it. We find it difficult to grasp how 9 competitors (9 X \$5 = \$45) using an outdoor range while consuming no utilities is somehow equitable with potentially 200+ people using Cram.

At one time in this country, marksmanship was revered. In point of fact: Both the NRA and the CMP were specifically created to foster marksmanship amongst US citizens, so that those citizens could help defend the United States if they were ever called forward into duty, as the United State learned the hard way about fielding troops that did not have a background skill with marksmanship. It is through matches,

not practices, that competitors earn higher qualification ranking, and it is ONLY through CMP Excellence In Competition (EIC) matches that both civilians and armed forces personnel can earn points towards the highly coveted nationally-recognized Distinguished Rifle or Pistol awards.

As a review, EAFR/CEATS is Federal Property that is leased to the State of Vermont, with [Army Regulation 405-80](#) (Management of Title and Granting Use of Real Property) governing the handling of EAFR/CEATS.

Per 405-80, the Installation Commander (section 2-13), as well as the USP&FO (section 2-14), **WILL** (not may) issue Leases to non-profit organizations and others.

Per Section 4-1 of 405-80, one of the goals for General Outgranting is to “...*promote multiple us of DA lands...*” Also per 4-1: Our use of the ranges at EAFR/CEATS is clearly “*of direct benefit to the US*”; it clearly helps to “*promote the national defense*”; it is unequivocally “*in the public interest*”, and it is absolutely “*compatible with the installation / project mission*”.

Per section 4-33 of 405-80: “*These grants may be without charge and may include utilities, in-place equipment, and janitorial services without charge, when use granted is incidental to other users of the facility.*” As an aside here: Our use is classified as “incidental”.

From the Vermont National Guard website, we see: “*It is DoD policy under DoD Directives 5122.5 and 5410.18 that community relations programs be established and that command relationships be delineated throughout the Department of Defense for conducting community relations activities and programs... A principal goal of all community relations activities is to increase understanding of U.S. defense posture and capabilities by increasing public exposure to, and understanding of, military personnel, facilities, equipment, and programs.*”

[Per 20 VSA § 361](#), it appears to us that the Governor has authority to intercede, as can the Adjutant General, Major General Knight.

[Per 20 VSA § 362](#): “*Matters relating to the organization, discipline, training, and government of the National Guard not otherwise provided for in this chapter, nor in the general rules, shall be decided by the federal laws and regulations prescribed for the National Guard and the U.S. Army, Air Force, or Navy as applicable.*”

At this point in time, and due to the chronic lack of long distance ranges that support the type of competitive shooting we engage in (200, 300 and 600 yards), as well as the variable number of competitive shooters that may or may not attend one of our matches, neither the VSRPA nor our competitors will know ahead of time what the actual cost of the match will be, as we would, and have, run matches with just 3 competitors present. Using that situation as an example, each of the 3 competitors would know ahead of time of the respective match fee (\$20-\$30), but they would not know that they would additionally each be hit with an additional \$46.67 surcharge for the range fee of \$140 ($\$140 / 3 = \46.67), and the VSRPA – being a non-profit 501(c)(7), would not be able to cover that.

The new fee schedule would quite effectively reduce our membership, it would reduce the number of people coming to matches, many of which come from out-of-state, and that loss of revenue to the VSRPA would essentially put us on the path to extinction.

We SUPPORT the Guard and its mission. We SUPPORT fostering marksmanship not only in civilians, but also with any and all interested military members. What little “profit” we realize at the end of a given

year we donate to Junior Shooting Programs such that not one person in our organization pockets even one thin dime as we are all volunteers.

If we were used properly: We can serve, and have served, as a viable recruiting tool for the Guard.

If possible, I would welcome a meeting with you by whatever means to discuss this further, and will hope that this might occur in the very near term.

With Highest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Bradley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" and the last name "Bradley" clearly distinguishable.

Chris Bradley
Secretary / Treasurer - VSRPA

CC: Susanne Young, Secretary – Agency of Administration