

HANDGUN TYPES



REVOLVER

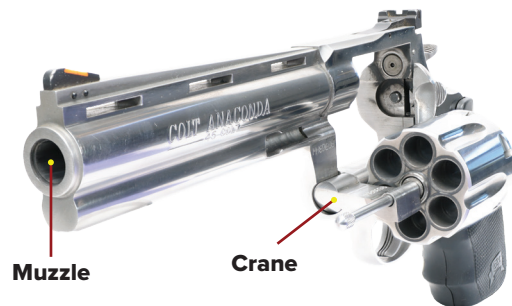
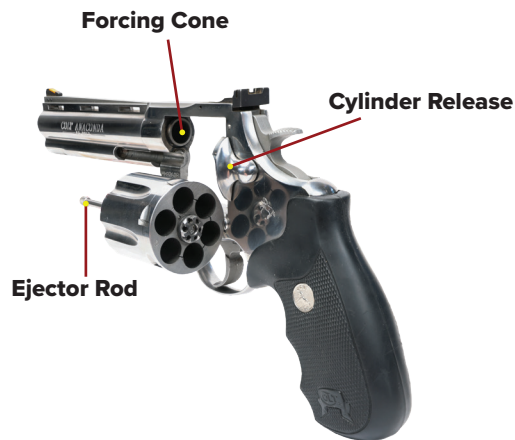
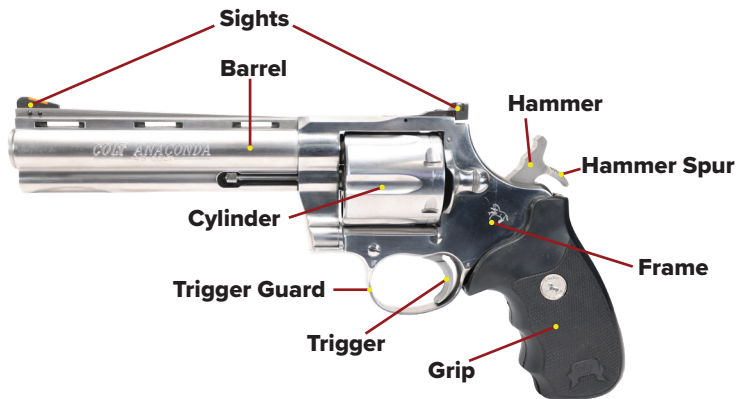
A handgun with a revolving cylinder containing multiple chambers, each holding a single cartridge. Revolvers are sometimes called **six-shooters** or **six-guns** because they typically hold six rounds. They may also be called **wheel guns** because of the rotating cylinder.



SEMI-AUTOMATIC

A handgun that automatically ejects and loads cartridges into its chamber after each shot. Some may refer to semi-autos specifically as **pistols**, while others may use **pistol** to mean both semi-autos and revolvers.

The term **semi-** indicates that it fires only one round per trigger press. Fully automatic handguns are capable of firing multiple rounds with one trigger press.



REVOLVER

Barrel - The metal tube that the bullet travels through after the gun is fired.

Crane - The pivoting arm that supports the cylinder, allowing it to swing out from the frame for loading and unloading. The ejector rod and cylinder are attached to this.

Cylinder - Where rounds are loaded and unloaded from the revolver.

Cylinder Release - Allows the cylinder to swing out for loading and unloading.

Ejector Rod - Located on the front of the cylinder. When you push on this, it will push the rounds or casings out of the cylinder.

Forcing Cone - The back of the barrel, where it meets the cylinder. This is where the bullet enters the barrel when the gun is fired.

Frame - Houses all the parts necessary for the gun to fire.

Grip - The lowest part of the frame, where you hold the gun.

Hammer - What strikes the firing pin and detonates the cartridge when the trigger is pressed. Some revolvers have internal hammers, so you won't be able to see it from the outside.

Hammer Spur - Extended piece on the back of the hammer that allows you to manually cock the hammer. Not all revolvers will have this.

If the hammer does not have a spur, this is known as a *bobbed hammer*.

Muzzle - The hole on the front of the barrel where the bullets exit.

