CONCEALED CARRY

HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF WHEN THE SYSTEM CAN’T OR WON’T

Surviving the Criminal Justice System...

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW BEFORE LEAVING HOME WITH YOUR GUN...

BEST CONCEALED CARRY TRAINING

How To Get a CC License in Your State

How to Choose the Holster Right for You
WHO IS TIM SCHMIDT?

You may know me as the President and Founder of the United States Concealed Carry Association (www.usconcealedcarry.com)—an organization that teaches and empowers its tens of thousands of members to confidently and responsibly protect the ones they love.

Above all though, I am a husband and father. The love I have for my wife and my children—and the responsibility and duty I have to keep them safe—have taken me many places in life. In addition to founding the USCCA and growing it to its incredible size, I hold a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and I’ve studied personal security and home defense from some of the greatest minds in the country. The reports, how-to-guides, newsletters, and the magazine I publish feature authors of the highest esteem in the law enforcement, military, and civilian realms of personal protection, family security, and armed self-defense.

The bottom line is that I know self-defense. I understand the mind of the criminal, and I understand what it takes to defeat them—mentally and physically. And I understand the mind of the concerned, prepared citizen, because … that is who I am.
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There are really two kinds of people in this world. The first kind is the person that is always looking to someone else to take care of them. You know what I’m talking about. Nowadays, it’s all we hear on the news. These people want the government to provide for them, and they want the police to protect them and provide their safety. (Some call these people sheep or sheeple!)

Then there’s the other kind of person, the person who truly believes in personal responsibility.

I can remember a saying that my Dad told me over and over as I grew up. He’d say, “Tim, you must always remember … If it is to be, it’s up to me.”

As a kid in my early teenage years I can remember thinking to myself, “Yeah Dad, I got it. You’ve told me this a thousand times.”

But you know what? That phrase, along with a whole bunch of other brilliant wisdom from my Dad, had a huge impact on me.

Now, if you’re still reading this, then I’ll bet you can relate to this concept of personal responsibility. Heck, you and I probably have a lot more in common. Yep, my Dad did an amazing job instilling in me that there is only ONE person responsible for my happiness, safety, and security.

And that one person is … ME!

My personal responsibility education helped lead to the second biggest frustration in my life.

Would This Frustrate You?

It started shortly after my first child was born. You know, everyone has certain defining moments in their lives. Times when normal, everyday events end up having a lifelong impact. I’ll never forget those first couple of days after my first son was born. My mind was flooded with all kinds of new thoughts and feelings.

There were feelings of joy, amazement, and wonder; Feelings of gratitude and responsibility—and feelings of fear and frustration.

What was I afraid of? I was completely overwhelmed by the idea that I was now responsible in every way for this new little life. Not only did I need to provide for my new son, it was also my duty to protect him (and my wife) from the evil that will always exist in our world. It hit me like a ton of bricks!

You know, I think everyone has their own self-defense revelation experience. For some it’s a friend who was attacked or mugged. For others it’s a robbery or break-in. And for others, it’s surviving a horrific experience that opened their eyes to the need to be able to defend themselves.

You see, I got off easy.

For some reason, my internal personal defense switch was tripped by the simple circumstance of becoming a new father.

I can only hope you’ll be as lucky as I was!

I found myself becoming very protective, thinking a lot about what I would do in different situations. I started learning about self-defense. I started buying books, magazines, and whatever I could get my hands on. I bought books about guns!

Growing up with my Dad, we never went hunting because Dad wasn’t a hunter. But, he did like guns and there were always guns in our house. (I still remember the first time Dad let me shoot his Smith & Wesson 5-inch .357 Magnum revolver!) So my desire to start learning about guns and how I could use them to protect my family was a natural thing to do.

And that’s when it happened.

I read an article that would change my life. The article was entitled, The Constitutional Right and Social Obligation to Carry a Gun. The article was by a guy named Robert Boatman. (Mr. Boatman has since passed away, but I did have a chance to meet him face to face and tell him how much of an impact he had on me and my family!)

This article opened my eyes to the idea of carrying a gun with me wherever I went. It made perfect sense to me and I was astonished how Mr. Boatman presented it as a social obligation. I was hooked. I needed to learn as fast as possible exactly how to do this.
Honest citizens carry concealed weapons because bad things can happen to good people—anywhere, anytime.

