I am afraid to read your surroundings; IDPA Matches do not reinforce a BAD gunfighting habit. This is not about gun handling, it is about how you will react during periods of great duress. Plastic barrels, sheets of plastic, sheetrock and old furniture will not protect you from gunfire. Every time you use these sorts of things as cover, you are reinforcing a BAD gunfighting habit.

No, shooting an IDPA Match is not training or even a training event. It is a game with timer, score sheet and an all-seeing performance adjudicator. It is a fun event and is another reason to go to the range and hang out with other like-minded shooters. Do not go down this path. Do not try and mix the very serious task of gunfighting with playing a shooting game in a controlled environment.

Let us take a minute to review training: repetition and memory. If every time you seek cover, it is behind a big blue plastic barrel, where have you been trained to hide under duress?

Let us take a minute to review training: repetition and memory. If every time you seek cover, it is behind a big blue plastic barrel, where have you been trained to hide under duress? Now that I understand the concept, let us take a minute to review training: repetition and memory. If every time you seek cover, it is behind a big blue plastic barrel, where have you been trained to hide under duress? Or if the stage is designed in a living room, and you hide behind the easy chair, where are you training yourself to hide in a home-defense event? There is precious little cover in your home; the exception may well be your gun safe if it is in the house. Sheetrock walls, kitchen appliances, living-room furniture and tables are not cover. However, we – IDPA shooters – routinely use these items as cover.

My plan is to give up the first floor and make my stand upstairs. There’s not much of real value downstairs, and I have a phone and a means to defend (with a reload) myself upstairs. There is only one way upstairs, and several places for me to conceal myself and still engage the staircase. Using the staircase as a shooting ally allows for a high probability of a first-round hit and allows me to account for the rounds fired in the downstairs area. Most shooters will use “real” ammunition during this sort of event, and accounting for the fired rounds is a critical task. This is the sort of ammo that will clear your home and enter the neighbor’s home if fired without consideration to what is in the next room or the neighboring lot. These are considerations that are not often made in an action bay.

Real conditions and personal conditions (training) often do not have much in common with what happens in an action bay. I will concede that individual gun-handling skills are trained and reinforced at a pistol match, but nothing beyond that. If you train to hide behind concealment, that is how you will react during periods of great duress. Plastic barrels, sheets of plastic, sheetrock and old furniture will not protect you from gunfire. Every time you use these sorts of things as cover, you are reinforcing a BAD gunfighting habit.

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