

**SELF DEFENSE HANDGUN OWNERSHIP
AND
THE INDEPENDENCE OF WOMEN
IN A VIOLENT SEXIST SOCIETY**

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I thought it was a real distinct possibility that I might be killed. I believed he would kill me if I resisted. But the other part was that I would try to kill him first because I guess that for me, at that time in my life, it would have been better to have died resisting rape than to have been raped. I decided I wasn't going to die. It seemed a waste to die on the floor in my apartment so I decided to fight.

Recollections of a woman who successfully resisted rape.

Do you care about freedom? Dreams may have inspired it, and wishes promoted it, but only war and weapons have made it yours.

Robert Ardrey

Surprisingly, despite the enormous literature on rape and other violence against women (and on firearms for self-defense), there appears to be no detailed treatment of the viability of women's armed self-defense. The widely publicized tracts in which handgun prohibitionists have argued that firearms are useless defense dismiss women and women's issues summarily with the comment that women can not use guns anyway. The other side devotes scant attention specifically to women because it urges armed self-defense equally for both sexes; and gun experts see little difference between male and female capacity for self-defense with firearms.

I do not favor small calibre pistols [for women]. I have taught too many women, girls, and boys to handle [.45s] with ease and accuracy. - Elmer Keith

If the housewife finds that a 12-gauge [shotgun] is just too strenuous, a 20-gauge is still pretty conclusive... - Jeff Cooper

During the frequent periods that I am away from home, I do not worry about my family,

for my wife has a gun that she could use as well, if not better, than I could; and more important than knowing how to use it, she knows when and under what circumstances to use it.¹ -Neal Knox

Similarly, the Women's Gun Pamphlet, published by a radical feminist group in Berkeley, simply assumes the viability of women's self-defense and proceeds with an excellent treatment of how to master handgun skills.

But we believe a specific discussion of women's armed self-defense is appropriate, because the crimes women fear are particularly deterrable and defensible with handguns. To the extent that the arguments in the anti-self-defense tracts are valid at all, what they demonstrate is that handguns are of little use against burglary and household (but not commercial) robbery. Handguns aren't much use against burglars because burglars take care to strike only when no one is at home to shoot them. As to household robbery, this occurs so infrequently that guns are not kept ready and accessible for resistance; in the rare event of a household robbery, the handgun is generally locked up in the basement, closet, or trunk. But proportionately far more crimes that are directed specifically against women (e.g., rape, murder or beatings by ex-husbands or boyfriends, etc.) involve breaking into their homes or offices. Thus a woman who keeps a handgun for defense against these crimes is much more likely than the normal householder to have it ready to confront the attacker - not to mention the fact that an ex-husband or boyfriend is a lot less likely to try to break in if he knows she is armed. But the tracts deriding self-defense deal with crimes against women by just not mentioning them. The most scrupulous and reliable of them, the Eisenhower Commission staff report, devotes to women only one sentence: "[They are] less knowledgeable than men about guns and generally are less capable of self-defense."²

We come to a very different conclusion based on a review of all the competent evidence as to successful and unsuccessful firearms defense incidents (by shopkeepers, householders, and, specifically, women repelling male attackers) correlated with the normal fact patterns surrounding crimes against women. As to all forms of male attack, we find that firearms, particularly handguns, offer women a high likelihood of successful resistance with a low likelihood of suffering serious injury, and that no other form of resistance does so. As to rape in particular, a firearm (particularly a handgun) is far superior to any other form of resistance because it is: (a) most likely to stop the attacker; (b) least likely to be taken away; and (c) least likely to be used to injure the woman if it is taken away.

In light of the bitterly controversial nature of this subject, we have attempted (not altogether successfully) to eschew emotionalistic terminology and argumentation and to separately discuss first the moral, and then the practical, issues. Furthermore - though at some cost to readability - we have found it necessary to constantly intersperse the discussion with disclaimers about what we are not saying, and clarifications about what we are. The first set of these can be presented here.

We fully endorse the common-law doctrine that a woman threatened with rape - or anyone else threatened illegal[ly] with death or serious injury - may rightfully resist with "deadly force." (The phrase "deadly force" is somewhat misleading, at least as to the relatively puny handgun. Even if an attacker persists to the point of being shot his chance of recovery is 90-95

per cent, as opposed to perhaps 35 percent if a rifle is used and 75 per cent in the case of a shotgun wound.³ Let it be very clear, however, that we are not urging women to have handguns for self-defense. Whether a woman should do that is a purely personal decision which must be made in relation to the particular circumstances in her life. The principal factors that must be evaluated are: First, is she willing and emotionally able to use deadly force in defense of herself or others who are threatened with death or serious bodily harm? If not, her only use for a handgun will be target shooting. Second, do the potential dangers of her life situation justify the "costs" involved on having a handgun for self-defense? These costs are not only the monetary expenditures, but the time and effort necessary to familiarize herself with the gun and learn how to use it safely and efficiently. Third, is her environment one in which a gun can safely be kept? As to this, the consideration normally raised is the presence of small children in the household. In fact, it is generally possible to keep a handgun secreted and securely locked, but reasonably ready for use - or, in an emergency situation, on the owner's person where it is at all times under her direct control. Realistically, the presence in the household of a careless or irresponsible husband or boyfriend may create a greater risk of gun accidents than do children.

We do not suggest that a gun will be much protection to a woman who continues living with the person she has reason to think she may need to defend herself against. A gun is not an absolute guarantee of safety even to the most cautious and discreet of owners, much less one who courts danger. A woman who will continue to live with a man she knows to be capable of killing or seriously injuring her needs a miracle, not a gun. By the same token, possession of a gun is no justification for disregarding the litany of sound advice given by rape prevention groups. Rapists are extremely dangerous, and any prospective encounter with them is perilous, whether the woman is armed or not. She is well' advised to avoid confrontation if humanly possible, for in this case, an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure. Also, a woman may be confronted with a robber, rapist, or the attacker in circumstances where submission seems "the better part of valor." Having a gun does not compel her to use it any more than she is compelled to scratch, bite, kick, or scream if this would increase her danger. The point is that a gun provides a real opportunity to resist, whereas biting, scratching, etc., have

very little likelihood of success and only provoke savage retaliation.

Just as we refrain from advising women to own handguns because the decision must be based upon each individual's evaluation of her own situation, so are we unalterably opposed to the so called gun control laws that seek to substitute government fiat for this individual decision-making. We are opposed to this because we know how that system actually works in New York City, the model of administration that the handgun prohibitionists propose for the entire country. An ordinary woman who seeks a gun permit because she has been threatened or beaten by an ex-husband or boyfriend, or mugged or raped, faces an administrative obstacle course including every technique of discouragement, persuasion, and delay the New York City police can thrust in her path. If an unusually resolute applicant nevertheless perseveres, the permit is automatically denied unless the police are convinced that she will be able and willing to bring a lawsuit. Even when an applicant is successful, the process involves a minimum of six months of red tape by which time she may have been killed or had to move somewhere else for her own safety. Police bureaucrats - all of whom carry a gun twenty-four hours a day for their own protection, incidentally work on the principle that if they give a threatened woman a gun permit and she misuses it there will be an immense clamor in the newspapers. Whereas, if they deny the permit and something happens to her, no one will pay attention to her complaints (even if she is still alive to make them).⁴ By the same token, such ordinary women - and especially minority and underprivileged women - are considered far too unimportant to receive the limited special protection resources that the police allocate to an elite few city officials and prominent individuals.

Unquestionably there are dangers in leaving to the individual citizen the decision whether to own the means of self-defense - although the far less than one in three thousand handgun owners who uses his weapon to murder is almost always going to be the kind of person whom the law cannot disarm anyway. But we find the dangers of individual choice considerably more acceptable than the arrogation of decision-making to a callous bureaucracy which sees to its own protection (and that of an elite, influential few others), while it cannot and will not provide protection to the ordinary individual to whom it denies a gun permit.

Rape and Other Physical Abuse of Women: The Magnitude of the Problem

For as long as the FBI has been publishing yearly reports of the nation's crime, the incidence of rape has been growing more rapidly than any other violent crime category. The rate (number of offenses reported per 100,000 population) tripled in the period 1933-65, whereas the homicide rate rose less than 25 percent in the same period. In 1970-75 the rate of reported rapes rose by 48 per cent, while the number of reported murders, aggravated assaults, and robberies rose by 28, 45, and 33 per cent respectively. As violent crime rates (particularly murder) have steadily dropped since 1975, rape rates have continued to rise.⁵ (It remains unclear, however, whether this represents an increase in actual incidence of rape - caused perhaps by the greater vulnerability of women as more live independent of men today - or simply the greater willingness of women to report rapes which in earlier years would have gone unreported.)

At the same time, non-sexual violence by men against women continues to account for a

large proportion of homicides and an even larger (though often unreported) proportion of aggravated assaults. In New York City "40 percent of all requests for police assistance and protection come from women who have been battered or threatened by their husbands."⁶ (by definition, this figure does not include women murdered by their husbands, or women murdered, assaulted, or threatened by ex-husbands, boy- friends, ex-boyfriends, or other male acquaintances.) A study of St. Louis police reports of aggravated assaults (defined as attempted murder or assault resulting in serious injury) found women being attacked by present or ex-husbands or boyfriends in over 12 percent of all cases (over 39 percent of the cases where the victim was female). This is a conservative figure, according to Sandy Baker, who did the study for St. Louis Legal Aid, in that it includes only those cases in which the report explicitly so described the man, excluding many others in which the connection was evident but not stated.⁷

Inability of the Criminal Justice System to Protect Women

How effectual is the Law in protecting women? In one city it has been shown that in 85 percent of the cases, when a homicide occurs in the course of domestic violence, the police had been summoned at least once before the killing occurred; and in 50 percent of the cases, the police were called five or more times before the actual murder."⁸ Or consider the case of Linda Ross, as described in a dissenting opinion in New York's highest court:

Linda Riss, an attractive young woman, was for more than six months terrorized by a rejected suitor well known to the courts of this state. . . . This miscreant, masquerading as a respectable attorney, repeatedly threatened to have Linda killed or maimed if she did not yield to him: "If I can't have you, no one else will have you, and when I get through with you no one else will want you." In fear for her life, she went to those charged by law with the duty of preserving and safeguarding the lives of the citizens and residents of this State. Linda's repeated and almost pathetic pleas for aid were received with little more than indifference. . . . On June 14, 1959 Linda became engaged to another man. At a party held to celebrate the event, she received a phone call warning her that it was her "last chance." Completely distraught, she called the police, begging for help, but was refused. The next day [the suitor] carried out his dire threats in the very manner he had foretold by having a hired thug throw lye in Linda's face. Linda was blinded in one eye, lost a good portion of her vision in the other, and her face was permanently scarred. . . . [Nevertheless the City has denied all liability, forcing Linda to sue.] What makes the City's position particularly difficult to understand is that, in conformity to the dictates of the law [of New York which forbids any civilian to have a pistol] Linda did not carry any weapon for self-defense. Thus, by a rather bitter irony she was required to rely for protection on the City of New York which now denies all responsibility to her.⁹

Common experience provides innumerable similar examples. A couple of years ago, a friend of ours in San Francisco awakened to find a prowler attempting to break in through her beveled glass front door. Fortunately for her, her screams drove him off - because the police never came. Apparently her call just got lost in the shuffle someplace.

Around the same time a male faculty colleague of Professor Kates, was robbed and severely beaten by three teenage hoods in Washington, D.C. After leaving the hospital, he investigated to find out why the police never appeared at the scene, for he knew they had been called by onlookers. He learned eventually that this is standard response by the rank-and-file of Washington officers to any situation involving teenage (as opposed to adult) muggers. The experience of Washington officers is that if they catch an adult mugger in the act he surrenders tamely enough, no matter how well armed he may be. The adult mugger knows that arrest means an hour's detention for booking, followed by release on bond or recognizance, and then, perhaps eight months later, conviction and a suspended sentence. But the poor ignorant teenage mugger, lacking knowledge of court practice, still thinks he is actually going to be punished. When an officer attempts to arrest such teenagers, they resist to the utmost, employing whatever weapons they have. Officers are understandably reluctant to risk life or limb (their own, and those of possible hostages or bystanders) just to send a few more teenage hoods through a forty-five-minute revolving door and out onto the streets again. So when police dispatchers receive a report of a mugging in progress, they are careful to note whether the culprits are teenagers - and, if so, the officers in the area suddenly find themselves terribly busy doing something else.

Police Negligence or Systemic Failure?

Tempting as it is to cast all the blame on the police or the courts, or some other callous or negligent bureaucracy, the truth is that most of the problems are simply inherent in our system of justice. Often times police are reluctant to arrest a wife-beater, because they sincerely (and reasonably) believe that this will only endanger the wife by making him more vengefully brutal on future occasions when the police will not be there to intervene. Yes, the police can arrest him this time. But they can't stop him from seeing a magistrate after he is booked, and being released on bail or his own recognizance. That is the husband's legal right. The police cannot prevent him from returning to his own house or seeing his own children. Short of a court order, which is time consuming, difficult, and expensive to obtain, these also are his legal rights. Once on the premises, he can brutalize, maim, or kill his unarmed wife, whether he is armed or not, long before the police can be summoned.

Few, if any, Americans, however great their abhorrence of spousal abuse, would suggest that the police be empowered to drag wife-beaters from their houses directly before judges who would summarily convict them and sentence them to life imprisonment. But it would require this kind of drastic change in our system of criminal procedure to ensure that when the police arrest a wife-beater he won't be out in a few hours, furious and able to wreak vengeance upon her.

Nor is it viable to talk about police protection for the threatened wife, girlfriend, etc. The simple fact is that the police are not staffed and organized (and they cannot be) to provide round-the-clock protection to the tens of thousands of women in communities across the country who are threatened, beaten, or murdered by their husbands each year - much less to the hundreds of thousands of other women who are threatened, beaten, or murdered by ex-husbands, boyfriends, or ex-boyfriends, or even to the women who are attacked by rapists. On this point, note that the facts we quoted from the Riss case were stated in dissent. The other

judges of New York's highest court voted to deny any compensation, following hoary and universal doctrines of American law. In California these are summarized in the statutes:

A public employee is not liable for an injury caused by his failure to enforce any enactment [i.e., law] Neither a public entity nor a public employee is liable for failure to . . . provide police protection . . . or to provide sufficient police protection . . . [or] for injury caused by the failure to make an arrest or the failure to retain an arrested person in custody.¹⁰

Neither the courts nor the legislatures of our country are about to impose upon the police liability for not providing protection which they are not equipped or staffed to provide.

The law presumes that a citizen is ordinarily capable of protecting herself. As a practical matter that means a woman has to have a handgun.

The "Morality" of Women Defending Themselves with Handguns

We recognize the force of the conventional response that there must be "some better solution" than a woman threatening or shooting her husband, lover, etc. But in the real world, there all too often isn't any better solution. And musings about better solutions are of very little aid to a woman who is being strangled or beaten to death. Consider a practical example: Less than a year ago the head of the St. Louis Legal Aid Women's Unit brought a client to Professor Kates for advice on buying and using a handgun. The woman's husband was a huge, powerful man with a long history of extremely violent attacks upon her and others. Her opportunity to divorce him arose only because he was currently hospitalized with two abdominal bullet wounds incurred during a nearly successful attempt to beat his sister and brother-in-law to death.

Let us examine what "better solutions" were available to this woman. Moving to another house in St. Louis and getting an unlisted phone number were of no use, since her husband could always find her at work. An impecunious black woman, she could not afford to quit her job. Even if she had, he could always have tracked her down through her friends. Moving to live with relatives in another part of the country seemed futile for he knew where they lived, and she was convinced he would follow her. Beyond the immediate practical questions is an ethical one by what right does anyone say that a woman - black or white, poor or rich - should give up her home, her job, her friends, and move to some place where she does not wish to live, rather than defend herself from a brutal, lawless attacker?

In the actual event, this woman did purchase a handgun and kept it on her person while her husband was visiting with the children. He did attack her, and she sent him back to the hospital with two more bullet wounds. Had she not had the gun, it seems quite probable that she would have been beaten to death. Although her skin is quite dark, the bruises on her face and neck were clearly visible the next day.

The Situation of Minorities and the Poor

This last example raises a question which the earlier ones also suggest: Given what police responsiveness is to violence against Linda Riss or law professors, or to our friend in her beautiful San Francisco Victorian, and to white middle or upper class people in general, what must life be like for minorities and underprivileged people living in the high-crime areas of our cities? The St. Louis police hierarchy provided a most reassuring answer when that question was put to them a few months ago by a local reporter doing a series on "gun control." They said that police protection is fully sufficient; blacks and the poor have no need for handguns in St. Louis. But repeating this to rank-and-file officers got the reporter only laughter and ridicule. The officers who actually work the ghetto unanimously and unequivocally told her that they cannot keep order there; self-protection is all that ghetto residents can rely on. More telling than their comments was their reaction to her proposal that some of them escort her into the

housing projects while she was doing interviews there. Although she does not ordinarily have difficulty finding male company, she could not get any officer, black or white, to volunteer to enter the area with her while off duty. These men go there at all only because required to do so to keep their jobs - and then only armed, with an armed partner for back-up, in shotgun-equipped squad cars which they rarely leave.

We cannot resist adding a further example of what gun laws mean for poor women. A couple of years ago in Chicago a man literally smashed his way through the thin walls of a tenement apartment, raped the woman he found therein, and threw her out the fifteen-story window. Police arrived too late to catch him, so they arrested her roommate for carrying the handgun she used to scare him out of raping and killing her as well. The prosecutor dropped the charges after the case attracted nationwide publicity. This was probably influenced by his knowledge of what would have happened in the special "gun court" that handles all such cases in Chicago. One of its judges has commented that he rarely gives more than a small fine because, in virtually every case, gun law violators are decent, respectable citizens - shopkeepers, secretaries, the elderly - who carry handguns out of a legitimate desire and need for self-defense. (The real criminals never come before this court, for gun charges against them are only incidental to their trials for murder, armed robbery, aggravated assault, etc.) The judge usually doesn't even add probation to the fines because that would prevent the defendants from buying a new gun to replace the one the police confiscated, and the judge believes they need guns to live and work where they do.