Many honest citizens know this, and they know that when seconds count, the police are minutes away—at best! These honest citizens take responsibility for their own safety and choose to carry a concealed weapon for the protection of their own lives and those of their loved ones. They are not vigilantes, they are not cowboys or wanna-be cops, or wanna-be killers. They are people like you and me who realize that life and family are worth protecting in a dangerous world, and they want to have a fighting chance should crime come unbidden to them. By so doing, they protect not only their own lives, but the lives of those around them. They do this by being a deterrent to those who would do us harm.

Before 1987 (when Florida laws changed to allow “shall-issue” carry permits), criminals knew it was very unlikely that their would-be victim was armed. No more! With the majority of states now being shall-issue, and with more citizens carrying guns for protection on more American streets, criminals cannot know who is armed and who is not. This deters criminals, and contributes to the decreasing trends in violent crimes nation-wide.

Carrying a gun is easier than carrying a cop. While the missions of the police officer and the armed citizen are different, guns in the hands of trained citizens can be just as effective against sudden attack as guns in the hands of trained police. The difference is, the responsibly armed citizen has the gun he carries immediately at hand when the danger strikes, and need not wait minutes or even hours for help to arrive. Any honest cop will tell you that most of the time, when they are
Citizens choose to arm themselves with a handgun for the same reason police do: to protect themselves and others from deadly danger. Handguns are more convenient for full-time carry than rifles and shotguns, and given modern ammunition, they can be effective for defensive purposes. There are other options for personal protection, such as martial arts, knives, or sub-lethal devices such as OC pepper spray and noise makers. Such devices have the disadvantage of being less effective at quickly and decisively stopping an aggressor, and they also have the added disadvantage of needing to be used at close-contact range if they are to be effective at all. By contrast, a gun delivers a powerful deterrent blow at a safer distance than can knives or pepper spray. In the face of a potentially lethal attack, the number one goal is the protection and survival of the innocent: that's you, someone you love, or another innocent person.
A wanted parole violator armed himself with a knife and tried unsuccessfully to rob a man in a car in the parking lot of a Royal Oak, Michigan convenience store. Scared off by someone shouting at him from a nearby vehicle, the knife-wielding bad guy turned on a young couple with a baby and demanded money. Hearing the commotion, a CCW holder in the parking lot drew his weapon and confronted the would-be robber, ordering him to drop the knife. He reluctantly complied, and the armed citizen successfully held him at gunpoint for police. Investigators praised the armed citizen for his quick action.

A Conway, South Carolina convenience store owner was leaving his closed store for his car one night when he was accosted by a man brandishing a gun and demanding money. The owner pulled his own legally-carried pistol, and in the ensuing exchange of gunfire, the 29-year-old robber, who had a long criminal record, was killed. The robber’s female get-away driver was arrested and charged with attempted murder and attempted armed robbery. Authorities ruled the shooting by the store owner justified.

**GUT CHECK:**
**WILL YOU BE ABLE TO PULL THE TRIGGER?**

Are you prepared to kill another human being in order to defend yourself or a loved one? Carrying a pistol concealed for self-defense is not for everyone. It is definitely not for the faint of heart—and using it is even less so! Deadly force should be a last resort, an action taken only when nothing else will work, and only when faced with the imminent threat of death or grievous bodily harm.

Deadly force is called _deadly_ because by its very nature, it is likely to kill the attacker. The point of deadly force is not to kill, although that may be the outcome of its use. It is meant to _STOP_ a criminal attack that may reasonably be seen as likely to cause death or great bodily harm if it is not defended against.

If you defend yourself with a gun or any other deadly weapon, you may kill or maim someone. No normal person wants to take a human life (which is one of society’s greatest taboos); but all normal people want to stay alive as long as possible. Sometimes, using deadly force is the only way to save your own life or the life of someone you love!

The time to think about your ability and willingness to take a life is _before_ you take up a gun for self-defense, when you can consider it in the quiet of your home, with ample time to ponder it and ask questions of yourself and others, and even pray about it. All those things will be time and effort well spent as you contemplate actions that are lifesaving, life-threatening, and likely life-changing for the victim, even if he survives.
Self-defense with a gun is a fight for survival. The stakes are, literally, life and death. Nothing less justifies using deadly force.

