

THE DEFENDER



A publication of
Virginia Citizens Defense League
Defending Your Right To Defend Yourself

Summer 2017

TRAVELING WITH A FIREARM

by Kenneth R. van Wyk, VCDL Executive Member

Do you travel outside of Virginia? Do you take a firearm with you whenever you lawfully can? If not, why not?

If you're like many people, perhaps you didn't think it was legal to bring a firearm when traveling by air or rail. Or perhaps you're overwhelmed by the laws and regulations and simply don't want to risk running afoul of them. Well then, this article is for you.

Let me start by saying this article should not be interpreted as legal counsel. While I believe the guidance here is lawful, if you really want legal counsel, you should ask a lawyer. Rest assured I am not a lawyer.

So, for starters, yes it is feasible to travel with a firearm. I've done it dozens of times on a few airlines without any major problems. I am a traveling consultant, so I have many occasions every year to do so. If you value your Second Amendment rights, I urge you to follow suit — once you've done a bit of homework up front to ensure you're on the right side of the law.

I've condensed here my main tips for traveling by air or rail with a firearm. I've done my best to keep them concise, and I welcome questions. Feel free to contact me via email at ken@vanwyk.org.

Know the Laws.

You may well know all the pertinent gun laws here in Virginia, but our 50 states have 50 wildly different sets of laws. It's up to you to know the laws in each state you plan on traveling to or through. The things that make the biggest difference tend to be each state's list of prohibited areas, and whether or not you have a duty to inform a police officer during an encounter with the law.

I use a fabulous and inexpensive (but not free) app on my iPhone for this. It's called CCW, and it's available for iPhones as well as Android phones. It'll set you back a couple of dollars, \$1.99 at press time, but serves as a great reference for gun laws.

Using CCW, I configure the permits I hold, and it shows me which states I can lawfully carry in. It also gives me a quick reference for each state's firearms laws. I double check this every time I travel to another state. Every single time.

Get the Right Permits

Our Virginia permits are pretty good, as they are recognized by a large number of states. What matters most, though, is whether they are recognized by the states you will be traveling in or through. If you need states that aren't "covered" by your Virginia permit, consider getting one or more additional permits for those other states. It may well be possible without a whole lot of difficulty. I have a Virginia CHP, but also non-resident permits in Utah, Pennsylvania, and Minnesota, for example. With that complement of permits, I can lawfully carry in 40 of our 50 states, which suits most of my business needs pretty well.

Here too, the CCW app gives you a handy reference for each state's permitting process and requirements. Some states require training; some states require range qualification; some states require fingerprints be submitted, and so on.

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VCDL Public Meeting Dates

Thursday, Sep 21—Annandale
Wednesday, Oct 25—Annandale
Thursday, Nov 16—Annandale
Thursday, Dec 21—Annandale

Additional meetings held throughout the state are announced in VA-ALERT and posted on the calendar at www.vcdl.org/calendar

Annandale meetings are held at the Mason Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale, VA 22003
Fellowship 7:30; Meeting 8:00 PM

EDITOR'S NOTE

We're excited to roll out the new look for The Defender. We've tried to make it easier to read, a solid mix of original material and well-tested items published elsewhere, and relevant to all — the shooter, the trainer, the activist, the grass-roots power, the voter — and are grateful most of our readers fit several of those labels. Please let us know what you think at TheDefender@vcdl.org.

We are happy to print original materials submitted to the above address. Your editor will be happy to help you with wording, but the ideas must be your own. Only non-partisan pieces, please, and if you include artwork, ensure you own the copyright or have a release. We will also re-print Letters to the Editor if they're emailed to us. Check the publication rules; some terms of usage specify that you will not publish your letter elsewhere. **Deadlines** for submission are the **5th day of February, May, August and November**, and will be used as space permits.

For the Fall 2017 issue, we'd particularly like to hear members' thoughts on why they go, or don't go, to Lobby Day each January. We'll publish the best of the responses.

Tess Ailshire
Editor



PRESIDENT'S PEN

How would you like to be able to carry in Maryland, DC, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, California, and Hawaii?

During the slower summer months, VCDL has started a major effort to get national concealed carry reciprocity passed into law. There is already a bill to do that, H.R. 38, currently sitting in a Congressional House Judiciary subcommittee.

President Trump has said repeatedly that he will sign such a bill into law, so it is just a matter of getting the House into motion to get the bill out of committee and onto the Floor.

