

# Improvised Weapons Identification & Awareness



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## Introduction

- Welcome to this course on improvised weapons.
- An improvised weapon is anything that can harm you or distract you.
- Awareness is key.
  - Imagination knows no limits.
- Better safe than sorry.
- You can always give an object back after you've proven it's not a threat.
- "Terry frisk" for weapons takes on a new meaning if you can articulate WHY you felt something you thought was a weapon.



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## Introduction

- What you'll see herein is not just an assortment of weapons manufactured by creative (potential) criminals at home.
- Guns, knives, stun guns and other weapons are sold commercially in formats intended to make people not notice them.
- Look for:
  - The cell phone gun and the cell phone TOY gun.
  - Non-metal knives



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## Guns

- We tend to think of guns in their most popular form.
- For the purposes of this course, we have to “think outside the box” and see that a firearm can come in many shapes and appearances.
- All of them have this one thing in common:
  - They are designed to fire a projectile at high enough speed to be penetrative to the human system, and with potential to cause severe injury or death.

Let's take a look at some of them...



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## Guns - Bangstick

- Single shot, usually screw-open and closed.
- Some have a safety block/pin that prevents them from being fired accidentally.
- Press fired against the target.
- A “contact weapon.”
- Usually handgun calibers or shotgun shells.




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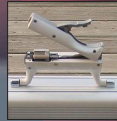
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## Guns – Briefcase Handle

- Hidden revolver type weapon
- Small caliber
- “Point shooting” by requirement
- Squeeze fired



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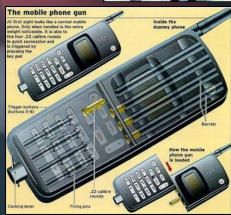
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## Guns – Cellphone Gun

- Four shots of small caliber
- Fired by pressing particular buttons
- Not a “new” cell phone design
- Never disregard “old” cell phones



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## Guns – Modern Cellphone Gun

- When folded, looks a lot like modern day smart phones.
- About the size of an iPhone Pro.
- Two shots of .380ACP
- Fold down grip.
- Commercially manufactured.
- NOTE: The bottom photo is a TOY that fires rubber projectiles.



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## Guns – Cigarette Case

- Is that a cigarette case with a lighter in the side pocket?
- Very rare item.
- Takes a few moments to assemble.
- “Lighter” is actually the single shot gun
- “Case” is a suppressor



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## Guns – Cigarette Pack

- Unlike the previous slide cigarette case, cigarette packs are still quite common.
- Single shot guns can be hidden inside.
- Never assume that an item is simply what it appears to be.
- Firing button hidden inside label.
- Packet could appear to be new –
- Unopened and still function.



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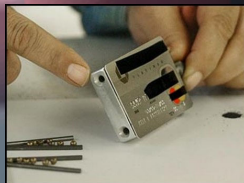
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## Guns- “Credit Card” shotgun

- As shown, the length and width of a credit card.
- Two barrels that fire up to 7 BBs each.
- Manufactured and sold commercially in Minnesota.
- Sold as a defensive weapon only.



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## Guns-Hunting Knife Revolver

- .22 caliber revolver hidden in the knife's grip
- Handle breaks open to empty spent shells and reload fresh.
- Fired by compression trigger in the grip.
- "Aim" by pointing blade.



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## Guns-Maglite Shotgun

- Same size as 3-D cell Maglite
- Spring loaded firing mechanism
- .410 gauge
- Single shot
- NFA controlled item



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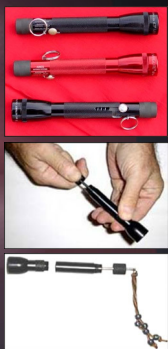
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## Guns-MiniMag Gun

- .22 or .380 caliber
- Single shot weapon
- Not a functioning flashlight
- Spring action fired
- Approximately the same size as a Maglite Mini-Mag.



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## Guns- Pistol Pen

- Once available at some gun shops in the southwest
- .32ACP
- Single shot
- Spring fired



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## Guns – Tire Gauge Gun

- Spring loaded single shot
- .22 long rifle
- Cap screws off to load the round
- Once loaded and cap screwed back on, it's pulled, pointed and released to fire
- Looks like a regular tire pressure gauge except it's missing the plastic piece that displays pressure.