But no one really wins a gun fight. The best you can do, the very best you can hope to achieve in a defensive gun situation, is to keep what you have—your life, and the lives and well-being of your loved ones.

There will be consequences of your use of deadly force for self-defense, even if it is successful. One of those consequences is having to live the rest of your life knowing you may have taken someone's life or seriously injured another person. There can be serious criminal and civil consequences for even the most justified of self-defense shootings. These consequences can best be summarized by observing that there are three separate and distinct problems associated with defensive gun uses:

1. Surviving the gun fight
2. Surviving the criminal justice system
3. Surviving the civil justice system

Surviving the gun fight can be the easiest of the problems, but it is the most important. If you don't survive, there's nothing else for you to worry about—at least in this life. That makes surviving the gun fight Problem Number One. You do that by being a responsible gun owner and gun carrier, and working diligently to achieve a level of skill with your arms so that you are in the best possible position to prevail if ever you must struggle for your life with a firearm. More on that later, when we deal with training.

The best you can hope to achieve in a defensive gun situation, is to keep what you have—your life, and the lives and well-being of your loved ones.
You will almost certainly deal with the police after a defensive gun use. They will in all likelihood respond to the scene of the shooting, and they will treat it as a crime scene. They will treat you as a criminal suspect, until and unless they determine differently.

You will likely be handcuffed, you may spend a night (or more!) in jail, and you will most definitely need to explain and defend your actions to the criminal justice system: the police, prosecutors, and possibly a jury of your peers. How well you do that, and the resources you may or may not have at your disposal to help you through that process, will have a huge impact on the rest of your life.

Even the most justifiable shootings can be cast in a bad light by sloppy police work, anti-gun prosecutors looking to make a name for themselves by hanging your scalp on their belt, or by you yourself if you cannot convincingly articulate why you resorted to deadly force at that place and time. If the police or prosecutor decides criminal charges against you are appropriate, you must defend those charges.

Even a losing criminal defense is expensive, and even bad lawyers don’t work cheap! The usual rule of thumb for a criminal defense is $100,000 and it can be much more, depending on the nature and complexity of your case. While a defense of criminal charges may not be necessary in your case, it may well be, too. These things can never be predicted in advance, but they must be thoroughly considered before you decide to carry a gun concealed for self-defense and in advance of your pulling the trigger.

Assuming you survive the gunfight and your encounter with the criminal justice system, the criminal or his surviving family may sue you for using a gun to defend yourself! As a lawyer once told me while I was interviewing him about defensive gun uses in general, "If you shoot someone, you WILL get sued!"

If you are sued, you must defend the suit, or you lose by default.

The standard of proof required to win a civil suit is not beyond a reasonable doubt, like it is in a criminal trial. No! It’s by a preponderance of the evidence, which is a much lower standard. That means even if you survive the criminal trial unscathed, you could still lose the lawsuit.

The full legal aftermath of a defensive gun use, with its range of possibilities and how to prepare for them, is beyond the scope of this article, which focuses on getting a concealed carry permit; but it is something you must consider, and consider well, as you think through and decide whether carrying a concealed weapon is for you.

In Civil court, even after you have been successful in criminal court you can still be made to feel guilty. The Self-Defense SHIELD will be there to protect you one step further. The USCCA carries the policy with each of the members the beneficiary. This means that a lawyer will be provided for you to defend your good name and your livelihood.

The United States Concealed Carry Association does not want to see you become a victim of the courts after you have made the decision to protect the ones you love. The USCCA has developed an insurance backed benefit (Self Defense SHIELD) that is set up to help you after a self-defense incident has occurred. Depending on your level of membership, the Self-Defense SHIELD will help you to hire an experienced attorney who will work hard to protect you. You can see more about it at www.usconcealedcarry.com.
ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLY ARMED CITIZEN?

The responsibly armed citizen trains in the use of firearms. When you are a responsibly armed citizen, you maintain a high level of skill at arms. You study tactics and laws about use of force and self-defense. You learn to stay aware of your surroundings so you can avoid trouble or deal with it promptly and effectively if you need to.

A responsibly armed citizen is not a law enforcement officer with a duty to deter crime and seek out and apprehend criminals. That’s not the goal! The goal is to defend innocent life: your own life and the lives of those you love. As a responsibly armed citizen, you know that guns should never be brandished without need. You know you will draw the gun only when you genuinely need to do it, and that if you do need to use it, you will use it decisively and effectively, and only as much as necessary.