Sights - Used to aim the handgun, most often in a notch-and-post configuration—the notch being the rear sight and the post being the front sight. These are often referred to as *iron sights*.

Trigger - The lever that will fire the gun when fully pressed to the rear.

Trigger Guard - Surrounds the trigger and prevents it from being pressed inadvertently.



SEMI-AUTOMATIC

Accessory Rail - Located in front of the trigger guard, the rail allows you to attach accessories such as lights and lasers. Not every handgun includes this feature.

Barrel - The metal tube that the bullet travels through after the gun is fired.

Chamber - The cavity at the rear of the barrel where a cartridge is inserted before firing.

Extractor - A small claw that grips the rim of the casing inside the gun, pulling the round out of the chamber when the slide travels rearward. In some handguns, part of the extractor is visible from the outside of the gun.

Ejection Port - A cutout on the slide that allows rounds or casings to eject when the slide moves back. It is typically located on the top and right side of the slide, since most people are right-handed.

Frame - Houses some of the parts necessary for the gun to fire.

Grip - The lowest part of the frame, where you hold the gun.

Magazine Release - The mechanism that releases the magazine from the pistol. It is most often a button, but sometimes it is a lever.

Magazine Well - The hole in the bottom of the grip. This is where you insert magazines into the gun.

Muzzle - The hole on the front of the barrel where the bullets exit.

Optic - An alternative sighting system that can be added to the gun. These work by projecting a reticle onto the front lens of the optic, superimposing it onto the target. Often called *red dots*, although the reticles sometimes come in other colors and shapes.

Sights - What are used to aim the handgun. Most often, these are in what's called a notch-and-post configuration. The notch being the rear sight and the post being the front sight. These are often referred to as *iron sights*.

Slide - The large metal part that slides back and forth during operation, holds the sights or optic, and contains some firing components.

Slide Serrations - Cuts in the slide intended to make it easier to grip.

Slide Stop Lever - Usually found at the top of the frame, just under the slide and right above the grip. This is what gets pushed up after the last round in the magazine is fired, locking the slide open. Part of it is on the outside of the gun, allowing you to lock the slide open manually. Some guns have an ambidextrous slide stop lever.

Takedown Lever/Tab - Allows you to take your gun apart. Your gun will have one or the other and they will be located in slightly different locations on the gun.

Trigger - The lever that will fire the gun when fully pressed to the rear.

Trigger Guard - Surrounds the trigger and prevents it from being pressed inadvertently.

PISTOL MAGAZINE

Magazines are ammunition-feeding devices that go into a firearm. They are often mistakenly called *clips*. Unlike a magazine, a clip is a different device typically used to load rifles.

Body - The part that holds the magazine together. It can be made of polymer, steel, or both.

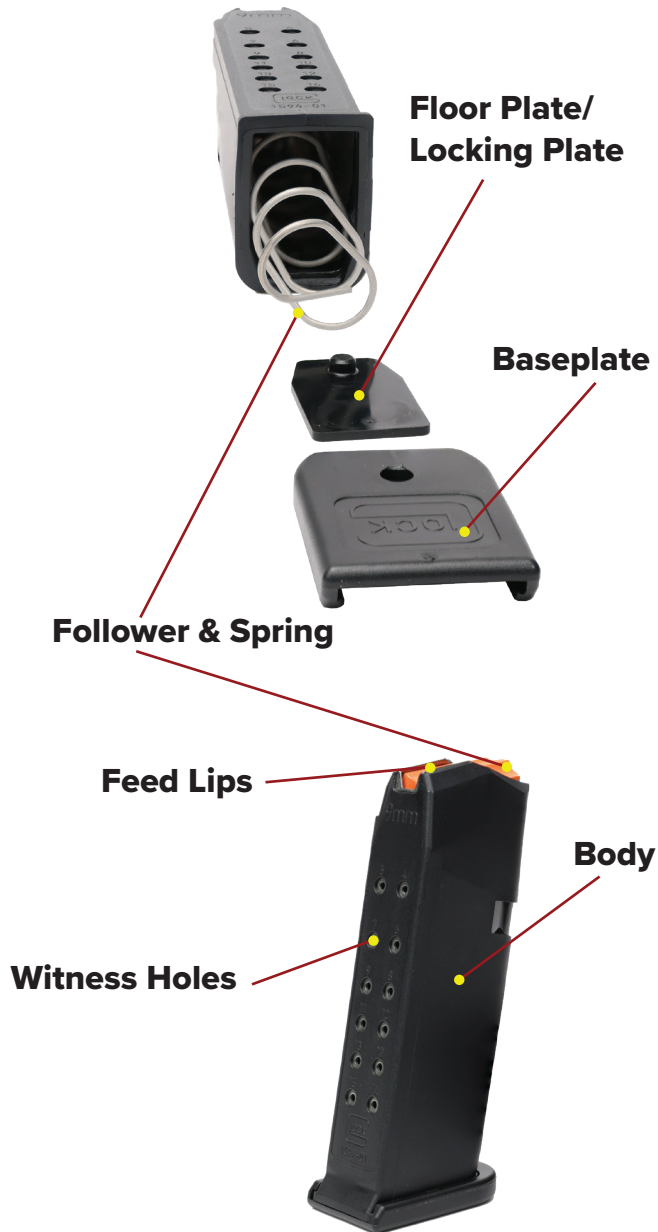
Baseplate - Slides onto the bottom of the magazine, compressing the spring and holding the magazine together.

