

# The 10 Commandments of Concealed Carry

By Massad Ayoob

- 1. If you carry, always carry.** The tool does no good if it is sitting at home. You cannot predict when evil will need to be faced down. Commit to your self to always carry.
- 2. Don't carry if you are not prepared to use it.** Predators sense your willingness or fear. A number of studies show that the criminal facing a prepared and willing defender often departs the situation with no shots fired by the defender. The deterrent factor is the bad guy not knowing who can fight back. Ayoob notes the irony of the person who is prepared to shoot if necessary is less likely to have to. The confidence exhibited by a prepared, aware person puts off the criminal's attack. Bad guys read body language and can pick out the sheeple (food). Be the sheepdog!
- 3. Don't let the gun make you reckless.** Contrary to what anti self-defense people believe, the gun does not pull the trigger. If anything it is a constant reminder of danger and causes the holder to be more cautious. The "higher standard of care" permit holders are held to, demands an expectation to avoid situations and locations that could escalate into a confrontation. Don't go looking for trouble, but realize it can appear anytime and anywhere.
- 4. Get the license.** About 48 of the fifty states in the U.S. have some form of permit system. Until ALL states recognize that the rights of self-defense existed BEFORE the government and do away with permits, use the system. Work for good change, study and be aware of the laws in each area as state laws vary. If your permit has recognition or reciprocity with other states, learn and follow the laws. If possible get more than one permit. If you choose to carry, do it legally.
- 5. Know what you are doing.** The key here is "learn the rules of the road." Check your sources regarding laws, use of force, rules of engagement and get competent instruction and on-going training. Many times in classes or training I witness people who can't perform under just peer pressure, let alone deadly threat. Learn, do and practice regularly. That is your responsibility.
- 6. Concealed means concealed.** Don't fall for the first-time gun carrier urge to let everyone know "you got the power!" Depending on where you live, it could be a crime to "show your piece", while elsewhere, open-carry is allowed. In my state there is no prohibition from carrying openly and loaded with a concealed permit. Yes, you can, but is it prudent? Should you try to "scare the horses" or keep it out of sight? In my area most in law enforcement do NOT know open carry is allowed and practitioners find themselves being stopped and questioned, even harassed by police because someone felt uncomfortable when they saw the gun. Better to keep it hidden and avoid the hassle and avoid losing your advantage during a bad situation. It takes planning, practice and training to do it right. Take the time to do it well.

**7. Maximize your firearms familiarity.** “The more you work with the chosen firearm, the more reflexively skilled you become in it’s emergency use and safe handling,” says Mr. Ayoob in a recent article, “Use the same action type for practice and competition.” Avail yourself of training and competitions to increase your skill level with your chosen tool of defense. You will not have time in the middle of a confrontation to learn how to run the gun! If ammunition prices are a factor due to budget constraints, consider a smaller caliber version of your self- defense gun. Rim-fire conversions for semi-auto handguns or a .22 version of your revolver, can give you inexpensive practice with skills that transfer to the larger caliber handgun. Dry practice hones a lot of skills without the expense of firing the ammunition. Just remember to do it safely.

**8. Understand the fine points.** You are responsible to know the details of carry laws in your state. Some states allow signs to be posted and no guns are allowed. Other states have signs posted but they have no force in law. Where I live, signs have no force in law, unless that location is listed as a Federal or State prohibited area. You also could be arrested for an infraction trespass violation in certain places, if you don’t leave when asked...after your gun is seen. Some states allow carry into bars, others it is not allowed. Check a credible source and never assume or go by what someone said they heard when it comes to the finer points of carrying.

**9. Carry an adequate firearm.** Experts recommend a minimum 38 S&W Special or 380 ACP as a starting point. Carry spare ammunition and consider a second or back-up gun. No, you are not paranoid, you are a conscientious, safety minded individual who has a clear view of reality. Any one else is suffering from a form mental illness called denial, a condition that could be fatal in some circumstances. I’ve heard it said that “one is none, two is one” by Clint Smith who trains at Thunder Ranch, Oregon and Phil Engeldrum, a very experienced expert said, “if you need to carry a gun, you probably need to carry two of them.” If your gun is taken as evidence after a self-defense confrontation, you made need a second, similar firearm so you can protect yourself from the “vengeful cronies of the criminal you were forced to shoot,” according to Ayoob. This also holds for a tool in for repair. Have a back-up or spare just in case.

**10. Use common sense.** Recognize the power and responsibility the gun represents. It belongs only in the hands of a person responsible enough to know and care about consequences, who cares about the safety of others, and respects human life. With many more Americans able to carry the means of defense, common sense needs a revival. It short, don’t do stupid things! Use you ability to think, plan, practice, avoid, and if needed, defend. Do it correctly and within the law.

While these are called “Commandments,” I think you can see the necessity and common sense distilled here. Review them frequently, just as you would the “other” commandments. It sure makes life a lot less complicated. Be safe and aware. The life you save will be your own or that of someone you love.