But the leaders of the handgun confiscation movement have the answer. They are going to make it a federal crime to own a handgun, with sentencing to be mandatory, so that a prosecutor will not have to drop charges against a woman like this. He will know that the judge has no choice other than to give her a year in prison.

Women's Self-Defense versus the Anti-Self-Defense Tracts

We have already mentioned the several well-publicized tracts in which prohibitionists have argued that handguns are worthless for defense of self and others. It should be noted that none of these involve any attempt to compare how often gun-armed citizens have been successful in defending themselves to how often they have been hurt or killed in doing so. The only study collecting data on that has been done by Professor Kates and justifies a conclusion far from what the prohibitionists want. Their tracts rest principally upon the allegedly small number of burglars and robbers actually killed by householders. How appropriate this is as a measure of self-defense (and how they selected their justifiable homicide statistics) is discussed infra., along with Professor Kates' study. For the present, we repeat that, taking their figures at face value, all the anti-self-defense tracts show is that handguns have limited utility against: (a) burglars, because these strike when no one is home; and (b) household robbers, because this is so unexpected a crime that comparatively few householders keep handguns readily available to resist them.

This has no bearing at all on the likely success of a woman who keeps a handgun at the ready because she fears rape (which is proportionately far more likely in the home than robbery) or had been threatened by an ex-husband or boyfriend. These tracts have quite

literally nothing to say about women's armed self-defense, for, in general, they avoid mentioning the kinds of crimes directed against women; the most thorough and scrupulous of them, as noted, dismisses women and their concerns with one contemptuous sentence. One measure of the likely success where a woman keeps a handgun ready is the success of shopkeepers (including many documented instances of women shopkeepers) in foiling robbers - yet another area the anti-self-defense tracts avoid discussing. A recent Duke University study concludes that in one city where many shopkeepers keep handguns ready for defense the average robber doubles his chance of dying by pulling seven robberies in a year - not to mention raising his chance of being wounded tenfold and taking an incalculably greater chance of being captured.¹¹

Deterrent Effect of Handgun Possession

Another significant issue is the deterrent effect that victim possession of a handgun is likely to have on one considering attacking her. The year after Orlando, Florida, instituted a highly publicized training program in which six thousand civilian women mastered handgun combat skills, rape dropped 90 percent there - though it rose precipitously across the country. We will discuss that and several comparable examples later. Such examples do not prove that handgun possession by individual women will deter crimes like rape or robbery for, in the absence of wide publicity, a criminal contemplating such crimes will not expect his victim to be armed. As to murder and other assaultive crimes, however, the situation is very different, for these are normally perpetrated among acquaintances. One who contemplates assaulting or

killing is much more likely to know his victim is armed and therefore to be deterred than a rapist or robber may be.

It is impossible to tell how many murders or assaults have not occurred because the victim was known to be armed. Nor can we be certain that such knowledge will necessarily deter the kind of man who contemplates attacking his ex-wife or girlfriend. It is clearly a deterrent to other kinds of violence, however. Surveys among prison populations uniformly find felons stating that, whenever possible, they avoid victims who are thought to be armed, and that they know of planned crimes that were abandoned when it was discovered that the prospective victim was armed.¹² Indeed, in these surveys prison denizens expressed support for handgun prohibition on precisely the same grounds which lead many honest citizens to oppose it, that it would make life safer and easier for the criminal by disarming his victims without affecting his own ability to attack them. Typical of prisoner comments, according to criminologist Ernest van den Haag of New York University, was: "Ban guns; I'd love it. I'm an armed robber."

Another illustration of the deterrent effect of civilian handgun ownership is the contrast between the Albuquerque police strike of 1974 and the Liverpool, England police strike of sixty years ago. The unprecedented increase in criminal activity in Liverpool while the strike lasted has been used as a classic example of the need for police services.¹³ But when Albuquerque police went out on strike, storekeepers openly armed themselves and citizens patrolled their neighborhoods with pistols and shotguns. Not only did major crime not rise - it dropped to lows that Albuquerque had not seen in years.

Quality of the Anti-Self-Defense Tracts

The Eisenhower Commission staff report admits that known handgun possession by a prospective victim can be an important deterrent, but passes quickly over the issue since the crimes it elects to focus on (burglary, robbery) are generally committed by strangers who can't be deterred because they have no idea whether their victim has a gun. Despite the evident bias in its selection of focus, the Eisenhower Report remains the most scrupulous and reliable of the anti-self-defense tracts. The least scrupulous is one that has been widely quoted for the statistic that the number of people killed accidentally by firearms in the home is six times greater than the number of robbers or burglars killed by such firearms. At first blush, this is a very impressive indictment of the keeping of handguns for self-defense. But, upon examination, it turns out that the rabidly anti-gun authors of this study manufactured their statistic by an unannounced transfer of gun suicides into the tiny category of gun accident deaths. Since the number of yearly handgun suicides is about 44 times the number of accidental handgun fatalities, the effect of this sleight-of-hand is to exaggerate the number of accidents by upwards of 4400 per cent, rendering the accident-to-self-defense comparison worthless.¹⁴

Nearly as misleading is the statement in another such study that a loaded handgun in the home is statistically far more likely to be used against family and friends than as a means to repel strangers. As this study itself notes, about "72 percent of all murders nation-wide occurred among family members friends and acquaintances. . . ."¹⁵ Of course a woman who keeps a handgun for self-defense is most likely to end up using it "against family or friends"

because those are the people who are most likely to be trying to kill her!

In striking contrast to the anti-self-defense studies are measures that their sponsors and publicists take when their own safety is at stake. While the New York Times unceasingly advises ordinary citizens that no one needs a handgun for self-defense its publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger has a permit to carry a concealed handgun at all times. So, reportedly, have Congressman and former New York Mayor John Lindsay (author of innumerable bills to disarm everyone else) and the husband of Dr. Joyce Brothers, the renowned pop-psychologist, whose public position is that no one needs a handgun for self-defense and that men who have them may be suspected of sexual dysfunction.¹⁶ One of the anti-self-defense tracts was issued by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, an organization that lobbies ceaselessly for handgun prohibition. Yet virtually every one of the big-city mayors responsible for this position carries a handgun himself and or has armed body guards.

Now it will undoubtedly be suggested that public office holders and publishers (but faded ex-mayors and Dr. Joyce Brothers?) have reason to keep handguns for self-defense. But this would seem irrelevant if handguns are useless for self-defense as the tracts say. In any case, it is quite untrue that big-city mayors and newspaper publishers are exposed to greater dangers than many classes of ordinary citizens. For instance, hundreds of thousands of women are threatened by male acquaintances each year; thousands of these women are killed, and tens of thousands severely injured. In contrast, the last big-city mayor murdered in the United States was Anton Cermak of Chicago, who got in the way of a bullet intended for F.D.R. in 1934. Our information as to the murder of newspaper publishers is not so precise, but the last one that comes to mind is Elijah Lovejoy in 1857. If anybody in our society does not need handguns for self-defense it is the mayors, the Sulzbergers, the Lindsey and Brotherses, the Nelson, David, Winthrop, and John Rockefeller, and all the other millionaires, socialites. and celebrities who hare New York City to carry concealed guns while ordinary citizens can't even get permits to own them. If these people - whose lives are spent in mansions, high-security office buildings, and chauffeured limousines - believe that handguns are useless, let them give theirs up first. But, somehow, not only does a handgun prohibition not affect them first, it never gets around to them at all.

Defense of Self and Others With Firearms: Restoring the Balance to the Calculus of "Gun Control"

One artificial reason for the apparent strength of the case against civilian handgun ownership is an inherent lack of balance in the information available. The FBI publishes each year a national crime report from which anti-handgun propagandists draw endless statistics of the misuse of handguns in crime. But no state or federal agency, and very few localities, collect evidence the lives saved and/or crimes foiled by civilian handgun possession. As we shall see, however, the evidence that is available on this suggests that such incidents numerically far exceed the incidents of handgun misuse. In short, we hear only about the bad that handguns do and not about the good. (Of course, much of that good is not quantifiable anyway. There is no way to determine how many assaults or murders do not take place because the prospective victim is known to be armed. Likewise, there is no way to quantify the innocent pleasure collectors or target shooters get from their weapons, or the feeling of security people get from

having a gun handy, though in fact they never need to use it.)

The largest available sample of incidents in which civilian handguns were used against crime comes from the magazine of the National Rifle Association. But this sample is both biased and incomplete. It is biased because the NRA confessedly prints only those instances in which civilians were successful in using handguns against criminals, not those in which they were unsuccessful. It is very incomplete because the NRA prints only a page each month of the far more numerous incidents sent in by its readers from newspaper clippings. Newspapers report only a fraction of the armed self-defense incidents that occur. Moreover, NRA members do not read every newspaper in the country, they do not spot every incident reported in the newspapers they do read, and they do not clip and send in every report that they spot.

To obtain a less biased and more comprehensive sample, Professor Kates has for a year and a half had students clipping out, from thirty daily newspapers available in university and public libraries in St. Louis, reports of both successful and unsuccessful use of firearms in repelling criminal attacks. Some 296 incidents were analyzed, which allowed an interesting comparison between the success rate of armed civilians against criminals and that of the police and uniformed security guards. With success defined as the criminal being driven off, captured, or killed, armed civilians were successful in 84 percent of the cases, while police and security officers were successful in 73.3 percent. As to the danger of such resistance, 11.3 percent of the civilian defenders, and 15.1 per cent of the officers, were wounded, while 6.5 percent of the civilians and 6 percent of the officers were killed. (The differential between the success of civilian defenders and the somewhat lesser success of police may be due to the fact that victims are likely to encounter criminals at closer range than are police. Alternatively or cumulatively, it is also true that the average police officer has little interest in developing firearm skills, and the encouragement, training, and opportunity to do so afforded by most police departments are meager at best¹⁷ whereas shop-keepers and residents in high-crime areas often have great incentive to perfect their firearm skills.)

The difficulties inherent in a study based upon newspaper reports are numerous. Newspaper reports are not always accurate and complete. Some unsuccessful self-defense attempts may not have been recognized as such, e.g., because the robber snatched up the defender's gun after killing him, so that one does not thereafter recognize that the defender even had a gun. On the other hand, for reasons that will be described later, most successful self-defense examples are either not reported by the police or at least not thereafter carried in newspapers. Finally, the newspapers available in St. Louis do not cover anything like the entire country. With those deficiencies acknowledged, it remains true that this study represents the only attempt ever made to compare successful to unsuccessful self-defense incidents and to determine the percentage of times in which a defender was injured or killed.

In contrast, the anti-self-defense tracts contain concealed biases far more inappropriate than those that are apparent even in the NRA's totally unscientific monthly column. These tracts make no attempt to compare the numbers of successful and unsuccessful self-defense instances or to measure the percentage of danger that a defender may be injured or killed. They just belittle the value of self-defense by stressing the small number of burglars or robbers killed by householders in Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, etc. Assuming that killings were the

appropriate standard, no explanation is given for omitting the numerically far more frequent killings of criminals by shopkeepers who, after all, will also be denied handguns by a national Sullivan Law. Similarly, no explanation is given for these studies' reliance upon unofficial police "guess-timates" of justifiable homicides from cities like Detroit and Los Angeles that do not keep actual records. At least some of the authors must be aware that the Chicago police department has been keeping records of justifiable homicides by civilians and by police for over forty years. These records show the number of criminals justifiably killed by civilians in each year to have squalled or exceeded the number killed by police - and in the last several years the civilian total has been almost three times that of the police.¹⁸ This comparison of civilians to police gains particular significance in light of the fact that "of the five largest cities in the United States, Chicago has the highest incidence of killings by the police." Professor Harding's study "Killings by Chicago Police,"¹⁹ from which this figure is taken, prompts some other comparisons between police killings and justifiable homicides by civilian gun owners. Every one of these civilian homicides was declared "justifiable" only after the most rigorous scrutiny by the Homicide Section of the Chicago police. But when the killings are by the police, rather less rigorous investigative techniques are employed. Professor Harding concludes, "the collaboration between or the inertia of [Chicago police officialdom and the Prosecutor's office] has erected an almost impenetrable barrier to effective testing of questionable police conduct." Working only from materials made public by the authorities (i.e., without any attempt to find or question witnesses independently), Professor Harding categorized 14 percent of the police killings he investigated as "apparent prima facie cases of manslaughter or murder. Several other [cases] presented factual anomalies sufficient to suggest that a thorough investigation [by the police at the time] might have revealed such prima facie cases." Needless to say, in not one of these cases was an officer charged with any crime; in only one of them was an officer even disciplined by the department, although in almost 20 percent of them Professor Harding found there to have been prima facie violations of such rules as not to shoot from a moving automobile or through apartment doors at unidentifiable targets.

At the risk of melodrama, it seems that possession of a Chicago badge is the equivalent of James Bond's "license to kill." Nor is Chicago atypical in the way in which it investigates killings by the police. A study by the Police Foundation finds the same pattern prevailing in seven other major American cities.²⁰ One may well wonder which represents the greater danger to public safety, handgun possession by citizens who know that if they are caught misusing their weapons they will be punished - or by police who know that they will not be?

Returning now to the anti-self-defense tracts, the most unfair of all the improprieties in their methodology is seizing on the number of criminals killed as a way of minimizing the "success" of civilian self-defense. Citizens keep pistols not to kill with, but to defend themselves. Success is measured as much by the number of criminals wounded, captured, or driven off without a shot being fired, as by the number killed. After all, we measure the success of the police not by how many criminals they kill, but by how many arrests they make and/or how many crimes they stop. The unfair minimization when kills alone are used as an index is not a minor one. From ten to twenty times as many criminals will survive handgun wounds as die of them,²¹ and the number who flee or surrender without a shot being fired may well exceed the number of wounded survivors.

Admittedly, it is very difficult to quantify the amount of non-kill success against criminals. While many such examples appear in Professor Kates' newspaper sample, there is good reason to believe that the majority of such incidents are nowhere recorded. The unfortunate fact is that crime has become so commonplace that many major newspapers do not consider newsworthy an item about a citizen driving off or even capturing or wounding a criminal.²² Moreover, it appears that many incidents in which prowlers, burglars, or muggers are driven off by civilians are never reported to the police, in part because most incidents occur at night, and the civilian has no very good description to give, and in part because the civilian may have owned or carried the gun illegally.

Only one sample with which we are familiar (and that a highly flawed one) provides comprehensive evidence as to the use of civilian handguns in defense of self or family. This is a survey taken for the California Department of Justice, in which 58 percent of those admitting to handgun ownership claimed that they or a member of their family at some time used that handgun in civilian self-defense.²³ Such self-reporting statistics must be used with great caution. The respondent may simply have invented an incident for the delectation of the poll-taker. Or the incident may have occurred, but it may have been the handgun user who was in the wrong and who illegally threatened or harmed another person. Because the question asked contained no time limitation, the respondent could be referring to an incident which happened in his household thirty or forty years ago. A drastic but effective way of excluding bias through invented or misreported or ancient incidents is to arbitrarily exclude from consideration 90 percent of the self-defense uses claimed by the respondents, and to assume that the incidents in question occurred not in the two years immediately preceding the survey, but in the entire preceding fifteen years. Assuming, therefore, that only 5.8 percent (rather than 58 percent) of America's handgun owners used their weapons in defense of self or others during years 1960-75, it still appears that the number of instances in which handguns were used in defense exceeds the number in which they were misused to kill in those years by a factor of 15-1.

The Effort to Dissuade Women From Keeping Firearms for Self-Defense

We are well aware of the deluge of advice to women that resisting a rapist with a firearm is both futile and dangerous. If this be accepted, it must be concluded that women should make no physical resistance to rape, for unarmed resistance would be even more futile and at least as dangerous. If an armed woman cannot resist a rapist, surely it would be futile for an unarmed woman to try. As to likelihood of injury or death from resisting, if rapists would be inspired to homicidal fury by the mere experience of wresting a gun away from a woman (as they are supposed to be able to do so easily), what will their reaction be to a woman who screams, scratches, bites, kicks, etc.? It seems that a woman who doesn't have a male around to protect her had better just "lie back and enjoy it" - and hope that her attacker does not have it in mind to mutilate or murder her afterwards.

Before accepting such a posture, women should be informed that there is no evidence that the projected scenario of a rapist taking a woman's gun away from her and shooting her with it has ever occurred outside of cinematic fiction. To eliminate any question of biased research on our part, we took this conclusion to Lorraine Copeland, an acknowledged authority in the area

of rape. While director of the Queen's Bench Foundation Rape Victimization Project, she did three major empirical studies,²⁴ including one on resistance techniques, and familiarized herself with the vast corpus of studies and other literature available on rape. Though there were women who successfully used firearms in self-defense in Ms. Copeland's sample, their number was too small to justify any conclusion. But in none of those cases did the woman have her gun taken away and used against her; and Ms. Copeland confirms our conclusion that a review of the entire corpus of rape literature reveals no such case.

In contrast to this unsubstantiated scenario, there are hundreds of documented examples of women successfully using firearms against male attackers. The following from the St. Louis Post - Dispatch from March 25, 1976, provides a particularly ironic counterpoint to the propaganda with which anti-gun police officials have deluged women:

George Kensey can't be sure whether he has poor judgment or bad luck - but he can be sure that he has bullet wounds in the shoulder and back. The woman whom Kensey attempted to pull from an outdoor phone booth near Gardena, California, early yesterday turned out to be Barbara Sherwood. And Ms. Sherwood turned out to be a sheriff's deputy, armed with a .38 revolver. She shot Kensey twice, took him to the hospital for treatment and then moved him to Angeles County jail where he is being held on suspicion of attempted rape.

Or consider this item from the St. Louis Globe Democrat:

'Get off or I'll shoot you' said the 60-year-old woman as she yanked a gun from under her pillow and ordered the rapist to stop. He obeyed. While continuing to point the assailant, the woman, whose identity was not disclosed, telephone police yesterday. They arrested Robert Thomas, 27, and charged him with [attempted rape and various other crimes]. Police said Thomas came to the woman's apartment seeking a friend who was not there. He allegedly flashed a straight razor, ordering the woman into her bedroom, and told her to undress.

