

A Complete Look at Gun Safety

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I think it actually gives me physical pain to have to include a disclaimer with this potentially life-saving information, but legally speaking, it is the best thing to do. The tendency of supposedly intelligent people to file lawsuits for some kind of wrongdoing or negligence prompts me to include a disclaimer statement. If a woman can win a lawsuit against McDonald's for serving her hot coffee which she proceeded to negligently spill on herself, God knows what is next. If a burglar can fall through the roof of a home that he is trying to break into while a family is away on vacation and win a \$100,000 judgment against the family for having a weak spot in the roof, where he was stuck for four days, then I feel that I MUST include a disclaimer statement in this document.

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There are only two causes of the negligent discharge of a firearm. A lack of knowledge and carelessness are the only two causes of a negligent firearm discharge. Now that you are reading one of the most comprehensive and all-encompassing gun safety documents currently found anywhere in the world, a lack of knowledge is not an excuse.

Author's Note: Please do not label negligent firearm discharges as 'accidents', they are not true accidents solely involving human error, mechanical defect and/or happenstance, most such 'accidents' are actually negligent, careless and unmindful or result from a lack of knowledge so deep that even handling them in the first place without proper supervision is strongly inadvisable.

There are three basic rules of safe gun handling. Learn them right here. You should repeat them to yourself enough times that you can briefly look away from this page and recite them without glancing back. Repeat them as many times as you wish, I'll sit here and wait for you.... :-)

1. **ALWAYS** point the barrel of the gun in a safe direction. A safe direction is defined as a direction where if the gun discharged, nobody would get hurt. The best direction to point a gun is generally at the ground/floor and off to the side and not at your feet.

This is known as the Golden Rule Of Gun Safety.

If everyone followed this one rule, it would almost bring an end to unintended firearm related deaths.

Be aware that the "safe direction" may change as you change your location. This one rule alone, if ALWAYS followed when handling a gun would prevent hundreds of needless deaths and thousands of grievous injuries every year.

2. **ALWAYS** keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire. There is a natural tendency to place the index finger inside the trigger guard. **This MUST be avoided.** Condition yourself to place your shooting hand index finger along the side of the frame. If you look, you will find that Hollywood is not helpful in this matter. Look at any poster or advertisement for just about any action movie involving a gun and you will likely find some actor or actress holding a gun incorrectly with their finger unwisely placed on the trigger.

If you stumble and begin to fall while holding a firearm, please be aware that your hand and fingers will begin to clench naturally during your fall. That is why you must condition yourself to place your trigger finger outside of the trigger guard when handling or carrying a gun at all times.

There is no reason whatsoever that your finger should be on the trigger unless you have safely and appropriately acquired your target and your sight picture and are ready for the trigger squeeze. You MUST discipline yourself not to rest any fingers upon the trigger.

3. **ALWAYS** Keep the action open and the gun unloaded until you are ready to use it. The action is the moving parts of the gun that allow loading, unloading, firing and extraction of the empty case or shell. If you are not ready to use it, keep the action open and unloaded.

With an open and unloaded action, the only injury that might occur is if you drop the firearm on your foot.

These are the Three Basic Rules of Safe Gun Handling as given by the National Rifle Association, which is the world's largest and oldest gun safety and marksmanship organization in the world. There are another set of popular safe gun handling rules which became very popular many years ago as introduced and promoted by Colonel Jeff Cooper, arguably one of our nation's most famous and revered firearms experts and trainers.

Here are Jeff Cooper's Four Rules:

1. ALL GUNS ARE ALWAYS LOADED!

An unloaded gun is useless, and no one should ever assume that any piece he may see or touch is not ready to fire. Would that we would never again hear the plaintive wail, "I didn't know it was loaded!" Of course, it was loaded. That is why it exists. Treat it so!

2. NEVER LET THE MUZZLE COVER ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO DESTROY!

When you point a weapon, you may not always actually intend to destroy, but you must be emotionally willing to do so. The fact that the piece is not loaded does not alter this. See Rule 1.

3. KEEP YOUR FINGER OFF THE TRIGGER UNTIL YOUR SIGHTS ARE ON THE TARGET!

Guns do not "go off" by themselves. Somebody fires them. The competent shooter keeps his finger straight and outside the trigger guard until he verifies his sight picture. Violation of Rule 3 is responsible for about 80 percent of firearms mishaps.