Once it passes there, we will work on the Senate. Senator Kaine is against it, like he is with any good gun bills, but getting Senator Warner to support it might be possible.

Here are the steps we are asking our members to do, as well as spreading the word to everyone they know, in Virginia and outside of Virginia (number 4 is URGENT):

1. Contact Congressman Bob Goodlatte. If you are a constituent, call 202-225-5431 and urge him to cosponsor and to get H.R. 38 out of his Judiciary committee. If you are not a constituent, use this number instead: 202-225-3951
2. Contact your House of Representatives member and urge them to cosponsor H.R. 38, if they haven't already done so:

BEYER, DONALD S. JR., Phone: (202) 225-4376
BRAT, DAVE, Phone: (202) 225-2815
COMSTOCK, BARBARA, Phone: (202) 225-5136
CONNOLLY, GERALD E., Phone: (202) 225-1492
GARRETT, THOMAS A. JR, Phone: (202) 225-4711
GRIFFITH, H. MORGAN, Phone: (202) 225-3861
MCEACHIN, A. DONALD, Phone: (202) 225-6365
SCOTT, BOBBY, Phone: (202) 225-8351
TAYLOR, SCOTT, Phone: (202) 225-4215
WITTMAN, ROBERT J., Phone: (202) 225-4261

3. Contact the Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan, and urge him to get H.R. 38 out of the House and on to the Senate: (202) 225-0600

VCDL will also be working on the Hearing Protection Act, which will make silencers/suppressors available with a normal firearm background check! No more waiting for months and having to pay a \$200 tax for each item.

Philip A. Cleave

UPCOMING GUN SHOWS AND EVENTS

To volunteer to help with a VCDL table at a gun show, contact its coordinator listed. For non-gun show events, contact the stated coordinator. **Verify all schedules**; this list is correct as of press time.

CHANTILLY—Dulles Expo Center

Sep 29-Oct 1 Nov 17-19 Dec 29-31

DALE CITY — VFW Post 1503

Oct 7-8 Dec 2-3

DOSWELL—Farm Bureau Center at Meadow Event Park

Oct 21-22 Dec 9-10

FISHERSVILLE—Augusta Expo

Sep 9-10 Dec 9-10

FREDERICKSBURG — Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center

Sep 16-17 Oct 28-29 Dec 16-17

HAMPTON—Hampton Roads Convention Center

Sep 23-24 Nov 25-26

HARRISONBURG—Rockingham County Fairgrounds

Oct 7-8 Nov 25-26

MANASSAS — PWC Fairgrounds

Nov 4-5 Dec 2-3

NORFOLK—Norfolk Scope

Sep 9-10 Nov 4-5

RICHMOND—6807 Midlothian Road (Kmart at Midlothian)

Aug 26-27 Nov 11-12 ***New Location***

ROANOKE—Roanoke Civic Center

Oct 21-22

SALEM—Salem Civic Center

Sep 16-17 Oct 28-29 Dec 16-17

VIRGINIA BEACH — Convention Center

Oct 14-15

WINCHESTER — Body Renew Fitness and Family Sports Center

Nov 4-5

COORDINATORS

Chantilly—**Danny Paulson**—gunshows.chantilly@vcdl.org

Dale City—**Richard Kroh**—gunshows.dalecity@vcdl.org

Fredericksburg and Doswell—**Michael Kolodzinski**—
gunshows.fredericksburg@vcdl.org

Manassas—**Rebekah Koffler**—gunshows.manassas@vcdl.org

Norfolk SCOPE—**John Ward**—gunshows.norfolk@vcdl.org

Richmond—**Mike Wilburt**—gunshows.centralva@vcdl.org

Southwest Virginia—**Al Steed, Jr.**—gunshows.swva@vcdl.org

Tidewater/Peninsula—**Ron Lilly**—

gunshows.hamptonroads@vcdl.org

Tidewater/Virginia Beach—**Gary Moeller**—

gunshows.vb@vcdl.org

Winchester — **Mark Lintz**—gunshows.winchester@vcdl.org

State Gun Show Coordinator—**Tess Ailshire**—

gunshowcoord@vcdl.org

THANK YOU

A special thanks to those members who use their time to help spread the VCDL word.

Big BOYZ GUNS 27 May

Sam Hollingsworth, Danny Lynch, Virginia Lynch, Ken Modica, Al Steed, Jr.