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## Guns – Walking Stick Shotgun

- Any cane can potentially be a firearm
- The "barrel" is however long the stick is
- Would be a single shot weapon



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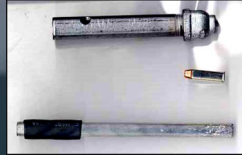
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## Guns – Common Zip Gun

- Common and easy to make
- One length of tube/pipe, internal diameter would equal the caliber loaded
- Outer shell with a cap and “pin” inside the cap.
- When cap/pin is pushed in hard enough, weapon is discharged.



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## Edged Weapons



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## Edged Weapons

- We tend to think of “edged weapons” in terms of knives, razor blades and other common cutting tools; tools designed to perform that task: cut.
- Anything sharp enough can be used as a cutting edge (an edged weapon) and sharp edges can be easily concealed in innocent looking places.
- It only takes a ¼” deep cut to cause potentially life-threatening blood loss.
- It only takes ½” deep cut to cause permanent disability.



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## Edged Weapons

- Pretty obvious:
- Shiv attached to bottom of tube
- Any sharp piece of metal or strong enough plastic will do
- Easily hidden and accessed weapon on potentially any bicycle



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## Edged Weapons

- "Dipstick knife" – hidden in the oil fill cap on a motorcycle
- Takes a few moments to deploy
- Always available once screwed into place



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## Edged Weapons

- Hairbrush knife
- Can be hidden inside the brush segment OR
- Can simply be a sharpened handle
- How many hairbrushes have you found inside purses or vehicle center consoles?



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## Edged Weapons

- Pen dagger –
- The size of a common ink pen
- Ink reservoir and writing end replaced with a metal, plastic or steel spike



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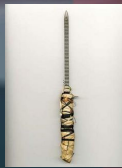
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## Edged Weapons

- Homemade shivs –
- Can be manufactured from anything that will hold a sharp edge or penetrating
- Toothbrush, spoon, any piece of metal
- There is a documented “kill” using an MRE spoon by an Army Ranger



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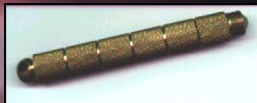
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## Edged Weapons

- Kubotan knife
- Two pieces that screw apart
- Blade is hidden inside handle
- Once screwed back together, the handle is the grip with a 3”+ blade protruding
- Have seen these used as keychains



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## Edged Weapons

- Lipstick knives
- Available commercially
- How many lipsticks have you found in purses or vehicle center consoles / glove compartments?




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## Edged Weapons

- Paracord bracelet knife
- Hidden edge in the clasp mechanism
- Commercially available
- Can be homemade if you buy the clasp mechanism online




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## Edged Weapons

- Pen knife –
- Sometimes they even have a working writing end.
- Edge hidden in handle
- Not recognized unless you open the pen

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## Edged Weapons

- Carbon fiber or plastic knives
- Commercially available
- Edge can be sharpened with a nail file
- Not detectable by magnetometers but seen by density scanners



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## Edged Weapons

- Carbon fiber/plastic folding knives
- Common size as folding pocket knives
- Edge sharpened with a nail file
- Capable of puncturing / slashing
- Not detectable by magnetometers but seen by density scanners



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## Edged Weapons

- Playing cards / credit cards
- Can be metal or plastic
- Sharpened corners or sides
- Playing cards usually slightly thicker than a normal playing card
- Credit cards same size and thickness
- Some criminals have sharpened actual credit card edges/corners for slashing



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## Edged Weapons

- Slash ring
- Difficult to wear 24/7, so likely put on just before use
- When worn it's used by slapping and dragging on the victim's skin surface.
- Sufficient to use through a layer of clothing



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## Other

- Other weapons that can cause blunt force trauma, burns, temporary or permanent blindness and more must remain within our scope of awareness.
- Hidden handcuff keys present a threat as well and can be manufactured from a wide variety of items.
- The limit of improvised weapons is the same as the limit of imagination and creativity on the part of those who would harm us.



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## Other

- Cell phone stun gun
- NOT like a TASER – does not fire probes
- Surface contact weapon only
- Can cause contact pain and distraction



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## Other

- Coin purse sap
- Weight is equivalent to amount of change in purse end
- Snaps used to hold it over belt
- Or can be carried, weighted end down, in a pocket
- Bludgeon weapon



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## Other

- Belt buckle handcuff key
- Easily overlooked
- Excellent escape tool
- Another good reason to always handcuff behind the back



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## Other

- Various homemade handcuff keys
- Creative criminals can make them out of anything
- Only need to be big enough to hold and function
- Can be very light and hidden anywhere



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## Other

- Safety pin handcuff key
- Easily made by bending end of safety pin end
- Look at bottom image. Pin may not fit flush if bent as shown.
- May still be pinned into clothing





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