This incident recalls an earlier one in which a Chicago woman confronted by a rapist in her apartment pretended to faint. When he carried her to her bed she reached under a pillow, pulled out a revolver, and shot him dead. Many of the thousands of examples printed in the NRA magazine over the years have involved gun-armed women routing male attackers. Typical are the following [that appeared in just one randomly selected issue (January, 1978)].

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma - a knife-armed burglar who backed a 77-year-old woman into her bedroom fled when she grabbed a handgun from under her pillow and fired a shot over his head.

Richmond, California - a woman called the police about a shotgun-armed prowler. When he broke into the house before they arrived, she killed him with a pistol.

Shreveport, Louisiana - a burglar who tried to force his way into the home of an 84-year-old woman at 2:30 A.M. fled after she shot him with a handgun.

Lennox, California - two men raped a woman who was five months pregnant; they fled when she secured a gun after they had gone into the kitchen to get some beer.

As isolated instances, such anecdotes prove little. We recount them to exemplify the hundreds of such cases we have reviewed. These are to be considered in the context of the general facts on armed self-defense and on the psychology of rapists and the circumstances of rape that are described in the immediately preceding and succeeding sections. Our conclusion from all this evidence can be stated in two sentences: First, women who prepare themselves to repel rape with a firearm stand a very good chance of success, and very little chance of being injured as a result. Second, if someone nevertheless considers self-defense with a gun too risky, the only rational course is complete submission. Since any other form of resistance is at once far less likely to succeed, and at least equally likely to provoke a rapist into violent retaliation. A further point is that about 80 percent of the documented successful armed resistance examples involved women using handguns. These are safer, easier to handle and much less lethal, than long guns. As to karate, judo, or other martial arts, achieving and maintaining the necessary defensive preparedness with a handgun is far less arduous. At the same time, a handgun is a far more effective defensive weapon against even one attacker, much less several. Although Ms. Silver has a brown belt in one school of karate, and a purple belt in another, she believes it far safer to have a firearm to resist an attacker, regardless of whether, or how, he is armed.

Although we will be devoting considerable space to the likelihood that a rapist can disarm his victim, it may be useful to enter another set of disclaimers and clarifications here: We are not claiming that never out of thousands of instances of resistance by armed women will a rapist get a handgun away. We are saying that such an occurrence will be very rare, and that when it occurs it is highly unlikely that the rapist will shoot her.

First, a rapist who is confronted by a woman who is armed and ready to defend herself will generally flee; what rapists seek is a helpless victim upon whom they can take out their hostilities - not someone who stands a substantial chance of seriously injuring or killing them. Second, if the rapist chooses to attack, the most likely result is that he will be shot until he desists; police combat instructors advise their pupils never to attempt to manually disarm a person with a handgun unless they are convinced he is about to shoot them anyway. Third, assuming that a rapist does wrest a gun from a woman after considerable struggle, he will be no more (and perhaps less) inclined to kill her or injure her than if she had bitten, scratched, kicked, or otherwise resisted without a weapon; if the gun has been fired during the struggle, the rapist will probably depart rapidly to avoid the police. Assuming that rapists could wrest guns away as easily as movie and TV scripts suggest, they are likely to be considerably less annoyed by such resistance than biting, scratching, etc. In the one case we know of where a rapist did get a woman's gun, he did not brutalize her thereafter. She stated, incidentally, that she lost her gun only because she could not bring herself to shoot him, though she had the opportunity. However humanitarian her reluctance, the result is that this so-called East Area Rapist has continued to rape scores of women in Sacramento, California, over several years' time.

Characteristics of Rapists and Rape Situations

Despite centuries of romanticization, it is by now well recognized that rape is not primarily a sexual act. This is emphasized by a survey Lorraine Copeland took among convicted rapists in California's Atascadero State Hospital.²⁵ More than three-quarters of the inmates stated that, on the day of their crime, they were feeling frustrated, upset, or depressed about something (other than the woman whom they victimized). Their primary concern was not sexual release, but venting these hostilities and antagonisms on a helpless victim. Indeed, almost 40 percent of these men were frustrated or depressed in general, and not because of conflict with a particular woman or women or all women. It seems that these men would have been equally happy to take out their frustrations by brutalizing a man they knew to be helpless; and some rapists have records of non-sexual, but extreme and unprovoked, violence against children.

The theme of power and helplessness - as opposed to sexual arousal - runs like a leitmotif through every study of rape. Despite the romantic myths, it is quite untrue that rapists concentrate upon conventionally attractive women. Victims are chosen primarily because their situation is perceived by the rapist as foreclosing effectual resistance; it is more important that the victim be helpless than desirable. Though over 60 percent of the Atascadero rapists were frustrated, angry, or depressed because of problems with some particular woman, they chose instead to brutalize some other female acquaintance or a complete stranger. They were getting back at a woman who had them "by the short hair" but they could do so only by striking at one

whom they perceived as helpless. Incidentally, when the rapist is confident that it will be futile. He often actually enjoys the woman's resistance. Many of the Atascadero rapists expressed disappointment that their victims had not struggled more. Very violent rapists often gratuitously brutalize unresisting victims in order to provoke them to futile resistance which can be even more savagely suppressed.

As to time and geography, a recent Denver study finds that "the greatest proportion of" rapes over a two-year period "occurred [between] midnight and 4 A.M. . . . while the victim was asleep in her bedroom."²⁶ A study of almost 650 Philadelphia rapes in the late 1950s found over 38 percent of them occurring in the victim's own home, with another 11.6 percent occurring in automobiles, and the rest in "open spaces." Of the Philadelphia rapes, 71 percent are characterized as "planned" and 11 percent as "partially planned," though the evidence for this is somewhat snaky, since it relies primarily on victim perception.²⁷ In a New York study, some 60 percent of the rape offenders questioned indicated that they acted upon immediate impulse with no prior planning.²⁸ As to means of intimidation, various empirical studies of rape disclose from 10 to 15 percent of the offenders using guns, from 20 to 55 percent using knives and other weapons, with the remainder relying on brute force.²⁹ The fact that only a small minority of rapists carry guns, and that a very large proportion carry no weapons at all, should not be misinterpreted as suggesting that rapists are not dangerous. If anything, it suggests the reverse. A gun-armed criminal (whether rapist, robber, or burglar) brings to bear against his victim the weapon which is most likely to secure obedience by mere threat. A criminal who relies on some lesser weapon is more likely to actually have to use it, either gratuitously, because he fears that threatening with it will not be enough, or because the victim actually does resist. For that reason, numerous studies of robberies both in this country and in Great Britain find injury to occur most frequently and be most serious when no weapon is used, or when the weapon is not a firearm.³⁰

In contrast to rapists, robbers are significantly more likely to be carrying some kind of weapon, which is most likely to be a firearm. Doubtless one reason for this is that robbery occurs far less often than rape on the spur of the moment, when the perpetrator is likely to be armed with nothing more than a pocketknife, if that. In contrast to the robber, the rapist feels more free to act on momentary impulse, because he is confident of his physical domination over women. By the same token, even when a rape is preplanned, the rapist may not think it necessary to use a firearm (or, perhaps, not any artificial weapon at all) to overawe his victim.

Also, many rapists eschew firearms for exactly the same reasons that robbers adopt them, i.e., the likelihood that their mere display will cow the victim into submission. While a robber wants to obtain money, and as easily as possible, a rapist is seeking psychological satisfaction. Because this is enhanced by victim resistance (if obviously futile), rapists generally opt against the gun, which will ensure compliance, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to savagely suppress resistance. Moreover, as a means of suppressing resistance, a gun is too distant and impersonal. Extremely brutal rapists almost always prefer a knife, or even better, a bludgeon or their unaided hands and feet.³¹ Rape-murderers very rarely shoot their victims, preferring to stab them as did Richard Speck (though he also had a gun). But often even the knife-armed rape-murderer eschews the weapon, preferring to get down and beat, kick, and/or strangle his victim.

The Mechanics of Women's Armed Self-Defense

The notion that women cannot defend themselves with firearms is the last apparently respectable (to "liberals") remnant of the apparently respectable (to "liberals") remnant of the sexist mythology about women and machines. In fact, women are at least equal to men in mastering combat firearms skills. In addition to its police training, the Chattanooga, Tennessee, Police Academy has initiated a short combat pistol training course for civilian women. The Academy's head reports that "most of the women had never [before] held a revolver, much less fired one." Nevertheless, he was astounded to find that, after two hours of classroom instruction and one hour on the range, they were consistently outshooting experienced police cadets who had the benefit of eight times as much instruction and practice.³² Of course the average rapist whom an armed woman will face has nowhere near the training or experience even of a police cadet. The phenomenal incompetence of criminals with weapons is something often and thankfully commented upon by police.³³ In addition, about 85 percent of rapists facing an armed woman will have the distinct disadvantage of not having a gun themselves.

Many rapists confronted with a gun will not even attempt to attack the woman, but will retreat or surrender if the opportunity is open. Empirical studies of sexual assault find a substantial proportion of would-be rapists backing off from even unarmed victims who show confidence and belligerence, rather than the timorous submission that the rapist expected. A fortiori, the number of rapists backing off will be greater yet where the woman's confident belligerence is supported and emphasized with a pistol. Of those rapists who would attack despite the woman's possession of a gun (or because they don't realize she has one until too late), many would be stopped cold by absorbing one or more bullets. Even if the rapist manages to close upon, and grapple with, a gun-armed woman without being shot, her screams and/or the weapon's discharge is likely to summon help, or at least to cause the rapist to depart for fear that police may come.

Confronting the Gun-Armed Rapist

A commonly heard objection to these arguments is that they apply only as long as rapists are less well armed than their victims. But (it is said) when women start defending themselves with guns this will prompt rapists to begin carrying guns, and the victim with the gun will find herself in more trouble than she would have been without

It is hard to know where to start. Probably it is best there are so many holes, both factual and theoretical, in this objection that it is hard to know where to start. Probably it is best to begin by reiterating a point made earlier which applies to resistance by a gun-armed woman in any situation, no matter what kind of weapon her attacker has. The idea that having a gun puts the victim in a worse position than if she had no weapon depends on the perverse assumption that somehow a woman with a gun must attempt to use it even if she thinks it will endanger her life. But nothing requires a woman to pull a gun against a rapist who has "the drop on her" or has grabbed her and placed a knife against her throat. The whole purpose of having a weapon for self-defense is to increase, not to diminish, the victim's options. A gun-armed woman may still submit if this seems advisable. The gun simply gives her the capacity to resist if that option

seems open, or if the rapist appears to be one of those who kill or mutilate their victims regardless of submission.

This raises a point of significance for the question of any kind of resistance to rapists. We have said that there is no evidence that rapists have ever injured women because of armed resistance, while there is every reason to believe that other forms of resistance are at least equally likely to enrage them. But, while women who resist without weapons are sometimes injured because of it, it must also be noted that far more terrible injury has often been suffered by women who submitted abjectly. Many rape-murderers make up their mind to kill their victim before they ever focus on a specific woman, and regardless of whether she resists. Many victims are maimed or murdered for no apparent reason at all, or even because they had submitted, thereby cheating the rapist out of the satisfaction of savagely suppressing their resistance.³⁴ Faced with such an attacker, a woman can only be better off for having a gun, whereas with a less brutal rapist she is no worse off.

Nor can the full range of the opportunities to resist be comprehended by a scenario in which the rapist "gets the drop" in a completely unexpected initial encounter. Most rapists apparently observe their victims for some time before making any move, and often the victim observes them as well. Many rape victims indicate that they anticipated the attack before it came but were unarmed and therefore unable to do anything about it.³⁵ An armed woman could forestall attack in such a situation by simply making it apparent that she had a gun. Even if he has a gun himself, a rapist has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attacking rather than fleeing at this point. The woman can pull her gun at least as quickly as he can pull his, and she will be far more willing to actually shoot because of the police attention which the resulting noise is likely to attract. The best he can hope for from an exchange of gunfire is to escape from the situation unscathed - which is precisely what he could have accomplished by leaving without pulling his gun. If she shoots him, he is plainly the loser. Even if he manages to shoot her in return, she goes to a hospital where 90-95 percent of handgun shooting victims recover, while he can go there only at the risk of being apprehended.

Assuming now a different scenario, in which a rapist takes an armed victim completely by surprise, her firearm may still give her the opportunity for effectual resistance at a later time. Often rapists encounter their victims at locations where it is impossible to search or disrobe them, and therefore have to transport them to more secluded areas. During the movement phase there will always be moments in which the attacker's attention is distracted, so that the victim may draw and (if necessary) use her own weapon. This will be particularly true if, as often occurs, the rapist attempts to transport her in his automobile.

Above, and apart from, the foregoing answers to the objection is a simple factual problem with it: The growth of an expectation among prospective rapists that women are going to resist them with guns will not result in more rapists arming themselves with guns but in fewer rape attacks. A rapist who thinks armed resistance is likely will not rape, for what he wants is "a sure thing," a helpless victim who has no real chance at all. When a victim arms herself she raises her chances of injuring her attacker by an infinite quantum, i.e., from virtually nil to substantial. Even if the rapist believes that by getting a gun himself he shifts the odds back into his own favor, the chance of loss is still unacceptably high. It is no longer "a sure thing"; he can

get hurt or killed.

The accuracy of this analysis is demonstrated by the actual results in communities which have adopted defensive firearms training for victims as a strategy for reducing violent crime. Faced with a dramatic increase in forcible rape, Orlando, Florida, police instituted in 1986 a well publicized program in which 6,000 civilian women received firearms defense training. In 1986, Orlando was the only city of 100,000 population in the United States to report a decrease in violent crime. Rape dropped by 90 percent, while aggravated assault and burglary dropped by 25 and 24 percent respectively.

In Highland Park, Michigan, armed robberies dropped from a total of eighty in a four-month period to zero in the succeeding four months, after police there instituted a highly publicized firearms training program for retail merchants. In Detroit such a program was carried on by a grocers' association over the opposition of the police chief. The program received extensive publicity, first through the chief's denunciations of it, and subsequently when seven robbers were shot by grocers. Grocery robberies in Detroit dropped 90 percent. In 1971, publicity for a firearms training program for New Orleans pharmacists was credited by police and federal narcotics agents with causing pharmacy robberies to drop from three per week to three in six months there.³⁶ By no means are these statistics offered for the proposition that armed civilian self-defense represents a panacea for violent crime. It is certainly conceivable that the dramatic crime reductions noted were purely coincidental, being caused by factors that had nothing to do with the highly publicized civilian firearms training programs. More likely is the possibility that at least part of the criminal activity that would have been committed in Orlando, Highland Park, Detroit, and New Orleans was transferred to neighboring communities, where victims were perceived to be less well armed.

Moreover, a strong argument can be made that the Orlando, etc., examples are of limited relevance to the subject under discussion here. These examples involve widely publicized community firearms training programs which might have come to the notice of persons considering committing violent crimes in those communities. In the short run, at least, even a very substantial increase in the percentage of women who keep firearms for self-defense is unlikely to generate enough publicity to become a factor in the calculations of prospective rapists. Obviously, they are not going to be deterred from rape by the increased likelihood of victim armed resistance if they do not perceive that increased likelihood. By the same token, however, rapists who do not perceive an increased likelihood of armed resistance will not react to that likelihood by increasingly carrying firearms themselves. But increased carrying of firearms by rapists was the harm which it was postulated would follow from an increase in the incidence of women's armed self-defense.

In sum, women are not constitutionally incapable of armed self-defense as has been postulated. The possession of a firearm gives a woman decisive superiority over the 85 percent of rapists who are either unarmed or armed with a weapon which is markedly inferior. A dramatic increase in incidents of gun-armed women repelling rapists will not dramatically increase the proportion of rapists who attack with firearms. If it has any effect, it will be to dramatically decrease the overall number of rape attacks, at least against women who are perceived as likely to be armed.

Conclusion

In closing it seems pertinent to ask why so many men have expended so much effort toward convincing women that they cannot defend themselves with guns. At least part of the answer, we submit, lies in the fact that the handgun, both symbolically and in reality, is the ultimate expression of the difference that the Age of Machines has made in the relationship between men and women. In prior ages, that relationship has been largely fixed by the differential in strength between the sexes. But the fact that most men can easily bench-press a hundred pounds, while most women would have difficulty with seventy-five, fades into insignificance when women have access to machines that lift tons. Even for men who accept this (and the continuing mythology about women and machines shows the extent of male resistance to it), the sticking point is the idea of women having access to guns to protect themselves with.

For men know that throughout all the prior ages of history the bottom line in male-female relations has always been woman's need for male protection. Women could not live alone for fear of predation by males. So they lived with a male protector and accepted his dictation of their role, either as a condition of receiving his protection, or because he would impose it upon them by physical force, or both. Access to firearms gives women, for the first time in history, the capacity to live independently and apart from men in safety and freedom.

We are not suggesting that it is right (or wrong) for women to live separately and apart from men. What we are suggesting is that women must have the freedom to choose with whom, and under what conditions, they shall live. That freedom is made possible by the opportunity to possess a handgun. To paraphrase a saying from the Old West: God didn't make men and women equal, Colonel Colt did.