4. BE SURE OF YOUR TARGET!

Never shoot at anything that you have not identified. Never shoot at a shadow or a sound or a silhouette or anything that you cannot see clearly. Also make sure of what is behind and beyond your target that a bullet may penetrate completely.

These are the four general rules of gun safety as taught by Colonel Jeff Cooper. They apply always: while you are on and off the range, at home, in transit, hunting, or

fighting. In studying them, you will see that if they were always observed by all people at all times there could be no such thing as a "firearms accident." As to that, it may be proper to insist that there is no such thing as a firearms accident - only negligence.

So whether you prefer the NRA rules of Safe Gun Handling above or Jeff Cooper's Four Rules of Gun Safety, please just know that learning how to handle a gun safely in every way at all times is essential and the lives of your family and friends depends upon it.

Gun Safety at All Times

These are gun safety rules that you should always follow.

ALWAYS treat every gun as if it is loaded and ready to fire. An excuse often heard following an accidental death is that "...I thought it was unloaded." ALWAYS handle the gun as if it is loaded, even if you know it is empty.

Never target shoot or hunt with a firearm, when you are too tired or fatigued to continue to pay attention and operate a firearm safely. After getting a brand new gun or your first firearm, you may have a tendency to stay out too long. Call it a day before you get too tired to pay attention.

NEVER point a gun at something or someone that you don't intend to shoot at. As Jeff Cooper would say "Don't point a gun at anything you are not prepared to destroy."

Check the action of the firearm every time you pick it up. Condition yourself to do this. Check that action again, even if you just checked it.

Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate. Inviting a hot piece of metal or powder in your eye is not a very good idea, in fact it hurts like heck, I know this from experience. ALWAYS wear those silly looking glasses or you may be sorry. If you want to be able to hear your grandchildren, you should have ear plugs or ear protection muffs and use them according to the instructions.

NEVER TAKE A GUN AWAY FROM SOMEONE BY PULLING ON THE BARREL. If they have their finger on the trigger, pulling on the barrel could discharge the gun and injure you. This is the most common type of accident among young people.

NEVER use drugs or alcohol before or during shooting. Alcohol or drugs can impair judgment. Mistakes are more likely to happen under the influence of alcohol. Be vigilant about safety, don't drink alcohol or use some prescription drugs while handling a gun. Alcohol use before or during the handling and/or firing of a gun, can drastically increase the incidence of a scientific phenomenon

known as the Stupidity Factor. Ok, I made up the "Stupidity Factor", but my point remains. This rule applies especially when reloading ammunition.

NEVER shoot into water and avoid ricochets. Bullets can skip off the surface of water and then change direction too!!!! Don't shoot into the water. Don't shoot at heavy metal objects such as junked cars, old propane tanks and abandoned refrigerators. Ricochets have been deadly in this type of situation.

NEVER rely solely on the safety device on the gun. Mechanical safeties have been known to fail. If you know Murphy's Law, then you would know that if a safety lever or button is going to fail, it will fail at the worst possible moment. Mechanical safeties can wear out or malfunction over time.

NEVER allow horseplay with a firearm even if you are certain it is unloaded. Horseplay with an unloaded gun is never a good idea. It can condition a child to respect a firearm less, and regard gun safety as less important. **NO HORSEPLAY. NEVER!**

Speaking about no horseplay, what about horses? Do not fire a gun within close proximity to a large animal, unless the animal has been trained to handle the sound of gunfire. This would include horses, cows, large dogs and any other animal that could injure you if it was suddenly startled by the sound of gunfire.

ALWAYS AVOID THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO PLACE A FINGER INSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD WHEN HANDLING A GUN. I know I already said this one, but it is worth repeating. Most accidental discharges occur because of a misplaced finger on the trigger.

Carry guns in cases whenever practical. In some States, this is the law. Get to know your State firearm laws. Ignorance of the law is not a valid excuse before a judge. It is the gun owner's responsibility to be familiar with their own state's gun laws.

Do not allow a holster, sling or clothing that might interfere with the safe operation of the gun. Choose firearm accessories carefully. Use only the slings, holsters, mounts or aiming devices made specifically for your gun.

