

# Common Firearms Familiarization



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## Introduction

- The purpose of this course is to make officers aware of some of the most common weapons either used in law enforcement or encountered by law enforcement in the course of their duties.
- Some of the weapons may seem very alien depending on the region/area the officer normally works; however, those weapons are common in other areas and this course is offered nationwide.



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## Revolvers

- Primarily two kinds of revolvers: Single Action & Double Action
  - There are double action only revolvers that have internal or bobbed hammers
  - Single action
    - Usually load through a side gate
    - Punch out spent shells with built in spring rod (one at a time)
    - Requires being cocked prior to pulling trigger to fire




(Black powder revolvers are not being covered here but would be single action revolvers with a different loading regimen)



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## Revolvers

- Double action
- Usually load through "break out" cylinder
- Punch out spent shells with spring loaded ejector rod (all shells at same time)
- Pulling the trigger cocks the hammer AND drops the hammer to fire.
- Usually can be fired single-action as well if you manually cock the hammer before pulling the trigger




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## Semi-Automatic Handguns

- Single-action and double-action but also safe-action and/or striker-fired

**SINGLE ACTION:**

- Hammer must be manually cocked, either by pull or by working the action, prior to firing.
- Government Model 1911 style handguns have a slide lock (also sometimes called a thumb safety) and a grip safety.
- Loading the chamber, having the hammer cocked and the slide locked is where the term "cocked and locked" comes from.

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## Semi-Automatic Handguns

- **DOUBLE ACTION**
  - Have a hammer
  - Typically double action first shot and single action until decocked
  - There are double action only variants but they are fairly rare
  - Some have manual safeties
  - Some have a decocking lever but no manual safety




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## Semi-Automatic Handguns

- Safe Action / Striker Fired
  - Typically have no external hammer
  - May have an indicator that protrudes from the rear of the slide to indicate when the weapon is "cocked"
  - May or may not have a grip safety




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## Shotguns

- Can be pump action, semi-automatic or even semi-automatic box-magazine fed
- Typically hold ammo in tubular magazine under the barrel
- Most popular is 12g although 20g and .410 are common. 16g, 8g and 10g used to also be common.
- Used to be THE most common long gun in a patrol vehicle. Replaced in many places now by an AR-style rifle

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## Semi-Automatic Rifles

- NOT a select-fire weapon that fires multiple shots with a single pull of the trigger. ONE shot fired per pull of the trigger.
- Fed from a tubular or box magazine
- Calibers range from .22 to .50BMG
- AR-style rifles are very common in LE use today
- May be chambered for a handgun caliber, i.e. 9mm, .40S&W




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## Bolt-action Rifles

- Manually operated loading system.
- Internal box magazine.
- Operated by unlocking the bolt (turn the handle up), pulling it fully to the rear (ejects spent cartridge) and then pushing it forward (stripping and feeding the next round) and then locking the action (turn the handle down).
- Considered most accurate for long range engagements.




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## Lever-action Rifles

- Manually operated loading system.
- Under-barrel tubular magazine. Ammo is fed into the tube via a side opening under the ejection port.
- Operated by opening the action (rotate the lever down, will eject spent cartridge if any, and cock the weapon), and then rotate the lever back up (will feed the next round into the chamber and lock the action).
- Popular for hunting and some sport shooting activities.

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## Other

- This is a very basic overview of the most common weapons.
- There is a wide assortment of other weapons that are different from those covered here in some minor way.
- On the street, if you're recovering a weapon and aren't sufficiently knowledgeable of the design/action, don't try to clear it.
  - Secure it.
  - Call for someone who does know and can clear it safely.
  - Not knowing is nothing to be embarrassed about. Having an accidental discharge because you're guessing at what you're doing is not only embarrassing but also very dangerous.



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