Chantilly 9-11 June

Keith Bailey, Kevin Boland, Gene Brodetski, Dwin Craig, Skip Dobrin, Jim Ellett, Robert Eufemia, Karen Field, Andrew Hirsch, Monique Hunt, Steve Hunt, Margaret Marcus, Michael Oakes, Alexander Rogge, Craig Shelton, Mark Shinn, Keith Webster, Robert White, Alek Paulson, Danny Paulson, Roz Paulson

Honor All Military & Southern Heritage Day 23 June

Connie French, Ed French, Craig Lawrence, Ken Modica, Neil Motter, Al Steed, Jr.

Kettlefoot Gun Shoot 24 June

Charlie Hargis, Wendy Sturgill, Chris Sturgill, Bailee Weddle

Hanover Tomato Festival 8 July

Dave Eckart, Richard Kroh, Bob Sadtler, Evan Smith,

Hampton 15-16 July

Mark Spruill, Doug Peterson, Linda Peterson, Monte Oakes, Ivan Perez, Ed Burton, Bryan Dunn

Salem 22-23 July

Charlie Beard, Mary Bryant, Melanie Charlton, Allen Edmondson, Sam Hollingsworth, Ken Modica, Neil Motter, Al Steed Jr, Ken Stiles, Steed family

Dale City 22-23 July

Tess Ailshire, Keith Bailey, Jack Carwile, Michael Greelish, Andrew Hirsch, Kevin Kilcoyne, Jesus Lopez, Tom O'Hara, Tom Pietras, Terrill Prude, James Roberson, Rosy Zhi

Chantilly 28-30 July

Vaughn Alex, Keith Bailey, Gene Brodetski, Dwin Craig, Skip Dobrin, Robert Eufemia, Jim Graf, Steve Hunt, Peter Joran, John Kamin, Rebekah Koffler, Margaret Marcus, Max Padon, Alek Paulson, Danny Paulson, Roz Paulson, Alexander Rogge, Craig Shelton, Mark Shinn, Keith Webster, Bill Woods

ROANOKE 19-20 Aug

Don Beheler, Dave Evans, Ed French, Connie French, Ken Modica, Al Steed Jr, Curtis Steed

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Know the Airline/Rail Policies and Procedures

There's no way around this one. You simply must know and comply with your carrier's policies and procedures. They tend to be 99% similar, but nonetheless you should verify before you ever leave for the airport or rail station.

The Transportation Safety Administration has its own rules, and your airline no doubt requires compliance with those rules at a bare minimum. You can find TSA's rules at <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/transporting-firearms-and-ammunition>.

Check also your airline or rail carrier's web site for their rules.

The airline I fly on the most requires me to do each of the following:

Lock my unloaded firearm in a locked case. For handguns, the case should be inside your suitcase, ideally. I lock my firearm case to the inside of my suitcase using a NON-TSA padlock. I use a Pelican case for my Glock 43 that usually travels with me. It is easily customizable for different firearms and a couple of magazines. I got my case for about \$25 on Amazon.

Remove any magazines from your unloaded firearm. Some, but not all, airlines require magazines to be unloaded as well.

Store ammunition, up to 10 pounds worth, separately in a hard-sided box. Many people use the ammunition manufacturer boxes, but I use a simple plastic ammo box I found on Amazon for less than \$5.

My suitcase itself is separately locked, using a TSA compliant external lock.

When I arrive at my airline check-in counter, I carefully let them know that my bag requires special handling. They ask me for details, and I politely say I'm traveling with a firearm. Your choice of words here is very important to ensure you don't cause any panic. Never, for example, start the conversation by saying "I've got a gun" or anything similar. The airline will verify your identity and travel details, and will fill out a form of some sort. They will then ask you to sign a card verifying you're complying with their policies and procedures. That card is likely to be bright orange and will be placed on your firearm case inside your suitcase.

If you're traveling with a long gun, its "suitcase" is its gun case, so there's no case within a case here.

The airline will then direct you to a special baggage TSA station. TSA has one of these at every major airport for handling special bags like golf clubs, skis, and firearms. In most airports, you'll take your bags to TSA yourself. At Dulles and a handful of others, the airline will insist on taking the bag for you, but you'll need to accompany the bag through this part of the process.

At the TSA baggage checkpoint, you'll be instructed to hang around for a few moments while they screen your bag. In my experience, this usually just takes 2-5 minutes. From time to time, they may ask you to open your suitcase.

Plan for Failure

The above description is how things are supposed to work, and they usually do. I've now traveled with a firearm dozens of times in the past three years or so. In nearly every case, things go smoothly.