Carrying a concealed firearm for self-defense is both a citizen's most basic right and most awesome responsibility. If, after careful consideration and study of the matter, you are not sure it is right for you, you should not do it.
Most states require some level of training before they grant a license to carry a concealed handgun. That training typically teaches safe gun handling, basic marksmanship, and local laws about self-defense. The class teaches students where guns may and may not be legally carried. Many, but not all, states also require you to demonstrate that you can safely fire a gun.

This state-required training should be regarded as the beginning, not the end, of learning what you need to know. Permit-related training will familiarize you with the basics of handgun operation and use. It will give you a nodding acquaintance with self-defense laws, but it will not make you a responsibly armed citizen, which should be your goal to become and remain.

As a responsibly armed citizen, what’s a good goal? Try this: with your carry gun, shoot accurately (keeping all rounds fired in the center of mass of a man-sized target) out to at least 25 yards. Can you do it? Can you do it with your strong hand only? Can you do it with your support hand only? (In case you are wounded in one hand.) This may sound hard to believe, but you have to prepare for anything. You have to be ready to defend your loved ones when they need it. If your “shooting hand” is injured you have to be ready to fire with your less dominant hand. To
see articles and videos that will help you to prepare visit www.usconcealedcarry.com.

Another good goal is to learn the laws about self-defense well enough that you easily, almost reflexively, recognize situations where you are legally entitled to use deadly force. When you read the news, look for stories of violent crime. When could the victim have legally defended himself with a firearm? When could he not? What elements in the story would need to change to make deadly force appropriate and legal for the victim?

You will also want to become well-trained in situational awareness. This will help you recognize potential threats before they happen! When you see a problem coming, you can take action to AVOID a confrontation if at all possible.

This necessary level of skill comes only from study and practice at the hands of people who have themselves studied and practiced for a long time. For the responsibly armed citizen, such training never ends. There’s always more to learn. Laws about self-defense change at the whim of legislatures and judges, and you must stay abreast of those changes. Maintaining your physical skills and your knowledge of the law is the duty you take up when you decide to carry a gun for the defense of yourself and your loved ones.

Finding a trainer is not difficult. A web search or telephone book will yield many in your area. Finding good ones is a little harder. Check the gun store where you bought your firearm to see if they offer courses in self-defense and handgun tactics. Ask around at your gun club or shooting range. Talk to local police or contact the NRA at www.nrahq.org/education or call them at (800) 672-3888.

Check gun magazines for ads and training reports for nationally-recognized firearms instructors. The USCCA is friends with some of the top trainers in the country. Check out www.usconcealedcarry.com for more information. The trainers featured in those ads and magazines have national reputations for a reason, and instruction from them is usually well worth the price. “You get what you pay for,” is as true in the gun world as anywhere else, and getting good training in gun-handling skills is more important than in almost any other endeavor.
As an American, you have a huge advantage when you want to carry a concealed pistol. Every citizen and legal resident has the right to keep and bear arms, and there are more firearms available to the average U.S. citizen than anywhere else on the planet.

Defensive carry handguns will typically be of two types: revolver or semi-auto pistol. While available calibers range from .22 to .50 Action Express, the usual caliber range for serious self-defense consideration starts at .380 ACP and goes to .45 ACP, with stops along the way at .38 Special, .357 Magnum, 9mm, and .40 S&W.

Until police departments moved to the semi-auto pistol to arm their officers in the 1980s, the six-shot revolver, usually in .38 Special, or its more powerful big brother, the .357 Magnum, was the standard sidearm for America’s thin blue line. The modern double-action revolver is inherently safe, with few moving parts to go wrong. It is simple to operate, easy to learn to use (but difficult to shoot well), capable of excellent accuracy, and when loaded with today’s ammunition designed specifically for self-defense, will give good service to the responsibly armed citizen. The chief drawback of the revolver is its capacity of five or six rounds, which some find to be too few.