Notes and References

1. From "The Best Home Defense Gun," a written symposium in G. James (editor). **Guns and Ammo Guide to Guns for Home Defense** (Petersen, 1975), p. 40.
2. "Firearms and Self-Defense," G. Newton and F. Zimring, **Firearms and Violence in American Life** (staff report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence).
3. Detailed comparisons of handgun, rifle, and shotgun lethality are contained in the articles "Handgun Prohibition and Homicide," and "Handgun Availability and the Social Harms of Robbery," supra.
4. These administrative policies date (from at least as early as 1937, when a distinguished civil libertarian commented that it was impossible to get a permit in New York City "unless you know a local judge or politician." (Morris Ernest, **The Ultimate Power** [Doubleday, 1937] p. 198.) Forty years later a review by New York magazine found the same situation in existence, despite the entry against the police of a series of individual and class action injunctions. (Susan Hall, "Nice People Who Carry Guns," New York, Dec. 12, 1977; The police "actively attempt to keep the number of pistol-packing New Yorkers at a minimum by refusing to give permits to keep a gun in the home; the number of permits issued is "so low that even the police are embarrassed at having to pretend that they believe the rationality of their own statistics. . . . The paper work and delaying tactics employed by the New York City Police Department are usually enough to discourage even the most avid. . . .") See generally Kates, "Some Remarks on the Prohibition of Handguns," 23 St. L.U.L.J. 12 (1978).
5. N. Morris and G. Hawkins, **The Honest Politicians Guide to Crime Control** (1970), pp. 60-61; FBI (Kelley), Uniform Crime Reports (1975), pp. 22.23; **FBI Uniform Crime Report** news release of Dec. 15, 1977, describing figures for Jan.-Sept., 1977.
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7. S. Baker, "Aggravated Assaults - Police Records for the City of St. Louis, Compilation of Six Months data" (unpublished ms., 1978).
8. L. Schneider, et. al.. "Representation of Women Who Defend Themselves in Response to Physical or Sexual Assault" (Center for Constitutional Rights, 1978), p. 10.
9. **Riss v. City of New York**, 240 N.E. 2nd 860 . 22 N.Y. 2nd 579.
10. California Gov. C., Sections 821, 845, 846.
11. P. Cook, **The Effect of Gun Availability on Robbery and Robbery-Murder: A Cross-Section-Study of 50 Cities** (Center for Study of Justice Policy, 1978), pp. 18-19.
12. Van den Haag, "Banning Handguns: Helping the Criminal Hurt You." **New Woman**. Nov.

Dec., 1975, p. 80; Firman, "In Prison Gun Survey the Pros are the Cons," **American Rifleman**, Nov., 1975, p. 13.

13. F. Zimring and G. Hawkins, **Deterrence** (1975s), pp. 158 ff.

14. Hirsh, et. al.. "Accidental Firearm Fatalities in a Metropolitan County," **American Journal of Epidemiology**, 100 (1975), p. 504. The study itself does not mention that its authors are employing this unusual method of classifying suicide. Upon learning of the matter through another source, Professor Kates wrote the authors for an explanation. Although over a year has gone by since the letter was sent, there has been no response.

15. M. Yeager, **How Well Does the Handgun Protect You and Your Family?** (U.S. Conference of Mayors. 1976), p. 5.

16. See sources cited supra, note 4.

17. Massad Ayoob, a distinguished authority on firearms who is himself a police officer, has commented with some asperity that the average officer would be more interested in acquiring a good fountain pen than in having a good side arm. The latest available figures indicate that 27 percent of all police departments do not test their officers in firearms use, and that almost 20 percent don't even have a range where an officer who wishes to test or improve his skills can do so. A. Bristow, **The Search for an Effective Police Handgun** (Thomas. 1973) p. 47. See also Milton, **Police Use of Deadly Force** (Police Foundation, 1977), pp. 105-15.

18. Justifiable homicide figures for the period 1965-75 were supplied to me by the Chicago police, through the courtesy of Professor Fred Inbau of Northwestern University School of Law.

19. "Killings by Chicago Police, 1969-70: An Empirical Study," 46 U. S..C. L. Rev. 284 (1973).

20. Milton, supra, note 17, pp. 65 ff.

21. Supra, note 3.

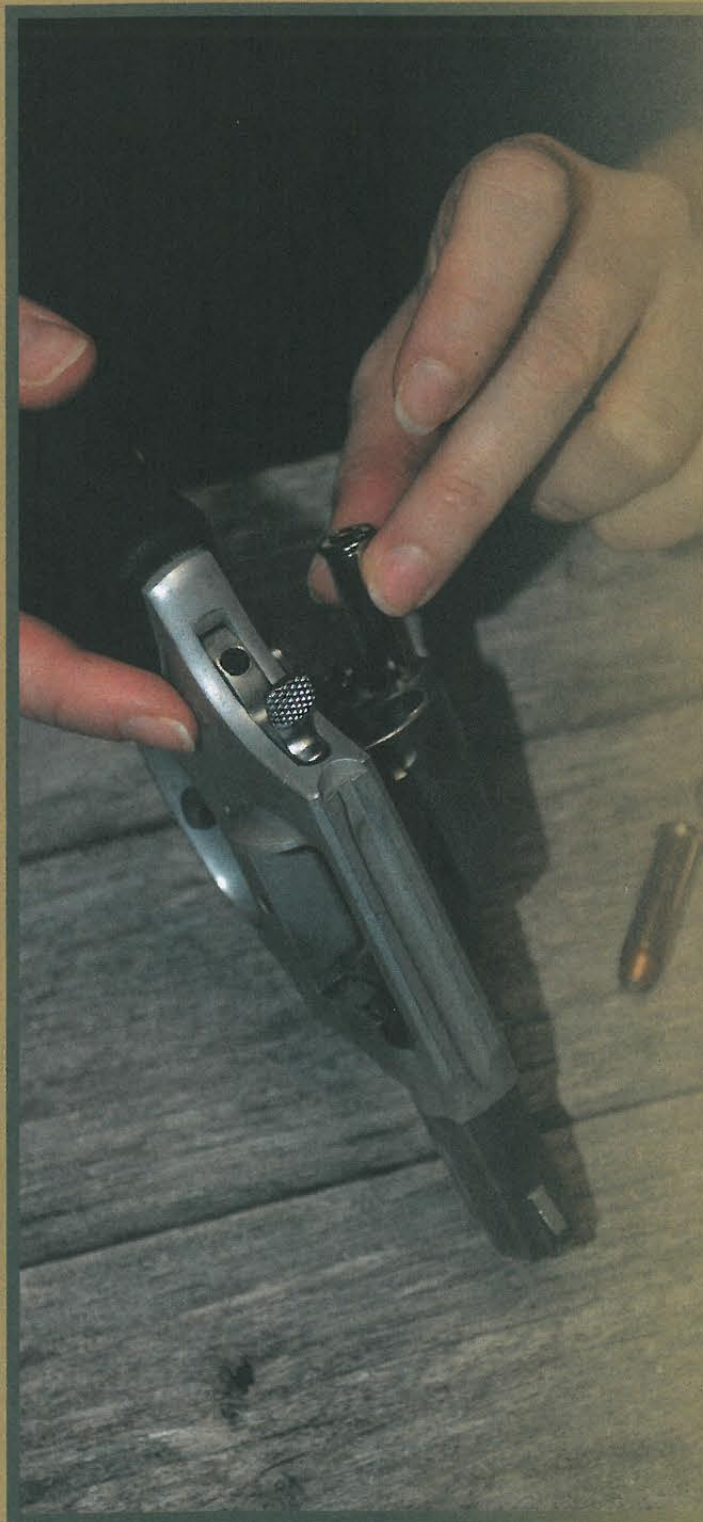
22. An observation confirmed by Professor Kates' colleague. Michael Wolff, who was a reporter for the Minneapolis Star for three years.

23. The Field Institute, **Tabulations of the Findings of a Survey of Handgun Ownership and Access Among a Cross-Section of the California Public** (1976).

24. Copeland, **Rape Victimization Study: Preliminary Research Recommendations** (Queen's Bench Foundation. 1975); **Rape Victimization Study: Final Report** (Queen's Bench Foundation, 1975); **Rape: Prevention and Resistance** (Queen's Bench Foundation, 1976). (Herein. after Copeland I, II, and III respectively.)

25. Copeland III. *supra*. note 24, pp. 65 ff.
26. An unpublished study described by Yeager. *supra*. note I5
27. M. Amir, **Patterns in Forcible Rape** (University of Chicago, 1971), pp. 141-42, 145.
28. 8. Glueck, **New York Final Report on Deviated Sex Offenders** (New York Department of Mental Hygiene, 1956), p. 46. See generally. Yeager, *supra*, note I5, pp. 32-33: Copeland, *supra*. note 24: and Amir *supra*. note 27.
29. Compare Yeager, *supra*, note 15. p. 32, to Copeland I, 13 and 68. See also Amir, *supra*, note 27, p. 153.
30. See discussion in Hardy-Kates article on robbery, *supra*.
31. Yeager, *supra*, note 15, p. 33: " . . . according to a 1967 survey of police reported rapes in 17 American cities, only 1.4 percent of rape cases cleared by arrests and only 0.5 percent of uncleared cases resulted in the victim being seriously injured with a firearm. On the other hand, 17.7 percent of cleared cases and 18.9 percent of uncleared cases resulted in serious injury being inflicted through bodily means."
32. Hicks, "Point Gun, Pull Trigger." *Police Chief*, May, 1975.
33. See discussion in Hardy-Kates article on robbery, *supra*.
34. See generally S. Brownmiller, **Against Our will: Men, Women and Rape** (Simon and Schuster, 1975), pp. 197-206.
35. Copeland III, *supra*. note 24, p.- I5.
36. James, *supra*, note 1, pp. 108-9

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF HANDGUN SAFETY



1. **Watch that muzzle!** *Keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times.*
2. **Treat every handgun with the respect due a loaded gun.** *It might be, even if you think it isn't.*
3. **Be sure of the target and what is in front of it and beyond it.** *Make sure you have an adequate backstop—don't shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.*
4. **Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.** *This is the best way to prevent an accidental discharge.*
5. **Check your barrel and ammunition.** *Make sure the barrel and action are clear of obstructions, and carry only the proper ammunition for your handgun.*
6. **Unload handguns when not in use.** *Leave actions open, and carry firearms in cases and unloaded to and from the shooting area.*
7. **Point a handgun only at something you intend to shoot.** *Avoid all horseplay with a gun.*
8. **Don't run, jump, or climb with a loaded handgun.** *Unload a handgun before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a handgun toward you by the grip, not the muzzle.*
9. **Store handguns and ammunition separately and safely.** *Store each in secured locations beyond the reach of children and careless adults. For added safety, also use a locking device such as a trigger lock or a cable lock.*
10. **Avoid alcoholic beverages before and during shooting.** *Also avoid mind- or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.*

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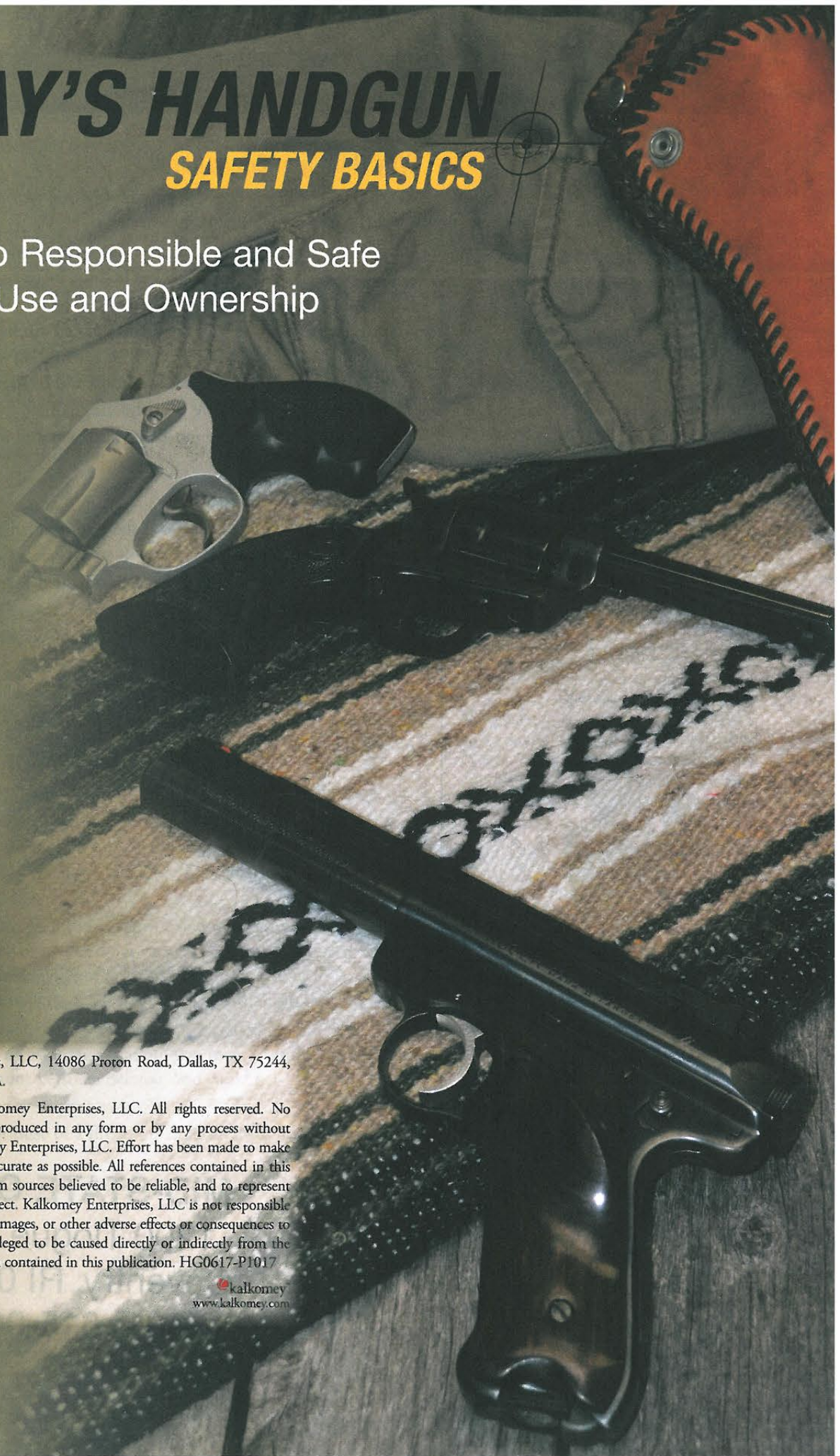
TODAY'S HANDGUN SAFETY BASICS

A Guide to Responsible and Safe
Handgun Use and Ownership

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Chapter Review Exercises**Why Handgun Education?**

- Many people actively participate in shooting sports. Of these, a large percentage are handgun enthusiasts.
- As more people become handgun owners, learning how to use handguns legally, safely, and responsibly has become increasingly important.
- Whether you are a beginner just learning how to use a handgun or an experienced user who wants a review, this manual can help you become more knowledgeable about handguns. It covers a wide variety of information, including:
 - General information about handguns and handgun equipment
 - Information to improve your shooting skills
 - Ways make your handgun experience safer and more enjoyable
 - Laws pertaining to handgun ownership

How to Use This Manual

1. Study the learning objectives at the beginning of each chapter to help you understand why certain material is covered.
2. Read and review each chapter of this manual. Keep in mind the learning objectives as you study.
3. Complete the corresponding Chapter Review questions at the end of the manual.
4. Check your answers against the key following the Chapter Reviews.
5. Review the information you may have answered incorrectly.
6. Continue in this manner until all the chapters have been covered.

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You should be able to...

- Describe five uses for handguns.
- Tell what the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees.
- Explain why you should know the laws pertaining to handguns.

Learning About Handgun Uses

In general, the use of handguns will fall into one of the following categories.

- **Sport:** Competitive shooting is one of the few sports where people of both sexes and all ages can compete regardless of physical strength or size. Shooting is part of international sporting competitions as well as local, state, and regional contests.
- **Recreation:** Some people use their handguns for informal target practice while others prefer to collect handguns.
 - Informal target practice is commonly called "plinking." The term comes from the sound a bullet makes ("plink") when it hits a tin can. When using handguns for target shooting:
 - Follow all gun safety rules.
 - Never shoot at glass. The flying glass splinters are dangerous, and the glass fragments litter the area.
 - If you are shooting at steel, use only steel targets that are designed for this purpose. With some types of steel, bullets may ricochet and injure those in the area.
 - Make sure you have a backdrop that will prevent bullets from striking or ricocheting toward populated areas or unintended targets.
 - Always clean up the area and remove all plinking targets when finished.
 - Hobbyists enjoy collecting historic and other types of handguns.
- **Hunting:** Handguns may be used to hunt small game or to control populations of nuisance animals. Many states also allow hunters to use certain caliber handguns for big game hunting.
- **Metallic Silhouette Shooting:** This is a type of shooting game where metal targets in the shape of animals are set up at various distances. Silhouette competitions include rules about the types of firearms and ammunition, the construction and placement of the targets, and other equipment that can be used.
- **Protection:** This use of handguns is the one most regulated by state laws. If you should face a possible life-threatening situation, you must consider carefully the decision to use a handgun for personal defense. You could be:
 - Disarmed and fired upon with your own gun.
 - Charged with criminal misuse of a firearm if circumstances do not warrant that level of response.
 - Sued in civil court even if you are found not guilty in a criminal court.

Handgun Laws

- Before using a handgun for any purpose, make sure you know the law.
 - Although the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees citizens the right to keep and bear arms, federal laws regulate the interstate sale and transportation of handguns. In addition, every state government and many local governments have laws that govern and define the use of handguns.
 - You should know your rights and responsibilities under your state's laws pertaining to self-defense and the use of force.
 - Ignorance of handgun laws is not a valid excuse for violating them.
- More information on handgun laws is included in Chapter Five.



Never forget that one result of using a gun for protection could be the death of another person.

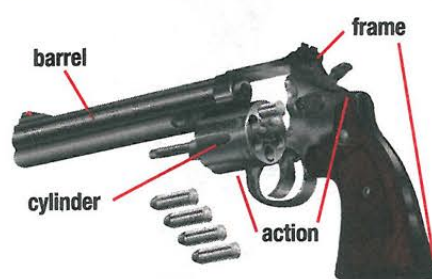
You should be able to...

- Define "firearm."
- Identify the basic parts of a handgun.
- Identify the basic components of handgun ammunition.
- Explain what rifling is and its effect when shooting a handgun.
- Identify and explain a handgun's caliber.
- Name the types of sights found on handguns.
- Identify the types of handgun actions.
- Identify the location(s) of safeties on handguns and explain how they are used.
- Correctly match ammunition with firearms.
- Explain how ammunition is fired from a handgun.
- Explain why it is important to know your handgun's range.
- Demonstrate cleaning procedures for a handgun.
- Demonstrate how to make a handgun safe for storage.

A Short History of the Revolver

Samuel Colt did not invent the revolver. Instead, he did for handguns what Henry Ford did for automobiles. Colt was the first manufacturer to use standardized parts and mass produce a handgun. He did, however, win a patent for a handgun with a rotating cylinder. His 1836 "revolving pistol" was a six-shot muzzleloader. In the 1850s, Roland White made an improvement on the Colt revolver design. White was awarded a patent for drilling the chambers clear through the cylinder. This chamber design allowed metallic cartridges to be seated. Soon thereafter, Horace Smith and Daniel Wesson bought White's patent and produced a handgun that would fire one of their own inventions—the metallic cartridge.