As you might guess, though, there have been a few exceptions. My advice is to plan for the worst case. Assume the process will fail, and be prepared. That is the mindset, after all, of why we carry, right?

With that in mind, here are a couple of case studies to consider.

The case of the authoritative and still wildly wrong

airline clerk. I had a check-in clerk recently who insisted I open my firearm case for her to inspect and to place the signed declaration card in. I tried to politely tell her that there's no need to open the case, and that TSA won't even be able to get to the declaration form if its inside the case. (The case, as I said, is locked with a NON-TSA padlock, per TSA policy.) She insisted, so I opened the case and expressed my concern about having an unsecured firearm in the terminal area. Fortunately, she didn't insist I remove the firearm so she could verify it wasn't loaded, or I would have insisted an armed law enforcement officer be present as a witness. (I later verified with the airline that the clerk was incorrect and I reported the incident to the airline's station manager, who assured me the situation would be corrected.)

The case of the cancelled flight in enemy territory.

I recently had to travel from Minneapolis to Jacksonville, Florida for two separate client meetings. In both states, my permits were up to date and lawful. However, it was summertime and there were afternoon storms moving through the mid-Atlantic region. To make matters worse, my ticket wasn't on a non-stop flight. I was scheduled to travel through Chicago for a 2-hour stop. Note I do not have an Illinois permit at present, but in any case, the first flight was cancelled, so the airline rescheduled me on a flight through Newark, New Jersey. You no doubt see where this is heading... When I arrived in Newark, my connecting flight to Jacksonville was cancelled. The good news is that I wasn't carrying on this trip, but I came this close (see my fingers?) to taking my Glock and decided not to. (My reason for not carrying on that trip was because my schedule gave me only 45 minutes to make my flight out of Minneapolis, so I needed to travel with my "carry-on only" gear — hence, no firearm.

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Even though this second case study ended up just fine, I spent quite some time re-examining how I travel with firearms. Had I been stranded in NJ, there's no way I could have lawfully taken possession of my checked-in bag. To make matters worse, my flight the next morning ended up being out of New York's Kennedy airport. In both NJ and NY, I would have been immediately arrested for trying to exercise my Second Amendment rights, sadly.

The take-away from this narrow escape is that you simply must plan for the worst. If circumstances beyond your control end up putting you into an airport in enemy territory, you must not take possession of your firearm, or you'll likely face the very unpleasant consequences. My advice in such a circumstance is to go directly to the airline's baggage office at that airport and let them know you cannot take possession of your checked bag. Explain to them why, and ensure they retain possession of the bag. They may allow the bag to remain checked in and load it onto your connecting flight later, if there is a connecting flight. (Perhaps you'll opt to get a rental car and finish the trip by land.) You may be able to convince the airline to send your bag back to your home airport and pick it up later. Whatever the case, be sure you don't violate a law in the state you find yourself stranded in.

Plan for failure, and you won't be sorry.

Move About The Country

Follow these basic processes and all should go just fine. Accept the responsibility of learning and following the laws in every state through which you plan to travel. Understand you might well find yourself in a state you never intended to be in. No worries, as you should know what to do.

If you do these things, though, you should be able to help us all keep our Second Amendment in good shape by keeping it well exercised.

I invite your stories, good or bad. If I've missed something, or if you've experienced something wildly different, please let me know. Again, that's ken@vanwyk.org. I'd love to hear from fellow gun-toting travelers.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Various members have brought to VCDL's attention that individual airlines may be establishing extra "security" procedures at their counters and gates. It is your responsibility to understand the rules and to make the decisions whether to abide by those rules or to take your business elsewhere.

I Want To Purchase A Gun. What Do I Need To Do?

By Board of Directors Member Pat Webb

As the owner of a gun store, I get this a lot. Buying a gun is simple, but it is only the beginning. The process depends on whether you are buying from a Federal Firearm Licensee (FFL) or from a private individual.

Let's start with the qualifications. Under Federal law there are age restrictions and there are also prohibitions on who can purchase a firearm legally. Again, these laws are slightly different for private sales than for purchases from a dealer. We will look at them separately.

Buying from a licensed dealer (FFL) requires that you be at least 18 years old to purchase long guns and 21 years old to purchase handguns, receivers, and NFA items. Buying ammunition is also subject to age restrictions, 18 for rifle ammo and 21 for handgun. If you are purchasing from a private seller, the age limit for handguns drops to 18.