Never lean a rifle or shotgun against a wall or vehicle. They can easily slip off the surface and hit the floor or ground. It is very unlikely that it will discharge, however, a ding or scratch in the firearm will not make you a very happy camper. It could permanently damage a scope too.

Never alter or modify your firearms unless you know what you're doing or are following explicit instructions. Sawing off shotgun or rifle barrels below 18" can result in federal criminal charges that can result in as much as twenty (20) years in prison. Altering some aspects of firearms could make them dangerous as well.

Gun Safety At Home

These are rules that are more specifically intended for the home.

You should store guns and ammunition so that they are not accessible to any unauthorized people. NEVER be satisfied with just hiding a loaded gun. If you are simply hiding a loaded gun in your home, KNOCK IT OFF. You are sending out an invitation to tragedy if you simply hide a loaded gun in your home. There are easily affordable devices available on the market so you don't need to simply hide a gun. Quick access however, should be practiced and practiced often. You don't want to be fumbling around for a defensive firearm while you're being attacked. Quick access to a defensive firearm should be tempered if possible with an eye toward inaccessibility to untrained children and unauthorized adults.

Never hide a firearm under a pillow or mattress. This is not a very smart thing to do. Someday it WILL BE FOUND by someone. It can get damp or musty and rust under there too! Whoever finds it, may not be someone you want handling an unsupervised firearm. Not to mention that if you are attacked while still in bed, you can't get under the mattress anyway. Your weight and the weight of a spouse and /or intruder will prevent access to the gun anyway.

You should store firearms and ammunition separately if practicable. Store ammunition so it does not get too moist or in an area that gets excessively hot, like an attic, cellar or closet. Ammunition primers can corrode and become unreliable if they are stored in a damp area.

Read and fully understand the manual that came with the gun. The gun manufacturers are truly concerned about gun safety. Don't take the gun apart too far!!! Learn all there is to know about your firearm. Know it inside and out. Taking the gun apart too far is how gunsmiths make a lot of their money. Not that I'm against gunsmiths making money, but I would rather spend my money on something other than having a professional reassemble a gun that I took apart too far.

When attaching trigger locking devices, make certain that they are done properly. If you have your firearms under lock and key, be sure to keep the key on YOUR key chain and keep it with you. It does no good to lock up your guns and leave the key out for anyone to find.

Always thoroughly check to make sure a firearm is unloaded before cleaning or disassembly. Also you should strictly follow the user's manual when disassembling the firearm. Remove all live ammunition from the area where you'll be cleaning the gun. There's no reason you should have live ammo around when cleaning a firearm.

Gun Safety While Hunting

Follow these rules and more while hunting.

Before I go into the safety rules while hunting, allow me to first list the eight (8) most common ways that people get injured with firearms and bows.

- 1.) The failure of the hunter to properly identify the target that they have decided to shoot at is number one. A hunter shooting at movement or misidentifying another hunter as a game animal is the most common method of gun related injury while hunting and it is the one with the feeblest excuse. Identifying the sex of a game animal before you let a bullet, shot charge or arrow fly will stop this type of accident.
- 2.) The hunter getting shot while transporting a game animal from the field to the vehicle is the 2nd most common. If you have two turkeys slung over your shoulder and another hunter sees two turkeys moving together through the brush, you could get shot. You should have something that is day-glow yellow/orange on the end of your barrel, or some kind of visible sign that what is moving in the brush is a human being who is transporting game.
- 3.) The trigger of a loaded firearm that is ready to fire that gets caught on an object such as a branch, is number three.
- 4.) The fourth one is the hunter who fails to utilize a proper haul line for a firearm that keeps the muzzle pointed down and the gun unloaded. When pulling a firearm up into a tree stand, the firearm or muzzleloader should be unloaded if practicable and the barrel should be pointed down, not up at the bottom of your chin. Please ladies and gentlemen, listen up. This just happened to a local hunter near where I live in Maine. He hauled a loaded muzzleloader up into a tree utilizing a cord and the trigger guard. The trigger got caught and he shot himself right through his right hand. Properly hauling a firearm into a tree, it is pointed down, not up and it is hopefully unloaded.
- 5.) The shooter stumbled and/or fell and the firearm discharged unintentionally because of the stumble or tumble. When doing anything physically challenging the firearm should be unloaded. Accidents, genuine accidents will happen, but avoid them if you possibly can by making your firearm safe while doing anything physically demanding. Such things are climbing uphill, descending, jumping creeks, climbing trees, etc.
- 6.) The improper crossing of an obstacle with a loaded gun is the sixth most common cause of hunting accidents. Going over a log, getting over a stone wall, getting over or under a fence and any other crossing of obstacles should be done with care and due diligence.
- 7.) The hunter's firearm fell from an unsecured or unsteady resting position and discharged upon impact. Most modern arms will not typically fire when falling over from a resting position, but it does happen and here it is at number seven.
- 8.) Very similar to number seven is when a firearm discharges because it is dropped. Whether it is dropped from a tree stand, dropped over the edge of some precipice or cliff or whatever, some kind of tethering device might be a good addition to your hunter safety preparation.