Basic Revolver Parts



What Is a Handgun?

A firearm is a mechanical device that uses pressure from a burning powder to force a projectile through and out of a metal tube.

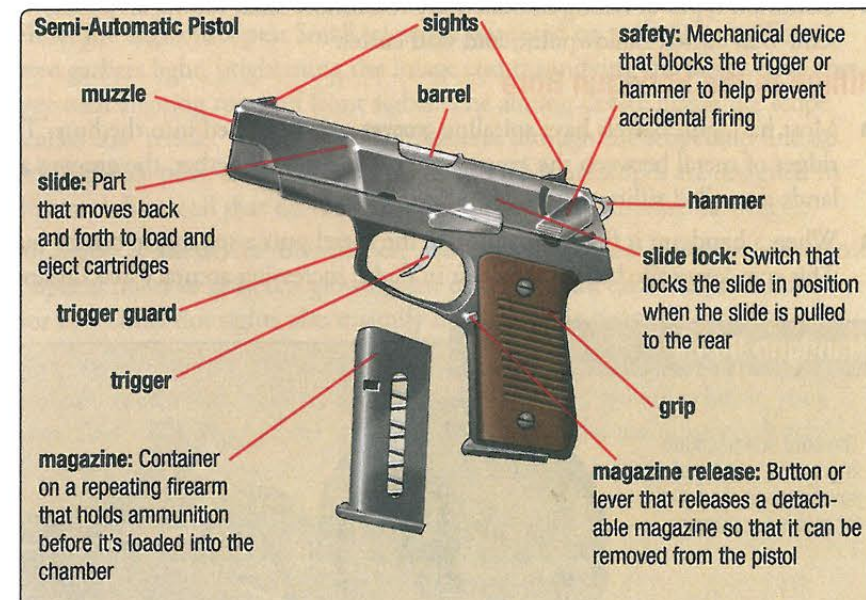
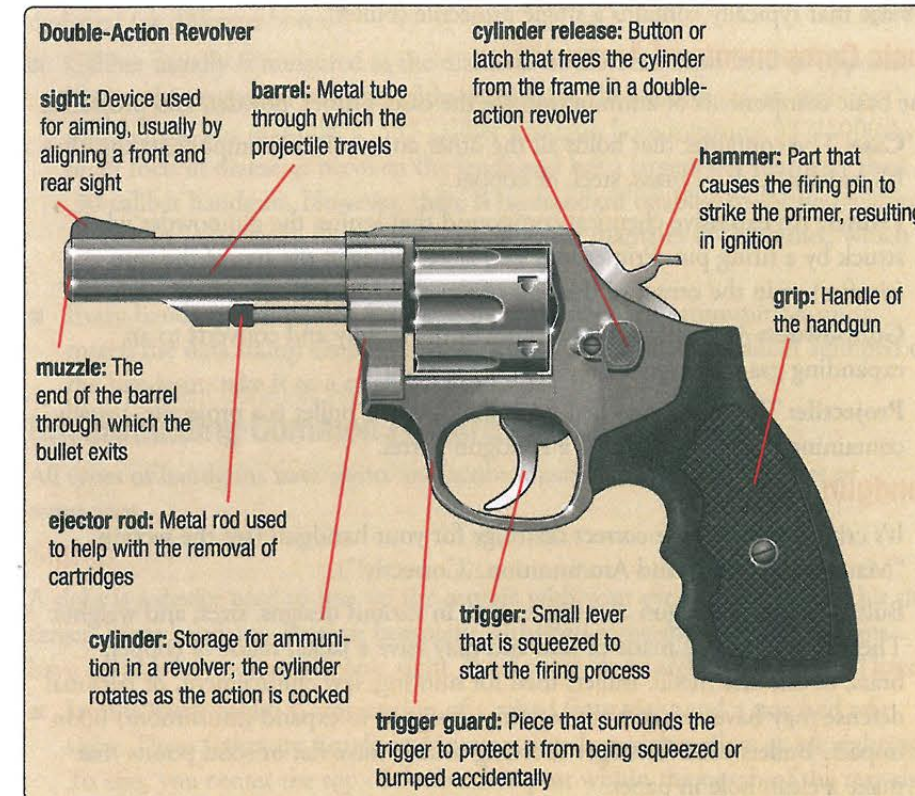
- Handguns are short firearms that are designed to be held in one or two hands while being fired. There are three basic types of handguns—single-shot pistols, revolvers, and semi-automatic pistols.
- To appreciate fully the importance of handgun safety, you first must understand how handguns work. This includes knowing the parts of the handgun, the types of ammunition, how ammunition is fired, and the ranges of handguns.

Basic Parts of a Handgun

- All modern handguns have three basic groups of parts.
 - **Action:** The action, also known as the trigger group, contains the parts that fire the cartridges. Several types of actions are used in modern handguns.
 - **Frame:** The frame is a metal housing that also serves as the handle (grip) of the handgun. All other parts are contained within it or connected to it.
 - **Barrel:** The barrel is the metal tube that the bullet travels through. The handgun barrel is much shorter than a rifle or shotgun barrel because the gun is designed to be shot while being held with one or two hands, rather than being placed against the shooter's shoulder.
- Repeating handguns (revolvers and semi-automatic pistols) hold more than one round of ammunition. A revolver uses a cylinder to store the ammunition, and a semi-automatic pistol uses a removable magazine that fits in the grip.

Parts of a Revolver and a Semi-Automatic Pistol

Below are the parts of a double-action revolver and a semi-automatic pistol.



Other Handgun Parts

bore:

Inside of the handgun barrel through which the projectile travels when fired

breech:

Rear end of the barrel

chamber:

Base of the barrel used to hold the cartridge ready for shooting

firing pin:

A pin that strikes the primer of the cartridge, causing ignition

receiver:

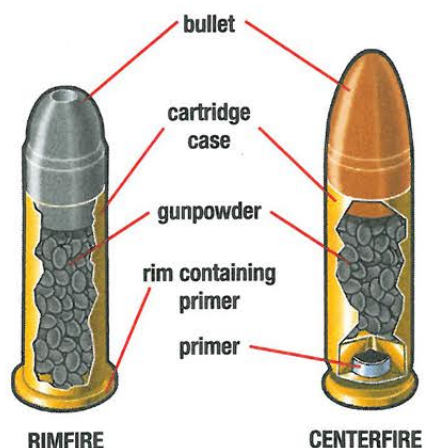
Metal housing for the working parts of the action

cartridge:

Ammunition used in modern handguns; a case containing primer, gunpowder, and a bullet

Centerfire and Rimfire Ammunition

- Centerfire ammunition is used for rifles, shotguns, and handguns. In this type of ammunition, the primer is located in the center of the casing base. Most centerfire ammunition is reloadable.
- Rimfire ammunition has the primer contained in the rim of the ammunition casing. Rimfire ammunition is limited to low-pressure loads. Rimfire cartridges are not reloadable.

Handgun Ammunition**Remember...**

Reloaded shells may have wrong information or have been improperly reloaded. It's important to mark reloaded shells clearly. Use only shells or cartridges that you have reloaded yourself or that have been reloaded by a person whom you know is competent.

What Is Ammunition?

Modern ammunition varies depending on the type of firearm. Handguns use a **cartridge** that typically contains a single projectile (bullet).

Basic Components of Ammunition

The basic components of ammunition are the case, primer, powder, and projectile.

- Case:** The container that holds all the other ammunition components together. It's usually made of brass, steel, or copper.
- Primer:** An explosive chemical compound that ignites the gunpowder when struck by a firing pin. Primer may be placed either in the rim of the case (rimfire) or in the center of the base of the case (centerfire).
- Gunpowder:** A chemical mixture that burns rapidly and converts to an expanding gas when ignited.
- Projectile:** The object expelled from the barrel. A bullet is a projectile, usually containing lead, fired through a handgun barrel.

Handgun Cartridges

- It's critical to select the correct cartridge for your handgun (see the section "Matching Firearms and Ammunition...Correctly").
- Bullets used in handgun cartridges come in various designs, sizes, and weights. The bullet usually is made of lead and may have a jacket made of copper, brass, or another metal. Bullets used for hunting, law enforcement, or personal defense may have soft or hollow points designed to expand (mushroom) upon impact. Bullets used for target shooting usually have flat or solid points that make a clean hole in paper.
- Common types of handgun bullets are roundnose lead, full metal jacket, semi-wad cutter, hollowpoint, and wad cutter.

Rifling in the Handgun Bore

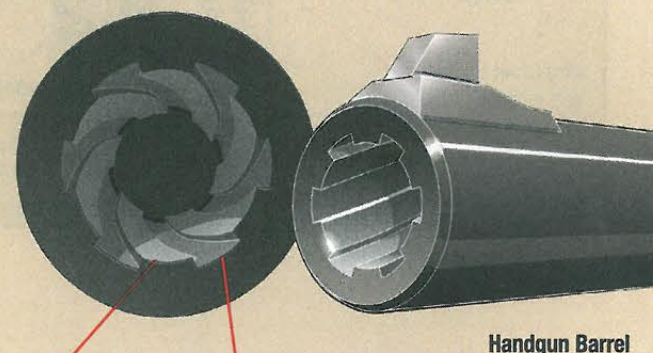
- Most handgun barrels have spiraling **grooves** cut or pressed into the bore. The ridges of metal between the grooves are called **lands**. Together, the grooves and lands are called rifling.
- When a handgun is fired, the rifling in the barrel puts a spiral spin on the bullet. This spin keeps the bullet point-first in flight, increasing accuracy and distance.

Handgun Bores

The bore of a handgun is grooved, which puts a spiral spin on the bullet for greater accuracy.

lands: The ridges of metal between the grooves in a rifled bore

grooves: The spiral cuts in a rifled bore

**Caliber**

Caliber is used to describe the size of a handgun bore and the size of the cartridges designed for different bores.

- Caliber usually is measured as the diameter of the bore from land to opposite land and is expressed in hundredths of an inch, thousandths of an inch, or millimeters. For example, a .357-caliber handgun bore measures 357/1000ths of an inch in diameter between the lands and has a larger bore diameter than a .30-caliber handgun. However, there is no standard established for designating caliber. In some cases, the caliber is given as the diameter of the bullet, which is the distance between the grooves.
- Every handgun is designed for a specific cartridge. The ammunition must match the data stamp on the firearm. If you cannot find the caliber stamped on the handgun, take it to a qualified gunsmith.

Understanding Common Features of Handguns

All types of handguns have sights and actions, and they may have safeties or magazines.

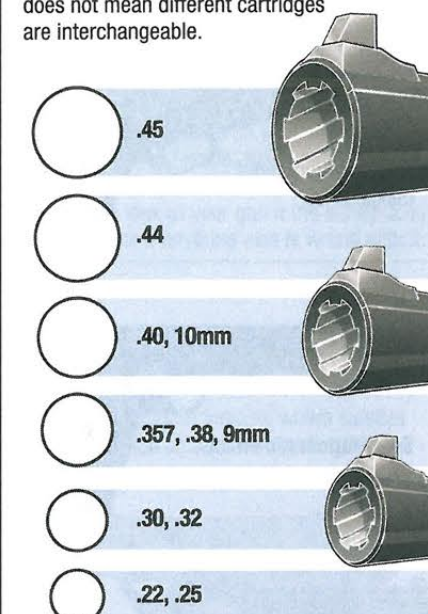
Sights

A sight is a device used to line up the muzzle with your eye so that you can hit the target. Most handguns have an iron sight, although some specialized handguns have a dot, a laser, or a telescopic sight. Read more about sights in Chapter Three.

- Iron (Open) Sight:** Combination of a raised front sight and a notched rear sight. These sights are simple and inexpensive. Iron sights allow quick sighting. To aim, you center the top of the bead or post within the notch of the rear sight and line up on the target. Iron sights can be fixed or adjustable.
- Telescopic Sight (Scope):** Small telescope mounted on your firearm. The scope gathers light, brightening the image and magnifying the target, and does away with aligning rear and front sights. The aiming device inside the scope is called the "reticle." To aim, you simply look through the scope and line up the crosshairs, post, or dot with your target. Handgun scopes are designed to withstand the recoil that occurs when using powerful centerfire cartridges.
- Dot Sight:** Small device mounted on your handgun. A dot sight uses electronics or optical fibers to project a glowing dot or other mark on a lens in front of your eye. Some dot sights also magnify like telescopic sights.
- Laser Sight:** Another type of small device that can be mounted on your handgun. Like a laser pointer, the laser sight projects a glowing dot on your target. Instead of using a laser sight, you can replace the manufacturer's grip with a laser grip.

Handgun Calibers

The circles show bore sizes of common calibers. Having the same bore size does not mean different cartridges are interchangeable.

**Types of Sights****Safety Tip**

Always ask a competent gunsmith to install a telescopic sight on any handgun.

Typical Handgun Actions

Single-shot pistols are usually break actions. Repeating handguns include the semi-automatic and revolving action types.



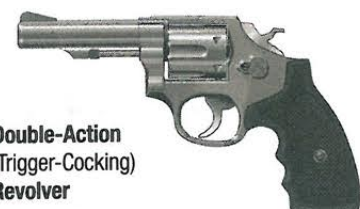
Break-Action Pistol
(Single-Shot)



Semi-Automatic Pistol



Single-Action
(Hammer-Cocking)
Revolver



Double-Action
(Trigger-Cocking)
Revolver

Actions

Handguns can be classified by their action type. The action of a handgun is made up of parts that load, unload, fire, and eject the cartridge. Actions are either single-shot or repeating styles. Single-shot handguns (single-shot pistols) must be reloaded each time the handgun is fired. Repeating handguns (revolvers and semi-automatic pistols) have extra cartridges ready in a magazine or cylinder.

- **Break (or Hinge) Action:** The break-action handgun operates on the same principle as a door hinge. Break actions may be found on single-shot pistols or on revolvers.
 - Simple to load and unload, a hinge action is often chosen as a first handgun.
 - To open the action, point the barrel at the ground. A release is pressed, and the barrel drops downward. This allows the cartridges to eject or to be removed manually if the handgun is loaded.
- **Semi-Automatic (or Autoloading) Action:** As each shot is fired manually, the case of the cartridge is ejected automatically and the chamber is reloaded automatically.
 - To open the action, you must pull back the slide. On most semi-automatics when the slide is pulled back, it will lock in the open position if the magazine is empty. If the handgun does not lock open, it means that a cartridge from the magazine has gone into the chamber, making the gun ready to fire. A few semi-automatics do not lock open and must be held open to check the chamber.
 - To unload, *first remove the magazine* and lock the action open. Then make sure it's unloaded.
 - Visually check the chamber for an additional cartridge.
 - Put a finger into the chamber to physically make sure the chamber is empty.
 - When closing the action for loading, pull back to unlock the slide and then let go, allowing it to travel forward on its own. Do not guide it forward with your hand because it may not seat properly.
 - On a semi-automatic, the trigger must be pulled each time a shot is fired. This makes the semi-automatic different from the fully automatic firearm, which fires continuously as long as the trigger is held down. *The fully automatic firearm may not be used for hunting or sport shooting.*
- **Revolving Action:** The revolving action takes its name from a revolving cylinder containing a number of cartridge chambers. One chamber at a time lines up with the barrel as the handgun is fired. Revolving cylinders may rotate either clockwise or counterclockwise, depending on the manufacturer. Revolving actions are referred to as either "single action" or "double action."
 - **Single Action:** Will fire only after the hammer has been cocked manually.
 - **Double Action:** Pulling the trigger both cocks and releases the hammer. A double-action revolver typically also can be hammer-cocked like a single-action revolver.

Safety Mechanisms

A safety is a device that blocks the action to prevent the handgun from shooting until the safety is released or pushed to the "off" position. The safety is intended to prevent the gun from being fired accidentally. However, safeties should never be relied on totally to protect against accidental shooting. Safeties are mechanical devices and subject to mechanical failure from wear and other factors, and can fail when least expected. Also, safeties can be unknowingly bumped from the safe position as your handgun is being handled or as it catches on clothing or tree branches.

Not all handguns have a mechanical safety. On a handgun with a safety, the safety will be located around the receiver and is usually easy to spot. Common types of safeties are:

- **Pivot Safety (Thumb Safety)**
 - Found on some semi-automatic pistols
 - A pivoting lever or tab that blocks the trigger or firing pin
 - Located on the frame (blocks trigger) or on the slide (blocks firing pin)
- **Grip Safety**
 - Another safety found on some semi-automatic pistols
 - A bar that blocks firing until you grip the gun and compress the safety
 - Located on the grip
- **Half-Cock or Hammer Safety**
 - Found on single-action revolvers
 - Positions the trigger at half-cock, away from the firing pin
 - Engaged by placing the trigger at half-cock
 - While not a true safety, it sometimes is described as a mechanical safety device by firearm manufacturers

Magazines

In semi-automatic handguns, the magazine is the place where the cartridges are stored. When you work the action, a cartridge is picked up from the magazine and placed in the chamber ready to be fired.

- Magazines are designed with a spring and follower that push against the cartridges to move them into the action. When checking a magazine to make sure it's empty, you must be able to see and feel the follower; if you cannot see or feel the follower, there may be a cartridge jammed in the magazine, which can be dangerous.
- Magazines may be detachable or fixed.
 - Detachable magazines allow you to remove extra ammunition from the firearm simply by removing the magazine. The magazine release is typically a button or lever located on the right or left side of the frame behind the trigger.
 - Fixed magazines require the ammunition to be removed manually from the gun itself.

Safety Tip

Knowing where the safety is and how it works is not always as simple as it might seem. There are many types of safeties. Sometimes people alter or modify their guns to disable the safety. This is very dangerous, especially if the gun gets into the hands of an inexperienced shooter. Be sure you know how the safety works on your own gun or any others you handle. Never alter or modify your firearm yourself. Have an experienced gunsmith look at your gun if the safety does not work or if anything else is wrong with it.

Typical Locations of Safeties

The orange outlines indicate where safeties may be located on semi-automatic pistols.