In addition to the age requirement, you must meet these criteria:

- You cannot be a convicted felon
- You must not be under indictment for a felony offense
- You cannot be the subject of an active arrest warrant
- You cannot have a conviction for domestic abuse
- You cannot have an active protective order or restraining order against you
- You cannot be an unlawful user of or addicted to drugs or controlled substances Although some states have made marijuana use legal, it is still a controlled substance according to federal law and even prescription use will prevent you from purchasing a firearm.
- You must not have been judged to be mentally incompetent or insane
- You must not have been committed to a mental institution against your will
- You must be a citizen or an alien here legally - there are some conditions with this clause

This is a highly abbreviated list and the complete rundown can be found on the Virginia State Police website at this link: http://www.vsp.state.va.us/Firearms_PurchaseEligibility.shtm

If you have any questions at all about whether you are eligible to purchase a firearm, please contact a competent attorney. A couple of bucks now will save you a pile of money in legal fees later and could keep you out of jail. If you need a reference for a qualified attorney you can visit the VCDL referral page at <http://www.hkshooter.net/lawyers/>.

Okay, I'm Legal, Now What?

If you are purchasing from an FFL you will need to furnish your government-issued photo ID. This is usually your

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driver's license or DMV issued ID card. Your ID must include your full name, address, gender and date of birth and must be at least 30 days since the date of issue.

In addition, if your address has changed you will need your DMV-issued change-of-address card. If your address on your driver's license is a post office box, you will need a government-issued document with your street address and your other identifying information. This is usually a voter registration card or your concealed handgun permit, but can be other documents as well. If you are military and a resident of another state but stationed in Virginia, you will also need a copy of your permanent duty orders. Resident aliens will need to provide their Green Card.

After verifying that you have the proper identification, you will fill out a federal form 4473 and then a state form SP-65. These forms contain much of the same information, but differ slightly. The dealer will verify that the information on the forms matches that of your ID and will submit your information for a background check. Not all of your details are given to the State Police. They will receive enough information to verify that you are not a prohibited person, and they will see that you are purchasing a given number of pistols, revolvers, rifles, and/or shotguns, but they will NOT receive any details about make, model or serial number. In addition, the data that is submitted to the VSP is required by law to be destroyed after 30 days. However, the dealer will retain the records for a minimum of 20 years per federal law.

What Firearm Is Right For Me?

This is a big question and can only be answered with a series of questions. We get a lot of people who want to buy a gun for the first time, but they don't know what is best for them. I ask the following:

- What are you planning to use it for?
- Will the primary use be concealed carry, target practice, or will you keep it at home for defense?
- If you will carry it, how do you plan to carry?
- How familiar are you with pistols?
- If you are hunting, what game? What area? Are there restrictions in your county?
- What is your budget?
- What is your hand size/strength?

That last question is mostly for pistols. We get many customers who have diminished hand strength for one reason or another. Sometimes a revolver is the best choice, sometimes a semi-automatic with an easy to operate action is the best choice. Take some time, do some research, and make an informed decision. If possible, when you think you know what you want go to a range and rent the model you are considering. You may find out that it doesn't suit you at all. You can ask about holster options while you are at it.

This is also a great time to take a lesson if you have never shot a pistol. Even if you do have some experience with firearms, many people find that they learn things that they never realized they didn't know. We frequently have spouses sit in on classes and later comment that they learned several things by doing so. A competent instructor will talk to you about ways to carry and safe storage as well as the mechanics of using your gun properly. They should also discuss ways to keep up with ever changing laws, such as subscribing to services like the VA-ALERT.

Do I Need To Take A Class?

In Virginia, we do not have a training requirement to purchase a firearm. If you want to get a concealed handgun permit (CHP) you must demonstrate competency. As a responsible adult, it is up to you to seek out whatever training you need on your own.

This may sound scary to some people who have never been around guns. However, many people have received training in proper gun handling from their parents, from military training, even in some schools. I don't know of a single gun store that doesn't have a list of qualified instructors ready to help you learn how to safely use your new gun.

Probably the single, most important thing you can do is get out that owner's manual and READ IT! I recommend to all my customers that before they use their new gun they should sit down with the gun and the owner's manual and review it page by page. Make sure there is NO AMMO IN THE ROOM when you do this. Take your new gun apart and reassemble it. Get to know it BEFORE you go to the range. Even if you have owned the same model previously, manufacturers can and will change things. Sometimes the controls are different or the safety features change. Fifteen minutes spent now can save you hours in an emergency room or worse.