Here are some more rules and tips. Some of them may be repeated tips from above, but they are worth mentioning again. More than one hundred hunters each year have to get up the courage to tell his hunting buddies' wife why he won't be coming home for dinner. **DON'T BE THAT GUY.**

NEVER shoot at movement when hunting. If you miss your intended target, where is the bullet going???? Positively identify the sex of the animal before firing. This will guarantee that you will not kill some lady who is hanging out her laundry while wearing a brown and white fur coat (true story). If you don't know what the male and female species of your quarry looks like, you should not be hunting in the first place.

ALWAYS carry the gun safely and watch that muzzle!! The muzzle is another name for the front end of the barrel.

WHILE hunting, you should be completely aware of where your buddies are and carry your firearm accordingly. When walking together, make certain that the muzzles are looking in a safe direction.

NEVER climb a tree or fence or jump a ditch with a loaded gun. You will have very little control over your firearm during a fall. Unload that firearm before you descend or ascend steep slopes. During an uncontrolled tumble or while sliding down a steep slope, your control of the firearm will be compromised. Unload it first. I would rather see you lose a chance shot at a game animal, than take a load of buckshot under your chin during a fall. In 2005, a hunter accidentally killed his own son after an uncontrolled slide down a steep slope while hunting. Before you do anything physically challenging, unload the firearm first. Please hear me on this. Burying your own child because you ignored me here doesn't make much sense.

NEVER, did you hear me? NEVER pull a loaded gun up into a tree stand. I do not care if it is a muzzleloader that is much easier to load while on the ground either. Take your ammunition or your powder, patches and bullets into the tree stand with you. Dozens and dozens of hunters get injured, maimed or killed each year while pulling a loaded gun up into a tree stand from the ground.

If you find a firearm while out hunting and it doesn't look as if it has been there for months, another hunter may be very nearby. It's also possible that the owner of the gun is injured, possibly from a fall or health problem and may need aid. It's always important in my estimation to carry a cell phone to call for help in case of an emergency of some type. In addition to that, a firearm that has been discarded may have been used in a crime or homicide. Having a gun used in a homicide in your home is likely not a good idea. Call law enforcement to come and pick it up as it could be evidence in a crime.

Gun Safety At The Shooting Range

Obey range rules and a Range Safety Officer

Never accept a loaded gun from anyone, unless you are a Range Officer or Certified Firearm Instructor or really know what you are doing. When you receive a firearm from someone, it should be unloaded and the action should be open. Keeping the action open when passing a firearm from one person to another is very important and it clearly demonstrates that you are conscientious and that

you know what you are doing. It is impossible to have a negligent discharge with the action open.

Be sure the gun is safe to operate. A gun that has been neglected or one that is very old, may not be safe to use. Some guns manufactured in the early 1900's should not use modern ammunition.

Be sure to cock back the hammer with the non-shooting hand when you have to cock a hammer. There are two reasons for this. First, it will be easier to keep the barrel pointed directly at the target area throughout the cocking procedure. Cocking the gun with your shooting hand means you're disturbing your grip enough to change the direction in which the barrel is pointing and you may be tempted to raise the barrel too high if you use the thumb on your shooting hand. Secondly, cocking the gun with your non-shooting thumb will make sure that your grip stays consistent throughout your group that you're shooting.

Never look down the barrel of a potentially loaded gun. Leave that to an episode of the Three Stooges. There is no way to tell if a gun is loaded by looking down the barrel anyhow. Don't do it, it's not that funny. Checking the barrel for powder, lead and copper deposits while cleaning the gun is ok, as long as the action is open and you're completely certain it is unloaded during the cleaning process.