Remember...

You should never replace safe firearm handling by trusting the safety on a firearm. A safety is a mechanical device that could fail.

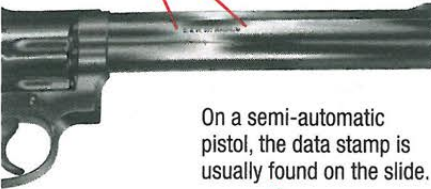
- Don't release the safety until just before you shoot.
- Even with the safety in the "on" position, be aware that a loaded handgun still may fire if the gun is dropped or struck sharply.
- Carry older single-action revolvers with the hammer down on an empty cartridge chamber.

Safety Tip

Some handguns have a mechanical safety, and others do not. In either case, the best way to avoid accidental firing is to make sure the gun is unloaded and the action is open. On a handgun, you can do this by making sure the slide is locked back (semi-automatic action), the cylinder is out (revolving action), or the gun is broken open (break action).

load:
The amount of gunpowder in the cartridge together with the weight of the bullet

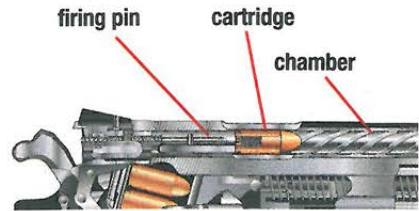
The data stamp of a revolver is usually stamped on the side of the barrel.



On a semi-automatic pistol, the data stamp is usually found on the slide.



How Ammunition Is Fired



• A cartridge is inserted into the chamber. The action is closed, and the firing pin is held back under spring tension.



• When the trigger is squeezed, the hammer falls and hits the firing pin. The firing pin moves forward with great force, striking and igniting the primer in the cartridge base.



• The spark from the primer ignites the gunpowder, generating gas pressure. The pressure from the expanding gas forces the bullet forward and out of the barrel. The bullet's speed and escaping gases produce a "bang."

Matching Firearms and Ammunition...Correctly!

With so many kinds of firearms and types of ammunition, it's not always easy to match the proper ammunition to your handgun correctly—but getting it right is critical. If you match the wrong ammunition to your gun, you can cause an explosion, injuring or possibly killing yourself and any bystanders.

- To match the proper ammunition to your handgun correctly:
 - Read the specific caliber designation on the side of the barrel or slide. Match that designation *exactly*. For example, if it says ".45 GAP," you cannot use ".45 ACP."
 - Carefully read the information on the lid of the ammunition box. Always check to ensure it matches the data on the barrel or slide.
 - Finally, match the information on the barrel to the information on the cartridge *before you shoot*. If in doubt, ask a more experienced shooter or a qualified gunsmith. Some store clerks, although they sell ammunition, may not know about the differences in sizes or the type of handgun you shoot.
- For safety, follow these practices.
 - Purchase only the correct ammunition for your handgun. Buy the exact caliber of ammunition for which your handgun was designed.
 - When purchasing ammunition, buy only from a reliable source and read the manufacturer's instructions.
 - Carry only the correct ammunition for the firearm you're using. Never mix ammunition such as carrying a caliber your companion uses.
 - Never use old ammunition. Contact your local law enforcement agency for advice on destroying it.

Knowing Your Handgun's Range

Knowing your handgun's "maximum projectile range" is critical to being a safe and responsible handgun user. The maximum projectile range tells you at what distances your handgun's projectile could cause injury or damage to people, animals, or objects.

Handgun: Maximum Projectile Range With Lead Bullets					
CALIBER	0 ft.	1650 ft.	3300 ft.	4950 ft.	6600 ft.
.25 ACP					
.45 ACP					
.38 SPL					
.357 MAG					
.40 S&W					
9x19 mm para					
.44 MAG					

Cleaning Your Handgun

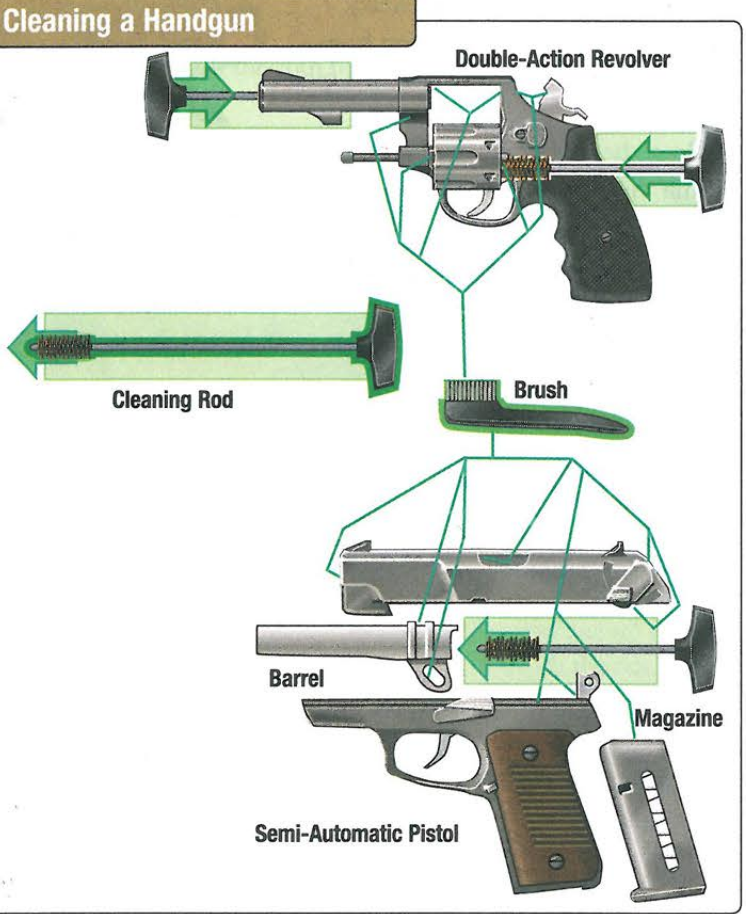
- Clean your handguns after every use to keep them in top condition. Every owner should have a complete cleaning kit.
- Work on a cleared table or bench. Always give cleaning your full attention. Never clean a handgun while doing something else.
- Follow these basic steps to clean your handgun.
 - Point the muzzle in a safe direction, and make sure the gun is unloaded.
 - Remove all ammunition from the cleaning bench.
 - For the most thorough cleaning, field strip the handgun as directed in the owner's manual. Then clean each part separately.
 - Follow the instructions in your cleaning kit. If possible, clean the barrel from the breech end, using a bore guide and a cleaning rod holding a bore brush or patch, wetted with solvent. Pass the brush/patch all the way through the barrel. Repeat several times with fresh patches. You may need a larger brush for the chamber. Use a hand brush to clean the crevices where powder residue accumulates. Follow with a dry patch, and finish with a lightly oiled patch for the barrel. Use a cloth for the other parts.
- Clean your ammunition by wiping it with a cleaning cloth. If the ammunition is not clean, particles of sand or dirt can scratch the bore.
- Use cleaning solvents in a well-ventilated area and only as directed.
- If cleaning from the muzzle end, use a muzzle protector so that you don't damage the rifling near the muzzle.

Cleaning Kit

- Assorted rod tips—brushes, mop tips, slotted tips, jag tips
- Bore light
- Clean cloths
- Cleaning rods
- Cotton swabs
- Dental mirror
- Gun grease
- Gun oil
- Gunsmith screwdrivers
- Patches appropriate for the caliber of the handgun
- Pipe cleaners
- Solvent
- Stand to hold the handgun securely in a horizontal position
- Toothbrush

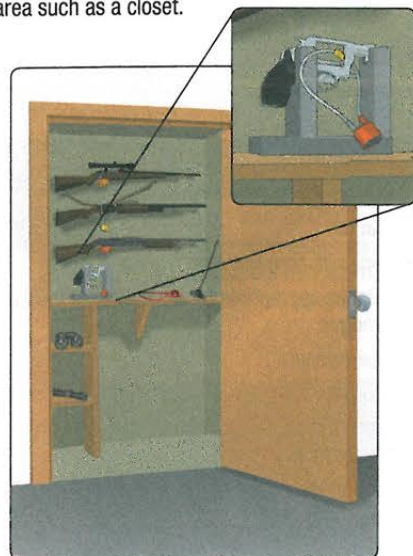
Remember...

For safety, keep children out of the cleaning area unless you are teaching them the proper way to clean a handgun.



Storing Handguns

Store handguns with a locking device if stored in an accessible area such as a closet.



Storing Ammunition

- Store ammunition, reloading supplies, and firearms in separate locked compartments.
- Keep all ammunition away from flammables.
- Store ammunition in a cool, dry place to prevent corrosion. Corroded ammunition can cause jamming, misfires, and other safety problems.

Remember...

Hiding a loaded gun does not keep children from getting access to the firearm.

Storing Your Handgun

- Firearms must be stored *unloaded* and in a *locked* location, *separate from ammunition*. The storage area should be cool, clean, and dry.
- Store guns horizontally, or with the muzzle pointing down. When guns are stored upright, gravity pulls gun oil downward into the action, which forms a sticky film.
- Displaying guns in glass cabinets or wall racks is an invitation to thieves and curious children. Ideally, guns should be hidden from view and locked. **Never leave a handgun in a place where a child might pick it up.**
 - A good place to store a handgun is in a handgun storage box or carrying case. Most of these can be locked.
 - Storage devices with hidden compartments are available.
 - For the best protection against theft and fire damage, purchase a safe.
- If your handguns are stored in an accessible location such as a closet, use a locking device to prevent the gun from being fired accidentally. This is especially important if children are around.
 - Trigger locks are designed to fit around the trigger guard of a handgun.
 - Sometimes, a padlock may be used as a substitute for a trigger lock. Slip the shackle through the trigger guard behind the trigger. This may prevent the trigger on some handguns from being squeezed far enough to fire the gun accidentally.
 - A cable lock prevents the action from closing on a live cartridge. To use a cable lock:
 - Open the action on your handgun.
 - Run the cable through the openings.
 - Lock the cable.
- You may be able to get a free safety kit, including a cable lock, from Project Childsafe. For more information and to see if the program is available in your area, visit the website at: www.projectchildsafe.org.



You should be able to...

- Define "good marksmanship."
- List the three fundamentals of good marksmanship.
- Define "sight alignment" and "sight picture."
- Demonstrate how to determine your master eye.
- Explain the basic steps to sight-in a handgun.
- Explain six handgun-shooting techniques that will help improve accuracy.
- Demonstrate the one-handed and two-handed grips and shooting stances.
- Explain how to use handguns correctly at the shooting range.

Developing Good Marksmanship and Accuracy

One of the essential handgun skills is good marksmanship, which is accurately and consistently hitting the target where planned. Good marksmanship is built on three fundamentals:

- Proper sight adjustment or patterning
- Proper shooting technique
- Practice

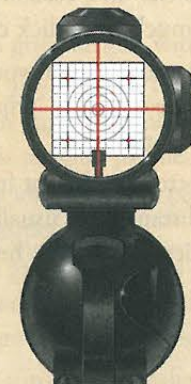
Sight Alignment

Sight alignment is the process of lining up rear and front sights. It is especially important in handgun shooting because of the shorter distance between sights.

- The sight picture is the image you see when the sights are aligned correctly with the target.
- To ensure that the bullet will travel to the target in your sight, it's necessary to sight-in your handgun.



With an iron sight, you place the top of the front sight level with the flat top of the rear sight. The front sight must be centered between the sides of the rear notch. When using a center hold as shown here, the sights are on the center of the target.

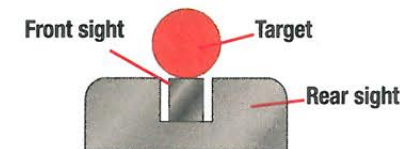


With a telescopic sight with a crosshair reticle, you line up the target with the crosshairs of the sight.



With a telescopic sight with a dot reticle, you line up the target with the dot of the sight. The dot must be centered.

Aligning an Iron Sight With a Six O'Clock Hold



Sight correctly aligned on bottom of target (six o'clock hold)



Misaligned—bullet goes right of target



Misaligned—bullet goes high and left of target

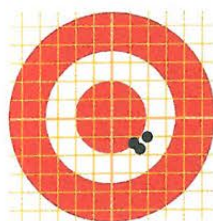


Misaligned—bullet goes high of target

Misaligned—bullet goes low of target

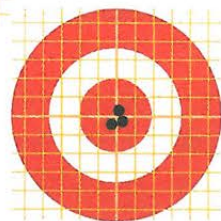
Remember...

Good vision is the foundation for good shooting and safety. Have your eyes examined on a regular basis.



Adjust sights up and left

Handgun correctly sighted-in for this particular range



Use a sight-in target to adjust your sights.

minutes-of-angle:

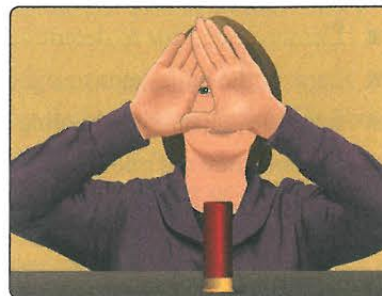
The standard measurement unit of shooting accuracy; one minute-of-angle (MOA) is 1/60 of one degree, or approximately one inch, at 100 yards

Remember...

You must sight-in your handgun with the ammunition you plan to use. Be sure you sight-in and practice firing your gun before you go shooting.

Dominant or Master Eye

- Just as you have a dominant hand, you also have a dominant eye. You need to aim with the dominant—or master—eye for the most accurate shooting. Usually your dominant eye is the same as your dominant hand, but not always.
- You should determine which is your dominant eye before you sight-in your handgun.
- To determine your dominant eye:
 1. Form a triangular opening with your thumbs and forefingers.
 2. Stretch your arms out in front of you.
 3. Focus on a distant object while looking through the triangular opening and keeping both eyes open.
 4. Bring your hands slowly to your face, keeping sight of the object through the opening; the opening will come to your dominant eye naturally.
- If you're not sure, close one eye at a time. The weak eye will see the back of your hand; the strong one will be focused on the object in the triangle.

**Sighting-In Procedure**

- “Sighting-in” is a process of adjusting the sights to hit a target at a specific range.
- Sight-in instructions are printed on some targets available from retail outlets or manufacturers. Most handguns are sighted-in at 50 feet. The basic steps involve firing at least three shots carefully and consistently at a target. If the bullets form a relatively small group of holes on the target, but not where you were aiming, the sights will have to be adjusted.
 - When adjusting telescopic sights, the rear sights or dials are adjusted by a certain number of **minutes-of-angle** or “clicks” in a certain direction. Read the sight’s instruction manual to see how much each click changes the sight.
 - The rear sight is moved in the same direction you want your shot to move on the target. Moving shots from side to side is “adjusting for windage.” Moving shots up or down is “adjusting for elevation.”
 - Specific instructions about trajectory and what fractions or inches you should be above the bull’s-eye at various distances are usually included on sight-in targets. You also might consult a ballistics chart or get help from an experienced shooter.

Learning Handgun-Shooting Techniques

Using correct shooting techniques will help you improve your accuracy.

Grip

Your hand position on the grip of a handgun is vital to hitting the target. Although the grip configurations of the revolver and the semi-automatic pistol are different, the gripping procedure is the same.

- For a right-handed shooter, the right hand is the “shooting” or “strong” hand and the left hand is the “support” or “weak” hand. For a left-handed shooter, the shooting and support hands are reversed.
- Hold the handgun high on the grip so that the recoil is directed back to the hand and arm in a straight line. This allows better repeat shots and more accurate shooting.
 - With a semi-automatic, the rear extension of the frame limits how high your hand can be placed.
 - With a revolver, your hand might be able to hold onto the gun quite high.
- To grip a handgun properly:
 - Grasp the gun under the frame and trigger guard with your support hand. Do not cock the gun, and do not touch the trigger.
 - Open your shooting hand so that your thumb and index finger form a V.
 - Place the V as high on the frame as possible so that the grip of the gun rests firmly in the palm of your shooting hand.
 - Curl your fingers around the gun’s grip with your index finger extended along the side of the gun and off the trigger.
- Use a two-handed hold whenever possible, applying pressure from front to rear with your shooting hand and from side to side with your support hand.
 - The two-handed hold is typically more stable than a one-handed hold.
 - To use a two-handed hold:
 - Follow the steps above to grip the gun with your shooting hand.
 - Wrap your support hand around your fingers on the shooting hand.
 - Place your thumb on your support hand over or beside your thumb on your shooting hand so that it is roughly parallel to the barrel of the handgun.
 - To improve your steadiness and accuracy, push forward with your shooting hand and pull with your support hand.
 - When using a two-handed grip with a semi-automatic, NEVER cross the thumb of your support hand behind the slide and hammer. Doing so may result in painful injury when the slide is pushed back by recoil.
- On both revolvers and semi-automatics, make sure you place the part of your hand between your thumb and index finger in an area on the gun’s grip where your hand will not be pinched or cut by the hammer during recoil.

Body Position

Correct grip and body position are key to making shooting more comfortable so that it’s easier to concentrate on aiming and firing. Using a support adds stability and reduces body movement, resulting in greater accuracy. When outdoors, use a tree trunk, steady limb, or other stable object as a rest. Placing some padding, such as a hat or a jacket, on top of a hard rest helps with your aim.

Four Fundamentals for an Accurate Handgun Shot

1. Aim carefully, aligning your sights.
2. Take a deep breath, and then exhale.
3. Squeeze the trigger slowly.
4. Follow through.

Handgun Grips

One-Handed Grip

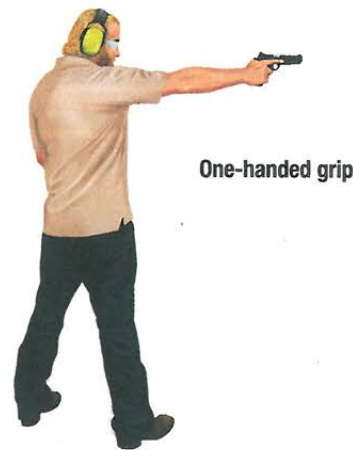


Two-Handed Grip

Safety Tip

The slide and hammer of a semi-automatic gun can deliver a bruising blow when held too close to the body. All handguns should be fired at arm’s length.