The other choice is a semi-automatic pistol, most commonly in calibers .380 ACP, 9mm, .40 S&W, and .45 ACP. The advantages of the semi-auto are larger ammunition capacity, faster reloads, and greater ease of concealment. Since a semi-auto does not have a bulky cylinder, they are flatter and a little easier to conceal than a revolver. The downside is their having more moving parts and thus more things to go wrong, which makes for a greater tendency to malfunction than a revolver. But with modern production techniques, proper training, and proper maintenance on the part of the shooter, semi-automatic pistols are capable of great reliability, and are widely chosen for concealed carry.

Try out several revolvers and pistols in the different recommended calibers. While shopping for your carry gun, you should know that what you enjoy holding in the shop...
may not feel quite so good in your hand when you shoot it! For this reason, if possible, get to a shop that allows you to rent firearms and try them out on their range before you buy. Your choice for a self-defense sidearm should be the one you can shoot most comfortably and most accurately, and that you will carry every time you walk out your door.

Given careful shopping, and the very wide range of handguns developed and tailored specifically for the U. S. concealed carry market, there is no reason your choice of a daily carry gun cannot be that of a powerful and concealable weapon in one of the effective calibers mentioned above. Once you choose one, practice with it until you can quickly and consistently hit the center of a man-sized target at ranges from three feet to 25 yards.

Choosing a handgun can be difficult, but the United States Concealed Carry Association has a great list of valuable tools for you to reference when making your decision. Simply go to https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/concealed-carry-magazine/issue-archive/ for great content from some of the Nation’s most experienced gun trainers and experts.

Self-defense ammunition is the next important part of a self-defense system. It must be accurate, reliable, and capable of delivering a hard hit. Any effective defensive round must hit its target, preferably stay inside its target, and deliver enough power on impact to stop that target from continuing aggressive action against the intended victim.

Your best bet for defensive ammunition includes a hollowpoint bullet, which is designed to expand on impact. You may also choose ammunition with a frangible bullet, which is designed to come apart on impact. Both of these ammunition types dump the bulk of their energy into the target and deliver maximum energy where it is needed the most. Both of them put the brakes on when they hit the target, so they are less likely to go through the bad guy and hit an innocent bystander. All these factors combine to make hollowpoint and frangible rounds good choices for civilian self-defense.

Modern hollowpoint and frangible rounds hit the target accurately and provide a good chance of stopping an aggressor. If you’re not sure what ammunition or bullet shape to choose, check what your local law enforcement agencies are using. Police officers carry guns for a living, and their departments have a strong interest in ammunition that will help their officers stay safe. Whatever ammunition they adopt is likely a decent bet for you.
Once you choose a gun to carry, you need to carry it. Your carry gear and mode is just as personal a choice as that of your handgun and ammunition. You want your mode of carry to be convenient, very discreet, and comfortable. With proper design and construction of the holster/carry system, even a full-size handgun can be carried comfortably and discreetly all day.

Carry modes vary from strong side, back pocket, front pocket, shoulder holster, small-of-the-back, ankle holsters, off-body carry in a purse, briefcase or fanny pack and just about anything in-between you can think of. I know people who carry the new Ruger LC9 in 9mm in their strong-side front trouser pocket, with an extra magazine of ammo in the weak-side pocket. Some like strong-side hip carry for a full-size 1911 Government Model .45 under a jacket or shirt; some prefer a weak-side shoulder holster for a short-barreled 5-shot Smith & Wesson Chiefs Special in .38 Special caliber. It truly is a matter of personal preference. Give thought to how you typically go through your day. Are you in a car a lot? If so, perhaps a shoulder holster may be for you. Are you usually in a coat and tie while at work? That may make it easier to discreetly carry a full-sized semi-auto pistol most of the time. Perhaps a small-frame semi-auto in .380ACP or 9mm in a strong-side front pocket holster may fit the bill. Give thought to your typical routine and how you dress; try out different carry modes and go with what works for you. If you are like most responsibly armed citizens, after a while you will have a drawer or box with holsters you tried and retired for something else. That’s okay. Being a responsibly armed citizen is a journey as well as a destination. If we’re lucky, we all learn and grow over time. It’s the same with guns and gear. It’s an art form, not a science. The important thing is to find what’s right for YOU, to know when and how to use your gun to good effect, and to carry 24/7 whenever it is possible to do so.
Until 1934, guns were unregulated in the United States. That was the year the National Firearms Act made it illegal to possess a submachine gun unless a $200 excise tax was paid to the U.S. Treasury. Interestingly, Congress did not attempt to prohibit the possession, manufacture or sale of machine guns, instead opting to discourage and thus limit their ownership through the federal government’s taxing authority. In 1934, $200 was the equivalent of $3,277 in 2012. Why do it that way? Simply because at that time, few people, including lawyers, judges, and legal scholars, questioned that the Second Amendment meant what it said about the right of the people to keep and bear arms not being infringed.