Be certain that when you are leaving the range or another shooting area, that the firearms you are packing away are completely unloaded, including magazines. I have been shooting for more than thirty years and I mistakenly left a handgun loaded after packing up at the range only once. As a responsible and alert gun owner, you should always know if one of your guns are loaded or not. That is why I have clearly advocated so many redundant safety checks. Please hear me.

If you don't know anything about the gun, seek a knowledgeable person. If you are in a position to use a gun at a range or while recreationally shooting outdoors, and you are not familiar with the gun, then ask the owner. Almost every model of gun, operates a little differently from its cousin.

Know how to use the gun safely. If you don't know what you are doing while out shooting with friends and family, don't pretend to know what you are doing. It is always OK to ask questions. Don't be afraid about looking less than macho. If you make a grievous mistake while handling the gun, then how would you look?

**"To pretend to know when you do not know is a disease."
Lao-Tzu [Li Erh] (570-490 BC) 'Old Sage', Father of Taoism**

Use ONLY the correct ammunition for the gun. On a rare occasion, a 20 gauge shell has slipped into the barrel of a 12 gauge shotgun. The next shot could destroy the gun and injure you. I know of someone that tried to shoot a .38 special from a 1911 .45 ACP. (A hospital run came soon after.)

Carry only one caliber cartridge or shell at a time. This will reduce the possibility of using the wrong

ammunition in your firearm.

Know your target and what is behind and beyond it. Be certain of where your bullet will end up. With some higher powered rifle cartridges, bullets can travel up to five (5) miles under the right conditions. Most rifle bullets will travel between a mile and a half (7,920 feet) and three and half miles (18,480 feet).

Be aware that certain firearms and activities have additional rules and precautions. When attending competitions or other organized activities, make certain that there are no other rules that you might be unaware of.

ALWAYS obey range rules and a Range Safety Officer. A Range Safety Officer has everyone's best interest in mind. Don't feel angry if a Range Safety Officer corrects something you are doing wrong. There are quite a few gun safety rules and they all must be obeyed at the same time. A gun club may have rules posted that you're not aware of. Please treat the Range Safety Officer with respect.

Be sure the barrel is clear of obstructions. An obstruction inside the barrel, such as a patch, bullet or bullet jacket can destroy the usefulness of the gun and could cause severe injury OR DEATH.

If the discharge of the cartridge seemed a bit different in sound or recoil, the gun should be pointed in a safe direction for at least thirty (30) seconds to two (2) minutes, in case of a hang fire. Then the barrel should be checked for obstruction. A hang fire occurs when the gun does not immediately discharge, but discharges a few moments later.

In some cases, a cartridge may have a primer, but no powder. Upon discharge, the primer would push the bullet into the barrel, where it would get stuck. This is called a "squib load". If only the primer fires on a cartridge, point the gun in a safe direction for up to two (2) minutes, possibly more, then check the barrel for any obstruction. If a bullet is stuck in the barrel, don't shoot another bullet at it to get it out. This will more than likely destroy your gun and could injure you and bystanders near you. If you can't get it out, see a gunsmith or other knowledgeable person. Stuck bullets can usually be carefully pounded out of the barrel with the proper tools.

If you do a bunch of your shooting at indoor pistol ranges, you should make sure that the range is fully ventilated and the fans are properly working. There can be a relatively high concentration of lead and harmful compounds in the air if proper ventilation is not observed. In addition to this, make certain that you wash your hands very well after shooting and cleaning your guns. There are many harmful compounds found in gunpowder and ammunition priming compounds. Some of them are listed here:

diazodinitrophenol
potassium nitrate
nitrocellulose

boron metal
nitroglycerin
tetrazene
lead
nickel
copper
zinc
lead styphnate
barium nitrate

While at the outdoor shooting range, keep your muzzle down!!! Don't allow your barrel to point above the dirt berms that are designed to protect the surrounding community from a wayward bullet.

Gun Safety While Reloading Ammunition

Reloading ammo has its own set of rules and risks

Never keep black powder or smokeless gun powder in unmarked containers. Always use the original containers. Don't mix powders unless you know what you're doing and you're specifically attempting a known duplex load.

Store all of your reloading components in a cool and dry area. Primers, black powder and smokeless powder should always be stored in a cool and dry area. This is more to protect the integrity of the reloading components than anything else. Of course you'll want to store them away from any heat source like a furnace, woodstove or water heater.

