

THE PREPARED CITIZEN

MASTERING HANDGUN SAFETY AT ALL TIMES

FROM RANGE TO HOME AND EVERYWHERE IN BETWEEN



| THE
CARRY GUY®

ARE YOU READY?™

The Carry Guy Complete Manual: Handgun Safety at All Times

Safety First

The following summarizes the NRA's fundamental rules of gun safety and related published guidance on storage, range, transport, cleaning, and home practices. These rules are the standard reference used by NRA-certified instructors and range facilities. This material is not a substitute for in-person professional training, manufacturer instructions, or compliance with local laws. Always verify current local requirements for storage and transport.

Who This Is For

Every handgun owner and carrier. Anyone preparing for range trips, cleaning, or daily carry. Households with children or visitors. Anyone who needs a single reference covering safety from preparation through return home.

What the Core Rules Are

The NRA's three fundamental rules for safe gun handling are:

1. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
2. Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
3. Always keep the gun unloaded until ready to use.

Additional NRA guidance includes knowing your target and what is beyond it, knowing how to use the gun safely, ensuring the gun is safe to operate, using only the correct ammunition, wearing eye and ear protection as appropriate, never using alcohol or impairing drugs while handling firearms, and storing guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.

A widely taught four-rule formulation adds "treat every firearm as if it is loaded." Both versions appear in NRA-related materials and training literature. The practical effect is identical: control the muzzle, control the trigger finger, and confirm the condition of the firearm.

When to Apply the Rules

At all times the firearm is present: while preparing to leave for the range, during transport, at the range, while cleaning, while returning home, while storing, while carrying, and while in a vehicle. There is no "casual handling" exception.

Where Safety Applies

- Range and training areas
- Home (including presence of children or visitors)
- Vehicle
- Any location where the firearm is carried or stored

How: Comprehensive Instruction by Situation

Preparing to Go to the Range

Unload and clear the firearm before leaving home. Verify the chamber and magazine well are empty by visual and physical inspection. Place the firearm in a secure container or holster appropriate for transport. Separate ammunition. Confirm range rules in advance. Do not handle the firearm in the vehicle while en route.

At the Range

Follow range-specific rules in addition to the fundamental rules. Keep the muzzle pointed downrange or in the designated safe direction at all times. Keep the action open and the firearm unloaded when not on the firing line. Immediately stop and keep the muzzle safe when anyone calls a cease-fire. Wear eye and ear protection. Use only ammunition marked for the firearm. Do not handle firearms behind the firing line. Treat every firearm as loaded even after clearing it.

Returning Home from the Range

Unload and clear the firearm before entering the residence. Do not bring a loaded firearm into the home unless it is immediately placed in secure storage or on the person for carry. Account for all ammunition. Return the firearm to its designated storage location promptly.

Cleaning

Unload and clear the firearm completely before any cleaning begins. Remove the magazine and visually and physically confirm the chamber is empty. Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction throughout. Work in an area free of distractions. Do not clean while others are present who could reach the firearm. Store the firearm only after cleaning is complete and it has been re-verified as unloaded (unless it is being placed into a loaded defensive storage configuration that is itself secured).

Safety at Home with Children or Visitors Present

NRA guidance states that guns must be stored so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons. Published recommendations from NRA-related sources and child-safety programs (including Project ChildSafe) include:

- Store firearms unloaded in a locked safe, lockbox, or container.
- Store ammunition separately in a locked location.
- Use additional locking devices (cable locks, trigger locks) as a secondary layer.
- Ensure keys or combinations are not accessible to children.
- Teach children the NRA Eddie Eagle steps if they find a firearm: Stop. Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.

Quick-access safes (biometric or PIN) are used by some carriers for defensive handguns kept near the bedroom; these still require that the device itself prevents unauthorized access. Verbal

rules alone are not a substitute for physical security. Laws regarding child access prevention vary by jurisdiction; verify local requirements.

Safety in the Car

Transport the firearm unloaded and secured in accordance with applicable law. Do not store a loaded firearm in an unlocked glove box or console. Keep the firearm inaccessible to others while the vehicle is unattended. When exiting the vehicle, either keep the firearm on the person or secure it. Do not handle or load the firearm inside the vehicle except as required by specific local carry rules.

While Concealed Carrying

The firearm remains under the carrier's direct control. Follow the fundamental rules at all times. Keep the finger off the trigger and the muzzle directed safely during any movement, sitting, or interaction with others. Do not display the firearm. Reholster deliberately and slowly. When the firearm is not on the person, it must be secured so that it is not accessible to unauthorized persons.

Additional Practices

- Know how to operate the specific firearm, including how to clear it.
- Use only ammunition specified for the firearm.
- Do not handle firearms while impaired.
- Immediately stop and reassess if any rule is violated.

Common Errors

- Assuming a firearm is unloaded without verifying.
- Allowing the muzzle to cover any person or unsafe area.
- Placing the finger on the trigger before the decision to shoot.
- Leaving firearms unlocked or accessible in homes with children or visitors.
- Handling firearms casually in vehicles or homes.

Special Considerations

Local laws govern storage, transport, and carry requirements; these vary and must be checked independently. Differing viewpoints exist on the balance between quick-access defensive storage and maximum child-prevention security; published guidance emphasizes physical locking devices and separate ammunition storage when children are present. Professional instruction is required to develop consistent application of the rules under stress and daily conditions.

Conclusion

Handgun safety rests on continuous application of the fundamental rules: control the muzzle, control the trigger finger, and confirm the firearm's condition. Apply these rules from

preparation through return home, during cleaning, in the presence of children or visitors, in vehicles, and while carrying. Secure storage prevents unauthorized access.

For hands-on training go to www.thecarryguy.com.

4 PRIMARY RULES FOR GUN SAFETY



Always keep gun
pointed in a safe
direction



Treat guns as
though they are
always loaded



Keep your finger
off of the trigger
until your sights
are on your
intended target



Always be sure
of your target
and what's
behind it