That changed with the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA68), passed in the wake of the John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinations. To own a gun today, one must be a U.S. citizen or legal Resident Alien. Persons prohibited from owning firearms under GCA68 include:

- Those convicted of felonies and certain misdemeanors except where state law reinstates rights, or removes disability.
- Fugitives from justice.
- Unlawful users of certain depressant, narcotic, or stimulant drugs.
- Those adjudicated as mental defectives or incompetents or those committed to any mental institution and currently containing a dangerous mental illness.
- Non-US citizens, unless permanently immigrating into the U.S. or in possession of a hunting license legally issued in the U.S.
- Illegal Aliens.
- Those who have renounced U.S. citizenship.
- Minors defined as under the age of eighteen for long guns and handguns, with the exception of Vermont, eligible at age sixteen.
• Persons convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.
• Persons under indictment for a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than one year are ineligible to receive, transport, or ship any firearm or ammunition.

As long as you are not in one of the prohibited categories, you are federally eligible to own firearms in the U.S. and to apply for a Concealed Carry Permit in most states.

State and local laws regarding gun ownership vary. Most closely follow the federal requirements, but a few do not. Check the law in your state for the particular requirements, and follow them scrupulously. You can check out all of the details on our website at https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/travel/get-your-ccw-permit/ for a complete listing of each states Attorney General and the specifics of gun ownership and CCW Permit regulations.

Forty-nine states now allow some form of concealed carry. Four states allow “Constitutional Carry,” that is, concealed carry without a state-issued permit. Three of those states also allow citizens to voluntarily apply for a carry permit.

Thirty-eight states are officially “shall-issue” states. In shall-issue states, the requirements for getting a concealed carry permit are laid down by law. If you meet the requirements, the state shall issue the permit. Your right to carry in these states cannot be thwarted by a lone bureaucrat.

In ten states, the laws are “may-issue.” May-issue states also have a list of requirements laid down by law. When you meet these requirements, the state may issue your permit—or it may not, if the pertinent authorities decide not to do it. Two of these states are shall-issue in practice, but they are still technically may-issue by law.

Illinois and the District of Columbia are “no issue” jurisdictions. In these areas, no law-abiding citizens may carry a concealed firearm—although a glance at the headlines shows us that the criminals certainly do!

If you live in a state that is shall-issue, your task is simple: Find out the legal requirements for a concealed carry permit, meet them, apply for your permit, and enjoy your new carry privileges. Shall-issue states typically have eligibility requirements pertaining to:

• Age
• Residency
• Substance abuse
• Criminal history (felonies are an automatic disqualifier, as are domestic violence convictions)
• Firearms possession
• Training in the legal use of force, self-defense laws,

and marksmanship instruction

If you live in a may-issue state, getting a CCW is more difficult, and the outcome is far from certain. Most may-issue states have criteria similar to shall-issue states, but some do not. Find out the requirements of your locality, try to meet them, and hope you get it. If you don’t, if your jurisdiction has an appeal process, and if you can afford it, appeal the adverse decision as far as the system and your resources allow.

The United States Concealed Carry Association has an active forum that can often answer questions that you may have. The members of the USCCA are a helpful and supportive group and may be able to share with you the methods that have been a proven success. Visit our forum at https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/forum/forum.php
To help lawful gun owners avoid having to deal with many different laws when they traveled with guns, Congress passed The Firearm Owners Protection Act of 1986 (FOPA). Under that law, you cannot be convicted of a firearms offense in a state that has strict gun control laws if you are just passing through on your way to and from places where your firearms are legal.

This law protects you only if:

- You are just passing through the jurisdiction, making only brief stops such as for fuel;
- You are legally allowed to own firearms;
- Your gun is legal at both ends of your journey;
- Your gun is unloaded;
- Your gun is not accessible to you or to anyone else in the vehicle; and
- Your ammunition is not accessible to you or to anyone else in the vehicle.