Always check metallic cases and shotgun hulls for defects before reloading them. Check cases and hulls for splits or cracks.

Use the utmost in caution when reloading centerfire ammunition. Don't allow yourself to become distracted. Concentrate completely on the task at hand, and most importantly, stay organized and label everything. Follow the ammunition tables exactly, do not experiment unless you are a very experienced or expert reloader.

A cartridge which has: the wrong powder, no powder charge, or too large a powder charge; an inverted primer, mis-seated primer, the wrong type of primer or an inert primer; a mis-seated, inverted, or mis-sized bullet; a collapsed, weakened, improperly sized or mis-crimped case; incorrect overall length or any of a host of other defects may seriously jeopardize your safety, the safety of those around you, and/or the reliability of your firearm in a defensive situation.

Many shooters prepare and safely use reloaded ammunition each day, and it can be an economical way to stretch your ammunition budget, but the safety of that reloaded ammunition directly depends on the care, components, equipment, and practices used in preparing it.

Always use a proper measure when loading Pyrodex or black powder into a muzzle loading firearm. Never simply guess.

Never use modern smokeless gun powder in a muzzle loader and never mix smokeless powder and black powder. There is such a thing as a "duplex" load which uses two different powders, but they should only be used under the most controlled circumstances and according to known recipes.

Never smoke cigars, pipes or cigarettes when using a muzzle loader or when reloading centerfire ammunition. You may lose your beard, mustache, eyebrows and eyelashes, which is very unattractive.

Never put a match to a pile of accidentally spilled black powder. You might end up having to completely shave off all your facial hair until it grows back evenly, right John?

Any gun is only as safe as the operator.

Remember that a gun is merely a device that stores, helps aim and discharges ammunition. A firearm will only do what the operator makes it do.

Safe storage of a firearm is an essential ingredient for avoiding an accident. **It is now state law in Massachusetts** that a firearm must have a trigger locking device attached to it or the gun must be locked in a secured container under key or combination. **It is illegal in Massachusetts to hide a loaded and unlocked gun in your home.** There are many devices on the market that one could use, such as trigger locks, cable-type locks, locked boxes under key or combination or stand-up safes.

I believe that many "Safe Storage Laws" deny the basic human right of self-defense. I believe that safe storage of firearms should be decided by the individual gun owner on a home-by-home basis.

I believe that some "Safe Storage Laws" clearly violate the Bill of Rights and therefore are void and need not be obeyed anyhow. Legislation that runs contrary to the Constitution is null and void, even if it's passed by the legislature and signed into law by the state governor.

Keeping firearms locked up and unloaded at all times, renders them totally useless for any home defense purposes. The storage of personally owned firearms, must be thoughtfully determined by the individual gun owner.

When should I start to teach my child gun safety?

It is essential that a child knows that a real gun is NOT a toy under any circumstances. Even if you are entirely certain the gun is unloaded, the child should NEVER be allowed to play around with it. The fact is that sometime in the future, the gun may just be loaded when the child begins to play around with it.

You know your child better than I do. There is no set chronological time that is best to teach firearm safety to a child. The unwritten rule is that you should begin to instruct a child about gun safety when they begin to show responsibility in other areas and also show an interest in guns. If the child can assume responsibility for feeding a pet or can perform household chores reliably, that may be a good indication of their maturity. Some children may absorb gun safety knowledge as early as four years old, some may take much longer.

My child could reliably and correctly handle a semi-automatic handgun by the time he reached first grade, but he had a good teacher. :-)

A child as old as three or four can learn and retain a simple three or four step gun safety message. Children as young as this learn best through repetition. It is best to keep the message simple too.

1. **STOP AND DON'T TOUCH IT**
2. **LEAVE THE AREA**
3. **TELL A RESPONSIBLE ADULT WHAT YOU FOUND**

This is the best message to teach young children in case they find a gun in an unsupervised situation. This is the heart of the National Rifle Association's gun safety program for kids called Eddie Eagle®.

For more information on this program call the NRA Eddie Eagle® Program toll-free at 1-800-231-0752.

Eddie Eagle® is a registered trademark of the National Rifle Association.