Feed Lips - At the very top of the magazine. These hold the round in place until it is fed into the gun. The feed lips ensure only one round is fed at a time.

**Floor Plate/
Locking Plate** - Assists in locking the spring into place, centering the spring before you set the baseplate. This may also be referred to by different names depending on the manufacturer.

Follower & Spring - Beneath the rounds is the follower and spring. The follower ensures the rounds are evenly supported as they're being fed through the magazine.

Witness Holes - Most pistol magazines will have holes in the body. These allow you to see how many rounds have been loaded. Some will be on the back, others may have them on the side.



CARTRIDGE

Cartridge/Round



Bullet - The projectile at the tip of a cartridge that exits the barrel when fired. Although the entire cartridge is often called a **bullet**, the term refers only to this component.

Cartridge/Round - This entire assembly is called a **cartridge** or **round** of ammunition. Sometimes also called a **bullet**, as previously mentioned.

Casing - The casing holds the bullet, powder, and primer. After firing, the casing is expelled through the ejection port of a semi-auto or manually removed from a revolver. Cases are often called **shells** or **brass**, since they are commonly made of brass, although steel and aluminum casings are also used.

Powder/Charge - Inside the casing is the powder, sometimes called the **charge**.

When it ignites and burns, the expanding gases then push the bullet out the end of the barrel.

Primer - The primer is the small disc inserted into the back of the casing. It contains a priming compound, which is an impact-sensitive explosive. When the primer is struck by the firing pin or striker, it creates a small explosion that ignites the powder inside the casing.

Centerfire vs. Rimfire - A centerfire cartridge has a primer located in the center of the casing, while a rimfire has its priming compound in the rim of the cartridge.

On a rimfire cartridge, the rim of the casing is crushed between the chamber face and firing pin, detonating the priming compound and igniting the powder.

Casing



Primer

Powder/Charge



Bullet



Centerfire



Rimfire



CALIBER

What is Caliber?-

Caliber technically refers to the diameter of a bullet in inches. For example, .38 caliber means the bullet is 0.38 inches in diameter.

However, *caliber* has also come to mean the general specifications of cartridges, sometimes including the casing and powder charge. It can also refer to cartridges measured in millimeters.

For example, 9mm Luger is a specific *caliber*, even though it is measured using the metric system.

How to identify Caliber-

If you ever need to determine a handgun's caliber, it is generally stamped on the barrel, near the ejection port.

Sometimes it is also stamped on the slide. However, keep in mind that some guns allow the barrel to be changed, which means the caliber on the slide might not match the caliber of the barrel. If there is a discrepancy, always default to the caliber marked on the barrel, as this is where the actual round will be chambered.

On ammunition itself, it's usually stamped into the casing. This is often called the *head stamp*.