This means you should unload the gun, place it inside a locked container, and put the container in the trunk of your car. Your ammunition should be treated the same way, but in a separate container. If your vehicle does not have a trunk, you should put the locked container out of sight and as far away from the passenger areas as you can. It is not legal to store the gun in the console or glove box.

Unfortunately, some states require more caution than others. New York and New Jersey are infamous among gun people for their regular and long-standing practice of making felony arrests of gun owners whom police find transporting guns in good faith and in accordance with FOPA. Rather than honor FOPA, they knowingly and deliberately arrest the gun owners on felony and force them to go to trial to claim FOPA as an affirmative defense after the fact. Some New York and New Jersey judges and prosecutors follow the federal law, but many do not, and many otherwise honest and law-abiding gun owners permanently lose their gun rights following the felony conviction. The best course of action for gun owners is to entirely avoid New York (city and state) and New Jersey when traveling with guns.
Concealed carry permits are not recognized everywhere. The federal government and all states have places where they do not allow any firearms, much less concealed ones, regardless of the permits you have. The places off-limits usually include, but are not limited to, the sterile area of airports, courtrooms, jails, police stations, and school zones. Every jurisdiction has its own rules.

Unlike a driver’s license, states are not required to honor concealed carry permits issued by other states (although some states do have reciprocal agreements with some states that have similar laws). Because of this, and because the off-limits areas differ from one place to another, you will need to be prudent when traveling outside your home territory. The July 2011 issue of *Concealed Carry Magazine* ran an article that went into the subject of traveling armed in some depth. You can view that story here: [https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/ccm-columns/features/seeing-the-usa-while-legally-armed/](https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/ccm-columns/features/seeing-the-usa-while-legally-armed/). An internet resource that includes thorough coverage of state laws governing concealed carry for all 50 states and the District of Columbia is HandgunLaw.US, at the website of the same name (http://www.handgunlaw.us/).

Thanks to the dramatic increase in the number of concealed carry permits over the past 25 years and rising public demand, as mentioned above, many states have established reciprocity procedures allowing carry permits issued by one state to be honored in some other states. For example, 20 other states will honor a concealed firearm permit issued in Nevada. Nevada itself will honor both resident and non-resident carry permits issued by 12 other states.

The list of which states honor permits from other states (and which state’s permits they will honor) is constantly changing. Before you travel outside your own state, you should always check to see if your carry permit is valid where you are going. You should also brush up on the rules of carry in that jurisdiction. The USCCA maintains reciprocity information on their website at (www.usconcealedcarry.com/travel). It is a powerful tool for you to use, and is always available to reference prior to traveling across any state lines.

**CAN I CARRY EVERYWHERE I GO?**
Who do you tell about your defensive handgun? While many people may be understanding and supportive, many others may not share your enthusiasm for carrying a firearm for personal defense, and may be uncomfortable, or even offended, by your carrying in their presence. Others may be unable to keep from talking about it and drawing often unwanted attention to the fact that you are carrying.

Personally, I focus on the word concealed in the phrase “concealed carry,” and choose to tell very few people that I routinely carry a pistol on or about my person almost every time I walk out my door—and usually inside that door as well! Your spouse or significant other will certainly know, and close friends may know, but I keep the number in the know as small as possible. Most people don’t need to know that you are carrying, and if a situation arises where its use is needed in their presence, they will find out soon enough!

This gives rise to another important social consideration of carrying a gun: What do family and friends do should you need to use your gun when you are with them? Unless you and they are properly trained in advance of the event, it can needlessly complicate things at best, and lead to possibly tragic results at worst. The short answer to this problem for me is: The one with the gun is in command. I intend to only draw my weapon in extremis, when there is no other choice except to use the gun or see me or other innocents die or be seriously harmed. My wife and close friends know they are to do what I tell them in such situ-
ations, and to get out of the way and under cover and stay there until I tell them otherwise.

Another important topic is your social contacts after a defensive gun use. This is the confrontation with the criminal justice system discussed earlier. You’ve defended your life with a gun, and the police have you in custody. Your one phone call is to your spouse. Does he or she know what to do in that situation? A full discussion of this topic, though of vital importance, is outside the scope of this survey report, but it is of such importance that I commend to your attention the serious, deep, and frequent study of the legal aftermaths of a defensive shooting.