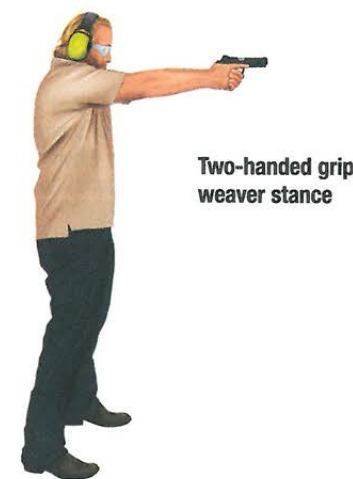
Body Positions



One-handed grip



Two-handed grip isosceles stance



Two-handed grip weaver stance

Remember...
Always keep your finger outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot.

The standing body position you use depends on whether you are using a one-handed or a two-handed grip.

- **One-Handed Grip Body Position:** Follow these basic steps to use this position.
 - Turn your body away from the target at about a 90-degree angle.
 - Spread your feet about shoulder width apart at approximately a 45-degree angle to each other.
 - Keep your weight evenly distributed on both feet with your knees straight but not locked.
 - Grip your handgun with your shooting hand and raise it to the target. Put your support hand in a comfortable position that is out of the way such as in a jacket or pants pocket.
 - Hold your shooting arm straight with the elbow comfortably locked but not strained. Your gun should be held out as an extension of your arm as if you were pointing your finger.
 - Keep your head up as you turn to aim at the target.
- **Two-Handed Grip Body Position:** Two different body positions work with the two-handed grip—the isosceles stance and the weaver stance. Due to the stability it provides, the weaver stance is popular with “action” gun competitors and also works for hunters.
 - To position your body in the isosceles stance:
 - Face the target straight-on.
 - Keep your feet parallel and comfortably separated.
 - Hold the gun with the two-handed grip.
 - Hold both arms with your elbows fully extended and comfortably locked.
 - To position your body in the weaver stance:
 - Keep both of your feet parallel as in the isosceles stance, or place your support-side foot slightly ahead of your shooting-side foot.
 - Turn your shoulders at about a 30- to 45-degree angle to the target.
 - Bend both of your elbows.

Aiming

- At the shooting range, many handgunners use a sight picture that places the bull’s-eye on the top of the front sight, rather than placing it in the sights over the center of the target.
- Scopes with long eye relief have become popular with handgunners. Scopes may take longer to align on a target than open sights, but they’re usually more accurate.
- As you aim your handgun, follow these guidelines.
 - When using an open sight, focus on the front sight. The target and the rear sight should appear blurred or fuzzy.
 - If you are a beginner, aim at the bottom center of the bull’s-eye. This is known as the “six-o’clock hold” because the location matches six o’clock on the face of an analog clock.
 - Aim with your dominant eye, but keep both eyes open. This will give you more light and better depth perception.
 - Realize that you cannot hold the handgun completely still while aiming. To reduce the amount of movement, rest between shots and do not grip the gun too tightly.

Breathing

- Your breathing can move the handgun just enough to throw off your shot. Proper breathing helps you steady your hold on the gun and maintain a correct sight picture.
- Practice with these two methods to see which one works best to control your breathing and keep the gun steady. When you are ready to shoot:
 - Draw a deep breath and exhale about half of it. Then hold your breath as you squeeze the trigger.
 - Take several deep breaths. Then squeeze the trigger after you exhale one breath and before you inhale the next breath. This is known as your natural respiratory pause.
- Bear in mind that if you hold your breath too long, your heart beats faster, which increases your pulse and causes the handgun to move. If you notice this happening, take more breaths and start over.

Trigger Squeeze

- Jerking the trigger or abruptly clenching the trigger hand can move the gun enough to cause a miss.
- To squeeze the trigger without jarring the gun:
 - Place the pad of your index finger on the trigger. This is the part of your finger that is halfway between the tip and the first joint.
 - Apply slow, steady pressure until the gun fires. Do not slap or jerk the trigger.
 - Squeeze the trigger directly toward the rear of the gun. Uneven pressure on the trigger can shift the sight picture and cause the shot to go wide of the target.
- When a revolver is fired, powder flashing at the front of the cylinder can cause burns. Be sure to keep your fingers away from the front of the trigger area.

Follow Through

- Following through prevents you from jerking the gun before the bullet has left the barrel and improves your accuracy.
- After the bullet fires, do not lower the gun immediately. Instead, follow through on the shot. For at least two or three seconds:
 - Keep squeezing the trigger *and...*
 - Hold the sight picture.

Follow Through



Remember...

Practice makes breath control and proper trigger squeeze habitual.

Diagnostic Targets for Handgun Shooting

If your shots do not hit where you were aiming, you may need to adjust your shooting technique. For help, you can use a diagnostic target like those based on information from the U.S. Army's Marksmanship Unit Training Guide.

- Typical targets are divided into sections labeled with information such as:
 - Having too little (or too much) trigger finger
 - Jerking or slapping the trigger
 - Gripping too tightly while pulling the trigger
- These targets work best when shooting from a distance of 25 feet.
- After shooting, you check the target to see what might have kept your shots from hitting the bull’s-eye.
- Diagnostic targets can be downloaded and printed from the Internet. They are available for both right-handed and left-handed shooters.

Dry Firing

“Dry firing” involves going through all the shooting steps but without using live ammunition. It may be used to teach beginners or to help more advanced shooters eliminate flinching and jerking. When dry firing:

- Use spent cartridges or commercially available dummy cartridges to avoid damaging the firing pin.
- Always obey the rules of safety.
- Never dry fire at a target you would not shoot at with live ammunition.
- Treat every gun as if it were loaded.

Safety Tip

- Permanent hearing loss happens gradually with each handgun blast. Choose an ear protection device with a high Noise Reduction Rating (NRR).
- Eye protection is essential when shooting a handgun to prevent damage from a ruptured shell or firearm malfunction. Wear eye protection also whenever disassembling or cleaning a handgun.

Outdoor Shooting Ranges

- At an outdoor shooting range, make sure:
- The backstop is adequate. The best backstop is a high dirt bank or berm that is free of rocks or stones.
 - There is a safety area behind the backstop. The size of the area should equal the actual distance the bullet travels when fired at an angle of elevation of 30 degrees.
 - Shooters fire in a northern direction. This direction provides the best light and keeps the sun out of your eyes.

Remember...

Learning to hit your target accurately with a handgun requires meticulous training and constant practice.

Using Handguns at the Shooting Range

Recreational shooters may go to the shooting range to take target practice or to participate in an organized competition.

Range Rules

Many of the rules that govern safe firearm handling in the field apply to the shooting range. To make sure all shooters are doing the same thing at the same time, everyone must follow established safety procedures and obey all commands immediately. Here are some additional requirements for the shooting range.

- Read all range rules that apply to the type of shooting you will do that day.
- If there is a range master, be sure to follow his or her instructions.
- If your gun fails to fire or misfires or if any other unusual situation occurs:
 - Stop immediately and call the range master.
 - Do not risk an accident by continuing.
- When not shooting, unload your firearm and leave it on the range line or bench until you're given further instructions.
- Don't handle your firearm while other shooters are downrange. Step away from the firing line or bench until the range is clear and the range master instructs you to approach the line or bench.
- If no range master is present, all shooters must decide on safety commands beforehand so that it's clear when someone intends to go downrange.
- Before any person goes beyond the firing line or downrange, unload your firearm and step away from the line until the other person returns.
- Under no circumstances should you shoot a firearm when someone is downrange or past the firing line.
- Always wear hearing and eye protection, even if you're watching others shoot.
- Respond immediately to anyone calling for a "cease fire."

Range Commands

At the shooting range, a group of shooters firing at the same time is called a relay. All commands are given by the range master. Here are some commands and what they mean.

The range master commands:	The command means:
"Relay No. __, Match No. __, on the firing line. The preparation period starts now."	Shooters have three minutes to move to the firing line and get ready.
"With five rounds, load."	Shooters load their handguns.
"Is the line ready?"	If someone isn't ready, the shooter will notify the range master.
"Ready on the left, ready on the right, ready on the firing line."	The range master is making a final check.
"Commence firing."	Shooters begin firing and continue until they have fired all shots or until the range master calls for a cease fire.
"Cease firing."	Obey instantly. Stop firing immediately even if all rounds have not been fired.
"Unload cylinders, open actions with slides back, remove magazines, guns on the table."	Unload your handgun and make certain your neighbors also unload their guns.

You should be able to...

- State four practices for handling and storing handguns safely in the home.
- Demonstrate the four primary rules of firearm safety.
- List safety information you should discuss with your family.
- List the steps to load and unload a handgun safely.
- Explain how to transport handguns safely in vehicles.
- Explain what to do if a hang fire or misfire occurs.
- Explain why self-control, target identification, and accuracy are critical for shooting safely.
- State five functions needed for handgun shooting that are impaired if the shooter consumes alcohol or drugs.
- Explain how to resolve a dispute without using violence.

Understanding Why Safety Is Important

Whenever handguns are being handled, an incident can occur if the gun is not handled responsibly. Gun safety rules are meant to eliminate the chance of an incident.

- Obey the Ten Commandments of Handgun Safety listed on the inside front cover of this manual.
- Use common sense.
- Be responsible with your handgun.

Handgun Safety at Home

Statistics show that more than half of the fatal firearm incidents reported each year occur in the home. Since almost all incidents are caused by carelessness and lack of knowledge, it's the owner's duty to help prevent firearm mishaps in the home.

- Most importantly, lock guns away where children can't reach them, and store ammunition in a separate location. Check to see that a firearm is unloaded before allowing it in any building or living area.
- Practice these safety rules if handling a firearm in the home.
 - Immediately point the muzzle in a safe direction when you pick up a firearm.
 - Keep your finger off the trigger.
 - Always check to see that the chamber and the magazine are empty.
 - If someone shows you a gun are not familiar with, do not handle it until the action is opened and you are certain the handgun is unloaded.
- If a gun is taken from storage to show friends, be sure they understand safe gun handling rules.
- When you are with others, pay attention to what everyone is doing, particularly children.
 - Know where everyone is at all times.
 - Anticipate when and where they will move.

The Four Primary Rules of Firearm Safety

- Point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- Treat every firearm with the respect due a loaded gun.
- Be sure of the target and what is in front of it and beyond it.
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.



Always store your guns in a locked location where children cannot reach them. **Never leave a handgun lying in a place where a child might pick it up.**

Remember...

Everyone, including children, always should remember that once you pull the trigger, you cannot bring the bullet back.

Safety Tip

Make sure that children cannot access any handgun that is stored in your home or another location. In addition:

- Make sure all guns are stored unloaded.
- Put a locking device on each gun, and also store all guns in a locked location.
- Keep all ammunition in a separate, locked location.

Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program

For more information, visit the NRA's Eddie Eagle Program website: eddieeagle.nra.org

Handguns and Children

All family members, not just the gun's owner, should know the rules of firearm safety and how to handle a handgun. This includes children.

- Remember that children are curious and may play with a handgun if they find one.
- If your children could be around handguns in your home or some other location, remove the mystery surrounding guns by covering safety information with your family.
 - Point out the parts of the handgun and tell what the parts do.
 - Demonstrate how to handle the gun safely.
 - Explain the safety rules about treating every handgun as if it were loaded and never pointing the muzzle at anyone.
 - Explain how the handgun's safety works.
 - Show them how to unload the gun safely and how to release a cocked hammer.
- Make sure children understand that guns can kill themselves or others.
 - Emphasize that they should never handle a gun unless they are with a responsible adult.
 - Teach them the rules to follow if they find a gun when an adult is not around. Adapted from the National Rifle Association's Eddie Eagle GunSafe® Program and used with the NRA's permission, these rules are:
 - Stop, and tell others who are with you to stop.
 - Do NOT touch the gun.
 - Leave the area.
 - Go tell a responsible adult.
- Take your children with you when you shoot. This will:
 - Help satisfy their curiosity.
 - Help prevent them from trying to handle the gun on their own.
 - Give them the opportunity to make up their own minds about becoming a shooter.

- Encourage your children to take a handgun safety course.

Safely Loading and Unloading Handguns

Even something as simple as loading or unloading a handgun can result in tragedy if it isn't done properly. Here's how to do it safely.

Loading

The loading procedure depends on the type of handgun.

■ **Revolvers**

- **Single-action revolvers** typically load through a gate on the right side of the frame. To load a single-action revolver:
 - Point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - Open the action; make sure the barrel is unobstructed.
 - Load a cartridge into each chamber. To rotate the cylinder, pull the hammer back to half-cock.
 - When the chambers are loaded, close the action.

- **Double-action revolvers** have cylinders that are swung outward to expose all chambers for loading. To load a double-action revolver:
 - Point the muzzle down and in a safe direction.
 - With your right hand, release the cylinder latch. This frees the cylinder from the frame.
 - Swing the cylinder out and away from the frame with the two middle fingers of the left hand.
 - Make sure the barrel is unobstructed.
 - Load a cartridge into each chamber. After a chamber is loaded, rotate the cylinder with the left thumb and two middle fingers.
 - When the chambers are loaded, make sure the hammer is down (uncocked). Gently swing the cylinder back into the frame, and make sure it locks into place.

■ **Semi-Automatic Pistols**

- Semi-automatics usually fire rounds stored in a magazine that is inserted in the grip or handle.
- To load a semi-automatic pistol:
 - Point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - Make sure the barrel is unobstructed.
 - Put the safety on if the gun can be loaded with the safety on.
 - Remove the magazine from the grip by depressing the magazine release button. This button is typically located on the left side of the frame, behind the trigger.
 - Pull the slide to the rear to make sure the chamber is empty.
 - Place the pistol in a stable location with the muzzle pointing in a safe direction.
 - Load the cartridges into the magazine by firmly pressing them down and toward the rear of the magazine. Do not force them. Forcing the cartridges could damage the lips of your magazine.
 - Hold the magazine in one hand, and pick up your pistol with the other hand.
 - Insert the magazine into the grip until it clicks securely into place.
 - Pull the slide all the way to the rear and then let it go forward. This picks up a cartridge and slides it into the chamber.
 - Put the safety on if you were not able to do so before loading.

Unloading

The unloading procedure also depends on the type of handgun.

■ **Revolvers**

- You remove the fired cartridge cases using the **extractor**. An ejector rod is connected to the extractor. Pushing the ejector rod causes the extractor to remove the fired cases from the cylinder chambers.

Double-action revolver ready for loading



Semi-automatic with magazine

Remember...

Removal of ammunition from the magazine or removal of the magazine from a semi-automatic pistol does not mean the handgun is unloaded!

extractor:

A device to remove the fired cartridge cases from the chamber in revolvers or pull the empty case clear of the barrel in semi-automatic pistols

Typical Handgun Cases

Padded, Soft-Sided Case (Pistol Rug)

Material: Canvas, nylon, neoprene, polyester, or leather

Advantages:

- Light, easy to handle and store
- Less costly than hard cases

Disadvantage:

- Less protection than hard-sided cases

Lockable, Hard-Sided Case

Material: Aluminum or composite

Advantages:

- Lightweight but sturdy
- Meets airline standards
- Can include deep foam padding that holds handgun in place and cushions impact
- Composite models can be molded to fit handgun
- Available in waterproof models

Disadvantage:

- Bulkier and costlier than soft-sided cases

Range Bag

Material: Nylon, leather, polyester, or canvas

Advantages:

- Holds handgun(s), ammunition, magazines, and accessories in separate padded sections
- Keeps all equipment in one location for transporting it easily to the firing range

Disadvantage:

- Not for use as a storage location since the handgun(s) and ammunition would be stored together

Holster

Material: Leather, nylon, or combination of materials

Advantages:

- Often used as a second case to carry a handgun from a vehicle into an outdoor shooting area
- Come in variety of styles, letting you select the one that meets your needs and personal comfort

Disadvantages:

- Must get your gun first, then get holster to fit
- Usually requires some type of carry permit

- **Single-action revolvers** are unloaded through a gate on the right side of the frame. To unload a single-action revolver:
 - Point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - Keep your finger outside the trigger guard.
 - Push the ejector rod. The fired case is ejected out of the chamber. Rotate the cylinder and repeat this operation for every chamber.
 - Make sure the gun is empty by visually checking both the chamber and the cylinder.
 - If the gun is cocked, uncock (decock) it. Hold the hammer with your thumb, pull the trigger, and slowly lower the hammer until it is in the uncocked position.
- **Double-action revolvers** are unloaded by releasing the cylinder. To unload a double-action revolver:
 - Point the muzzle up and in a safe direction.
 - Keep your finger outside the trigger guard.
 - Release the cylinder latch to allow the cylinder to swing out from the frame.
 - Push the ejector rod downward, forcing out the fired cases.
 - Make sure the gun is empty by visually checking both the chamber and the cylinder.
 - If the gun is cocked, uncock (decock) it. Hold the hammer with your thumb, pull the trigger, and slowly lower the hammer until it is in the uncocked position.
- **Semi-Automatic Pistols**
 - Semi-automatics usually have cartridges stored in a magazine.
 - To unload a semi-automatic pistol:
 - Point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - Put the safety on if it is not already on.
 - Keep your finger outside the trigger guard.
 - Release the magazine and take it out of the pistol.
 - Remove the cartridges from the magazine.
 - Pull the slide all the way to the rear and then let it go forward to eject any cartridge that may be in the chamber. Repeat this several times to make sure the chamber is empty.
 - Make sure the pistol is empty by visually checking both the chamber and the magazine.

Safely Transporting Handguns

Transporting handguns properly involves both legal and safe practices. In addition to federal laws, there are regulations that vary from state to state. **Know your state's law and obey it.**

General Rules

Always unload and case firearms before transporting them. In many states, this may be the law.

- The action should be open or the gun broken down, whichever makes the handgun safest if it's mishandled.
- The handgun should be locked in the trunk of your car or in an area of the vehicle that is not immediately accessible to anyone in the vehicle.
 - You may not store the gun under a seat or in a door pocket.
 - Some states prohibit putting handguns in the glove compartment of a vehicle for any reason.
- Ammunition should be kept separate from the handgun.