[Eddie Eagle's Home Page](#)

Keeping Good Records

If, God forbid, your firearms are ever stolen, it would be a great help to your police department to have all your firearms documented. Here is just an example of what I would suggest you do. Create a table like this one, fill it out and keep it in a safe or safety deposit box.

It is also a great idea to have good photographs of the firearms and document any customizing that has been done.

[Download a firearm inventory Microsoft Word Document here:](#)

Manufacturer	Model #	Action	Caliber or Gauge	Serial Number
Sturm-Ruger	GP-100	Revolver	.357 Magnum	XXX-XXXXX
Sturm-Ruger	10-.22	Semi-Automatic	.22LR	XXX-XXXXX
Sig-Sauer	P226	Semi-Automatic	.40 S&W	X-XXX-XXX

Child-Proof Guns, Or Gun-Proof Children?

I have always taught that it is a far better thing to gun-proof your children than to child-proof a gun.

Reality dictates that a sound strategy of both teaching your children proper gun handling procedures and letting them shoot and clean your guns, coupled with locking up and safely storing guns and ammunition must be followed.

IF YOU ARE HIDING A LOADED FIREARM IN YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW, YOU ARE INVITING A POTENTIAL DISASTER. AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, SOMEONE MIGHT FIND THAT HIDDEN FIREARM, AND THEY MAY NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN THEY FIND IT.

In general, guns should be stored so that they are inaccessible to unauthorized children or adults. **Simply hiding a loaded firearm is not the way to go.** Lock guns in a rack, cabinet or safe. You should store ammunition in a separate container.

If you foresee the real possibility of using the firearm for home defense purposes, there are many products on the market to assist you.

- Simple combination, single pistol lockboxes.
- Fingerprint scanning, single pistol lockboxes.
- Key locked trigger guards.
- Key locked cables.

Obviously the concerns of a well-trained person with no children and the concerns of a family with small children differ in the level of precaution that must be observed. If you live in an area where a break-in is somewhat likely, you should seriously and carefully consider the storage of a self-defense firearm.

If you foresee the possibility of using a firearm for home defense, you should practice accessing your unloaded defensive firearm in a variety of conditions and circumstances.

Tempering defensive firearm access, with home firearm safety is the responsibility of each gun owner. Only you can decide what is best for you and your home.

Total firearm accessibility, may compromise gun safety considerations too much. But too many gun safety precautions, may compromise defensive firearm access.

Ideally, you should be able to access a loaded firearm very quickly, while making unauthorized access of that firearm as difficult as possible. This is not an easy thing to accomplish and is the subject of much debate and conjecture.

Gun proof your children and child proof your guns.

Gun Locks

Gun locks, trigger locks, keyed cables and metal jacket locks are all good solid devices to keep guns away from unauthorized fingers. The following locks come highly recommended by me. This is especially if you have young children or grandchildren around. In some states, like Massachusetts and California, you must have one of these attached to your firearm or your collection could be confiscated. Sorry guys, but that the law in at least Massachusetts. Talk to your spouse about a gun safe or sturdy security cabinet too.

Safes

The easiest and best way to make your firearms safe and secure is to file them away in a sturdy firearm safe or lockable metal gun cabinet.

Wooden gun cabinets look great, but don't afford much protection from the curious prying hands of an unsupervised child. These wooden cabinets with a large plate of glass certainly will not slow down a prepared criminal very long at all.

You don't have to spend as much money on a safe as you did on your first car. There are plenty of well-made gun security cabinets that are less than \$200.00. These can be bolted to the floor and to the wall.

When choosing a safe or security cabinet, you should make sure of a few things:

- Does it easily bolt to the floor and/or wall?
- Is it made of heavy enough gauge metal that it cannot be readily cut into?

- Is the lock itself unpickable?
- Does the safe allow relatively easy access in an emergency?
- Would a [gun lock](#) be just as good without the expense of a safe? But then again, a safe keeps your guns cleaner and the dust doesn't accumulate on them.

Well, that's all I have for you. I kept this complete look at gun safety to just sixteen pages or so depending on the format you are reading it in of course. Once again, this document is provided free of charge and no payment is necessary. However, if you feel compelled to do so, you may send me a thank you gift to support my efforts.

You can find all of the information you need to send me a gift/contribution at <http://www.savetheguns.com/contributions.htm>

Thank you for reading!

Now pass this onto someone else. Together we may actually save a life or two.

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