For now, give serious and sober thought to what you will do in the immediate aftermath of a defensive shooting. For example, what do you say when you call the police, whether and when you need to call an attorney, should you ask your attorney to come to the scene, etc.? Probably most important is: Do you have an attorney lined up ahead of time that you can call as needed? After that, how will you pay the legal expenses associated with even a righteous shooting, one where you are not criminally charged or sued civilly after the fact? The very worst of all possible times to look for a lawyer is when you are sitting in a jail cell after successfully defending your life with a gun. You need to think about it NOW, when you are calm, when your life and freedom are not in jeopardy, and you can take your time, ask for advice, study the available literature (there’s plenty out there!), study the several products on the market designed to aid you in this very situation (including paying legal fees), and choose the one that best meets your needs and your purse, all in the quiet of your own home with no pressure on you at all! The Self-Defense SHIELD consists of an insurance policy owned by USCCA, Inc. that designates the members as beneficiaries. No individual underwriting is required. The USCCA, Inc. owns and pays for the policy while YOU, as a PLUS member, automatically get the benefits. This liability insurance policy is underwritten by the Savers Property and Casualty Insurance Company a subsidiary of the Meadowbrook Insurance Group. Meadowbrook Insurance Group, Inc. and its insurance company subsidiaries have been rated A- (Excellent) by A.M. Best Company. In 2010, Meadowbrook Insurance Group, Inc. wrote $801,900,000 in policies. See more information at https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/membership/
If you don’t do anything else recommended in this report, do these two things:

1. Get good professional instruction in firearms tactics and practice regularly with your carry gun; and study the rules of self-defense and use of lethal force in your area.

2. Make adequate arrangements ahead of time for the criminal and civil aftermath of a defensive shooting, including legal information, identifying and retaining an attorney who will advise you, and defend you in court if needed; and securing one or more of the products on the market for meeting and paying for those legal needs.

As you start your journey to being a responsible armed citizen, range buddies and friends from shooting clubs and gun-rights organizations can be good sources of information and support in general. They can point you to good training sources in your area, and they can keep you from reinventing the wheel in many ways. You still must do your own due diligence, though, to make sure their advice will work for you. There are numerous internet sites catering to the needs, serious and social, of CCW holders and gun enthusiasts in general. The U.S. Concealed Carry Association has a wealth of pertinent information available with membership, and much advice is also free for the taking from their website, www.usconcealedcarry.com.

HELPFUL RESOURCE

A good starting point for your armed self-defense journey is the U.S. Concealed Carry Association. Visit the USCCA at www.usconcealedcarry.com where you will have the opportunity to watch a webinar that further explains some of the things discussed in this report. You will also receive a FREE gift from USCCA President and Founder Tim Schmidt just for attending. Taking the time to read this report shows that you have taken the first step in being a responsibly armed citizen, joining the USCCA takes that step one further.
Learn More About Becoming a Member of The USCCA...

Concealed Carry Magazine
You'll get 8 BIG Issues per year of Concealed Carry Magazine, delivered right to your door every 45 days in a discreet, plastic-wrapped, cover. These 100% content-rich, 64 page, zero advertisement issues combine entertainment with information that you simply can’t get elsewhere. And because we don’t accept advertisements, you can TRUST the no B.S. articles and Gun & Gear reviews... You’ll also get instant online access to 7+ years of Concealed Carry Magazine back-issues, right on our secure website.

Exclusive Reports For USCCA Members
Every month, we’ll send you a brand new report, 100% FREE. These exclusive reports range from topics like home defense and advanced handgun training to shooting accuracy and quick and easy legal preparation... You’ll get immediate access to 14 reports ($209 retail value), and you’ll be the first to know every time we create a new one.

Unlimited USCCA Website Access
You get instant access to over 1,400 articles, reviews, training, case studies, and real stories on our 100% secure website. This is hundreds of dollars of life-saving information that you’ll get immediate, unlimited access to.

Self-Defense SHIELD
This insurance-backed membership benefit ensures that when you use your gun in justifiable self-defense, the USCCA will have your back and pay for the pro-2nd Amendment lawyer of your choosing. With up to $300,000 of legal protection, this is the missing weapon in most armed citizens’ arsenals...

And Much, Much More! Please visit: https://www.usconcealedcarry.com/membership/