Taking Additional Safety Precautions

Self-Control and Target Identification

- Some shooters may become overly anxious or excited, which can lead to careless behavior. They may fire at sounds, colors, movements, or unidentified shapes, or simply shoot too quickly. In the excitement after hitting their target, they may swing a loaded firearm toward their companions or run with the safety off toward the target.
- Self-control is an essential aspect of safety. Only shoot when you know that no people, domestic animals, buildings, or equipment are in the zone-of-fire.
- Slow, careful shooting is not only safer, but it also produces a higher degree of success.

Accuracy

Shooting accurately is a key safety factor. Some incidents, often deadly ones, have occurred when stray bullets have hit people out of the shooter's sight. Be sure you have a proper backstop before you shoot.

Alcohol and Drugs

- Consuming alcohol before or during shooting increases the risk of incidents because it impairs coordination, hearing, vision, communication, and judgment.
- Drugs can have a similar effect. If you have to take prescription medicine, check with your physician to see if it's safe to take while shooting a handgun.

Resolving Conflicts Without Violence

Anyone with a concealed handgun permit always must try to avoid conflicts and take the necessary steps to resolve any disputes that occur without using violence.

- To avoid a conflict, try to stay calm when communicating with the other person.
- If the situation starts to get out of control, walk away if possible.
- If you cannot avoid a conflict, you should use a dispute resolution method.

Using the LEAPS Method

One method that can be used for dispute resolution is LEAPS. The word "LEAPS" can be used to help you remember these steps.

- Listen to what the other person has to say.
- Empathize with the other person by trying to understand his or her feelings.
- Ask questions to get more information from the other person. Possible questions include asking who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- Paraphrase what you have heard to show the other person that you are listening and you understand what he or she is saying. For example, you can say, "Let me make sure I heard you correctly. You said _____."
- Summarize by giving a possible solution to the situation. For example, you can say, "From what you've said, let's _____."

Hang Fires and Misfires

Hang fires happen when the firing pin has struck the primer and there is a delay before it fires. This can occur for several reasons, such as a faulty firing pin or spring, defective primer, or other cartridge-related problems. A misfire is when the primer fails to ignite the powder.

Always treat a "misfire" or "hang fire" as if the handgun is going to discharge at any second.

- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.
- Do not attempt to fire the gun again.
- Leave the action closed, and retain your shooting position. Wait for at least 30 seconds.
- If the gun has not fired after 30 seconds, open the action and remove the cartridge. Also check the gun for obstructions but do not attempt to clear it unless you have experienced help.

- On a revolver, check both the barrel and the cylinder.
- On a semi-automatic pistol, clear the chamber and check the barrel.

Failure to follow these safe handling practices could result in a tragedy.



A DEADLY MIX

The best thing you can do for your safety and the safety of others is simple...

Don't drink and shoot!

Because you can drink faster than your system can burn the alcohol off, there is an increasing level of alcohol in your blood. This level is referred to as Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC).

You should be able to...

- Give federal, state, and local laws pertaining to handgun ownership and use.
- Explain the regulations you must follow when transporting a firearm on a commercial aircraft.

Remember...

Handguns are regulated under federal, state, and local laws. Ignorance of the laws is not a valid excuse for violating them.

The Castle Doctrine

The Castle Doctrine, also known as the castle law or defense of habitation law, is a long-standing American legal concept. It is based on the idea that “a man’s home is his castle.”

- The Castle Doctrine protects the right of an individual to act in self-defense in a manner that is appropriate for the circumstances. More specifically, you are likely protected from legal prosecution if:
 - You are using force to defend yourself against an intruder **and...**
 - The intruder is within your residence or any legally occupied place, vehicle, or workplace.
- The Castle Doctrine is not a defined law that can be invoked, but a set of principles which may be included in the law in many areas.
 - In some states, the law might say a person has a duty to retreat to avoid violence if he or she can reasonably do so.
 - In other states, the Castle Doctrine laws might specifically contain a “stand-your-ground” clause. If so, the use of deadly force may be permissible to prevent felonies from being committed in one’s home or to protect against an assault in a place where that individual has a right to be, such as within one’s own home or garage. Deadly force may be justified and may provide a defense of justifiable homicide in cases when the resident reasonably fears imminent peril of death or serious bodily harm to himself or herself or to another person.
- In addition to providing a valid defense in a criminal case, many states with a Castle Doctrine law, particularly those with a stand-your-ground clause, also have a clause which gives you some immunity from civil lawsuits filed on behalf of the assailant for damages/injuries resulting from the force used to stop the assault or intrusion.
- Since the Castle Doctrine and stand-your-ground laws vary by state, make sure know what is legal in your area.

Obeying Handgun Laws

Since the federal government, states, and many local governments have different handgun laws, you must find out what is legal in your area. In addition, if you are taking your handgun with you to another location, you must:

- Make sure you follow the laws regarding transporting a handgun.
- Check the state and local laws for the area where you will be shooting your gun.

Learning Federal Laws

Various federal laws regulate handgun ownership and usage. These include the following.

- **Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:** As ratified by the states in 1791, the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the People to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”
- **U.S. Code of Federal Regulations:** Federal laws regarding handguns and other firearms are included in several parts of the U.S. Federal Code. For example, Title 27, Part 479 discusses registration, identification, and transfer of ownership of firearms. Other parts of Title 27 cover additional laws pertaining to firearms.
- **Gun Control Act of 1968:** This Act is found in Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44 of the U.S. Code and includes provisions that:
 - Control the mail-order sales of firearms.
 - Prohibit those categories of individuals listed in the Act from owning a firearm.
 - Require individuals to purchase handguns only in their state of residence.
- **Firearm Owners’ Protection Act:** This Act also is found in Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44 of the U.S. Code and was passed to amend many of the provisions of the Gun Control Act of 1968, including clarification of which categories of individuals are prohibited from owning a firearm.

Air Travel Regulations

When you are transporting a handgun or other firearm on a commercial airline, you must follow these regulations.

- All firearms must be unloaded.
- All firearms, ammunition, and firearm parts must be:
 - Declared at the ticket counter during the check-in process.
 - Packed in a hard-sided, locked container.
 - Checked with your other luggage.

Other requirements also apply. Check with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) or your airline for more information.

Learning State and Local Laws

Laws pertaining to handguns vary by state and locality.

- Be sure you know the laws for your area or any other area where you might travel with your gun.
- Some information on state laws can be found under “Gun Laws At a Glance” and “State Gun Law Profiles” on the National Rifle Association’s (NRA) Institute for Legislative Action website at www.nraila.org/gun-laws.aspx.
- As you review the topics below, use the sidebar space to make notes on your state’s laws and regulations.

Carrying a Handgun

In many states, a concealed handgun includes any handgun that a person is carrying that is totally or partially hidden from the ordinary sight of another person. Before you carry a concealed and/or an open/unconcealed handgun, make sure you know:

- The definition for a concealed handgun in your area
- The license/permit requirements for carrying a handgun
- If you are required to carry your handgun license/permit with you
- If your handgun license/permit allows you to carry a concealed handgun and/or an open/unconcealed handgun
- If your handgun license/permit is valid in other states you plan to visit
- Any other related laws and requirements for your area

Learning License/Permit Requirements

To get a license/permit to carry a concealed handgun and/or an open/unconcealed handgun legally, you must meet your state's requirements such as:

- Age
- Residency
- Mandatory education
- Safe handling demonstrations
- Shooting qualification
- Renewals

Knowing Ownership and Permit Restrictions

- **Ownership Restrictions:** States and local areas often have laws stating that some persons are not allowed to own a handgun. These restrictions may include persons who:
 - Have committed certain types of crimes, including domestic violence.
 - Are convicted felons or charged with committing a felony.
 - Have been arrested for drug and/or alcohol abuse.
 - Are mentally impaired.
 - Are delinquent in paying certain debts such as child support.
- **Permit Restrictions:** States and local laws may also specify which persons cannot get a handgun license/permit. For example, a person might not be eligible to get a license/permit if he or she:
 - Is ineligible to own a handgun under federal or state laws.
 - Has been charged with or convicted of a crime that involves homicide, serious bodily harm, kidnapping, sexual abuse, or sexual assault.
 - Has been convicted of carrying a handgun while under the influence of alcohol.
 - Has been convicted of carrying a handgun in an area where guns are prohibited.
 - Is mentally impaired.

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

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Rhode Island Firearms Law

The following list is a summary of the more important provisions of the Rhode Island law on handguns. If you have any doubt or question about the meaning, read the law and consult with competent legal counsel.

- You cannot purchase a handgun or handgun ammunition unless you are 21 years of age or older.
- There is a seven-day waiting period before purchasing a handgun.
- Committing a crime of violence while armed can lead to a prison sentence of five years in addition to the sentence of the crime.
- Convicted criminals cannot legally own a firearm; nor can mental incompetents, drug addicts or habitual drunkards.
- You do not need a license to transport a handgun to and from your home or place of business to a bonafide target range if it is broken down; unload and carry and open as circumstances will permit. Handguns can also be transported to and from a bonafide target range secured in a separate container suitable for the purpose. You can obtain a license to carry a concealed weapon by applying to the State Attorney General or local police chief by demonstrating you have need. You must be at least 21 years of age and qualify on a target range.

Note: A handgun transported openly is still considered to be concealed if it is not being transported from home or a place of business to and from a bonafide target range.

- You cannot alter the serial number of any firearm.
- All gunshot wounds must be reported to the police immediately.

NOTES

Knowing Where Handguns Can Be Carried

Most states and localities have laws that say where you can and cannot carry a handgun legally, including whether or not the handgun must be concealed. Be sure you know the laws for your area.

- **Legal Locations:** Some places where you may be allowed to legally carry a handgun include:
 - Your residence or other private property
 - Your place of business
 - A campsite
 - A motor vehicle if the state's requirements are met
- **Prohibited Locations:** Some locations where you may be prohibited from carrying a gun include:
 - School grounds
 - Courthouses and/or other government buildings, including libraries, post offices, and law enforcement offices
 - Military bases
 - Secured area of an airport
 - Banks
 - City, county, or state parks
 - Places that sell or serve alcohol
 - Trains
 - Sporting events
 - Hospitals or nursing homes
 - Churches or other places of religious worship
 - Private residences unless you have the owner's consent
 - Areas posted with signs that prohibit concealed and/or unconcealed weapons

Using Deadly (Lethal) Force

- **Understanding when you may use lethal (deadly) force legally** includes knowing how “deadly force” is defined in your area. Before you face a situation where you might have to consider using deadly force, you should know:
 - The laws for your area regarding self-defense, defending others, and defending property
 - It is always illegal to use deadly force if you are involved in a non-deadly attack
- **Using Deadly Force for Self-Defense:** To know when you are allowed to use deadly force for self-defense, you should find out:
 - Your state’s definition of “self-defense”
 - Whether or not you are required to retreat from a threatening situation
 - When you have the right to defend yourself
 - The situations when deadly force would be considered to be necessary
 - Locations where deadly force might be allowed (such as in your home)
 - Limitations on the use of deadly force
 - Alternatives to the use of deadly force, including non-violent dispute resolution
- **Using Deadly Force to Defend Others:** Learning when you are allowed to use lethal force to defend others includes knowing:
 - If the “alter-ego” rule pertaining to the amount of force a third party would use to defend himself or herself applies
 - If your relationship to the other person affects whether deadly force is allowed

NOTES

- **Using Deadly Force to Defend Property:** Before you use lethal force to defend property, you should know:
 - Which areas are included as property—home, business, vehicle (Castle Doctrine)
 - If a protective/restraining order must be in effect
 - What circumstances would justify the use of deadly force
 - If the laws vary for different types of property
 - Any exceptions to the laws

Avoiding Prohibited Acts

In your area, be sure you know which types of acts are illegal. Examples of acts that may be illegal are:

- Drawing or displaying a handgun
- Threatening others on the highway
- Firing a gun at a building or a means of transportation (automobile, airplane, etc.)
- Using or carrying a firearm while under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

Responding to Law Enforcement Officers

If you are carrying a handgun and are approached by a law enforcement officer, make sure you know and follow the correct procedure. Requirements may include:

- Keeping your hands where the officer can see them
- Telling the officer that you have a gun
- Showing the officer both your driver's license and your handgun license/permit
- Staying in your vehicle unless the officer asks you to get out of it

Understanding Laws Related to Children

If children are in your home, you should know other handgun laws that will apply to you, including:

- Definition of “children”
- Requirements for unloading
- Storage requirements
- **Child Access Prevention Laws:** Many states have child access prevention (CAP) laws that are intended to prevent children from having access to firearms.
 - The specific laws vary by state. However, the CAP laws in many states hold adults criminally liable if children have unsupervised access to firearms.
 - Make sure you know the CAP laws that apply in your state or in any other state where you might be visiting and have a firearm with you.

Selling or Transferring Firearms

Before you sell or transfer a firearm to another person, be sure you know the laws for your area such as:

- Completing a waiting period
- Verifying proof of residency
- Checking on the frequency of sales or purchases
- Completing a criminal history check
- Meeting age requirements/not selling to minors

Chapter 1

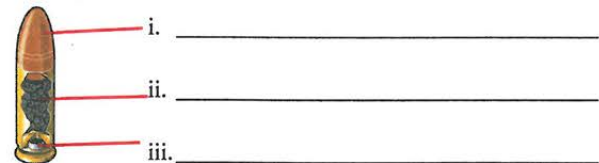
- List five uses for handguns.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- The second amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees citizens the right to _____.
- Ignorance of handgun laws is a valid excuse for violating them. True _____ False _____

Chapter 2

- The three basic parts of a modern handgun are _____.
 - cartridge, frame, and barrel.
 - action, frame, and barrel.
 - frame, trigger, and action.
 - barrel, chamber, and muzzle.
- Label the indicated parts of a semi-automatic pistol.



- The component in ammunition that ignites the gunpowder when struck by the firing pin is the _____.
- Label the indicated parts of centerfire ammunition.



- The design feature that causes a bullet to spiral, which increases accuracy and distance, is called _____.
- When referring to handguns, "caliber" is _____.
 - the length of the handgun's barrel.
 - always expressed in hundredths of an inch.
 - used to describe the size of the handgun bore and the size of cartridges designed for different bores.
 - all of the above.
- The type of sight found on most handguns is the _____.
- The action of a handgun is made up of parts that _____.
 - block the trigger or hammer to prevent accidental firing.
 - hold ammunition before it's loaded into the chamber.
 - load, unload, fire, and eject the cartridge.
 - serve as the handle of the handgun.

- List three types of handgun actions.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- If a handgun has a safety, the safety is located around the receiver of the handgun and _____.
 - ensures that the handgun can never be accidentally fired.
 - is a device that blocks the action to prevent accidental firing.
 - is always located either inside or on the trigger guard.
 - all of the above.
- You should only use ammunition that exactly matches the caliber specifications marked on the _____ of your handgun.
- Knowing your handgun's range is critical—it allows you to _____.
 - determine which caliber of ammunition you need.
 - make accurate shots at any distance as long as they are within your handgun's range.
 - know at what distances your handgun could cause injury.
 - all of the above.
- Firearms should be stored _____, in a _____ location, and separate from _____.

Chapter 3

- Good marksmanship is _____.
 - being able to hit your target at least 50% of the time.
 - correctly marking your target.
 - being a good sport if you miss your target.
 - hitting your target accurately and consistently.
- Sight alignment, the process of lining up rear and front sights, is especially important in handgun shooting because _____.
- The most stable gripping procedure for handgun shooting is the _____.
 - one-handed hold.
 - two-handed hold.
 - adjusting for windage hold.
 - adjusting for elevation hold.
- All handguns should be fired at _____ length.
- Due to the stability it provides, the _____ stance is a popular two-handed grip body position.
 - 90-degree angle
 - 180-degree angle
 - weaver
 - isosceles
- To help you steady the handgun when you're ready to shoot, you should control _____ as you squeeze the trigger.

- The proper technique for pulling the trigger when shooting a handgun is to _____.
 - pull the trigger quickly, moving only your finger.
 - squeeze the trigger slowly.
 - jerk the trigger.
 - slap the trigger.
- To make sure all shooters are doing the same thing at the same time, everyone at the shooting range must _____.
 - obey all commands immediately.
 - use the same ammunition.
 - follow established safety procedures.
 - both a. and c.

Chapter 4

- To minimize the risk of a firearm incident in the home, you should *never* _____.
 - point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - keep your finger off the trigger when handling the firearm.
 - store the firearm and ammunition together.
 - check that the chamber and magazine are empty.
- List the four primary rules of firearm safety.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- _____ should know the rules of firearm safety and how to handle a handgun.
 - Only the gun's owner
 - All adult family members
 - All children in the family
 - All of the above
- If children find a gun when an adult is not around, they should _____.
 - leave the area.
 - go get their best friends.
 - make sure the gun is unloaded.
 - shoot the gun for practice.
- To unload a handgun safely, you should always _____.
 - keep your finger outside the trigger guard.
 - dry fire the handgun before loading and after unloading.
 - point the muzzle in a safe direction.
 - both a. and c.

- _____ is *not* a safe way to transport a handgun.
 - Unloaded
 - Under the seat in your vehicle
 - With the action open
 - In a gun case
- List five functions that are impaired if you consume alcohol or drugs.
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
- One method you can use to resolve conflicts without violence is "LEAPS," which stands for:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Chapter 5

- Federal laws that regulate handgun ownership and usage can be found in the _____.
 - Uniform Commercial Code.
 - Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
 - U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.
 - Declaration of Independence.
- When transporting a handgun on a commercial aircraft, it must be _____, packed in _____ container, and checked with _____.
 - is a federal law that allows you to act in self-defense in all situations.
 - protects your right to act in self-defense in certain circumstances.
 - always requires you to retreat to avoid violence.
 - always includes a "stand-your-ground" clause.
- The Castle Doctrine:
 - is a federal law that allows you to act in self-defense in all situations.
 - protects your right to act in self-defense in certain circumstances.
 - always requires you to retreat to avoid violence.
 - always includes a "stand-your-ground" clause.
- The laws pertaining to handguns are the same in every state and locality. True _____ False _____
- It is always illegal to use deadly force when:
 - you have the legal right to defend yourself in threatening situation.
 - the person attacking you is your spouse, child, or other relative.
 - the person attacking you is in your home.
 - you are involved in a non-deadly attack.