I Bought My New Gun. How Do I Register It?

In Virginia, we do not have firearm registration. This means that you do not have to register your gun, nor do you have to report selling it to a private party if you should ever do that. In addition, your concealed carry permit, should you apply for one, is not for a specific firearm, so you don't have to register which gun you will carry.

One more thing worth noting is purchasing a gun as a gift. This is legal to do within certain limitations. You cannot purchase a gun for someone who is a prohibited person, but you most certainly can purchase a gun as a gift for someone who could otherwise buy it for themselves. In fact, the new 4473 form in use beginning in January 2017 has a detailed explanation of how to determine if the purchase is legal:

A person is also the actual transferee/buyer if he/she is legitimately purchasing the firearm as a bona fide gift for a third party. A gift is not bona fide if another person offered or gave the person completing this form money, service(s), or item(s) of value to acquire the firearm for him/her, or if the other person is prohibited by law from receiving or possessing the firearm.

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ACTUAL TRANSFEREE/BUYER EXAMPLES: Mr. Smith asks Mr. Jones to purchase a firearm for Mr. Smith (who may or may not be prohibited). Mr. Smith gives Mr. Jones the money for the firearm. Mr. Jones is NOT THE ACTUAL TRANSFEREE/BUYER of the firearm and must answer "NO" to question 11.a. The licensee may not transfer the firearm to Mr. Jones. However, if Mr. Brown buys the firearm with his own money to give to Mr. Black as a gift (with no service or tangible thing of value provided by Mr. Black), Mr. Brown is the actual transferee/buyer of the firearm and should answer "YES" to question 11.a. However, the transferor/seller may not transfer a firearm to any person he/she knows or has reasonable cause to believe is prohibited under 18 U.S.C. 922(g), (n) or (x).

EXCEPTION: If a person is picking up a repaired firearm(s) for another person, he/she is not required to answer 11.a. and may proceed to question 11.b.

Also, if you are sending a gun to someone in a different state, the transaction must go through an FFL and the recipient needs to go through a background check when they pick the gun up.

Aside from private sales between individuals who reside in the same state not being subject to background checks, there is one more exception. If you send your firearm to the manufacturer or to a licensed gunsmith for repairs, it can be sent directly back to you and you do not need to go through a background check. If you have a dealer send your gun in for you, it will be sent back to the dealer and you may pick it up there. You do not need to fill out the 4473 and have a background check. However, if someone else picks the gun up for you they would be required to fill out the 4473 and have a background check run.

So That's All There Is?

Buying a gun is not that hard. Making the right choice, seeking out proper training, taking time to practice, these are all important parts of gun ownership, but they are easy for most individuals. If you need help, there are qualified instructors and gun dealers all over the place who are ready to offer advice. The process to buy a gun is not complicated and the background check rarely takes more than a few minutes. The laws do change from time to time, but luckily we have VCDL to help us keep up with that.

There are many things that we do in life that carry an inherent risk. Driving a car or owning a swimming pool is statistically more dangerous and we do these things without a second thought. We take the responsibility to learn to drive or swim before we participate in those activities. Owning a firearm is not much different. I am not advocating that everyone purchase a gun, but if you decide that you want to own one there is no reason to be afraid. Life is full of calculated risks. The key is to educate ourselves on the proper use of whatever tools we are using to make our lives easier. VCDL is happy to help you stay informed and find the right teachers to help you gain the knowledge you are seeking.

Firearm Condition Readiness: Condition 0, Condition 1, Condition 2, Condition 3, Condition 4 — What Do They All Mean?

G. Halek, posted at Concealednation.org

Firearm conditions are primarily a way to declare the readiness of the weapon. For instance, if you're on the firing line and the range safety officer calls out "cease fire, cease fire, unload, show, clear — weapons at Condition 4" — it's helpful to actually know what that means.

In this case, Condition 4 is pretty much the universal "safe". There is no round in the chamber (because you visually inspected) and the magazine is out of the firearm. With these two stipulations, the firearm can quickly be inspected by a range safety officer or other suitable person to be determined if it is clear and safe for handling.

Whenever you're passing a firearm off to someone else, it's always a great idea to put that firearm in Condition 4. That person should always then inspect the firearm to ensure it is clear. This really cuts down on any chance of a negligent discharge.

In this article, we'll discuss the different condition ratings commonly associated with Single-Action/Double-Action and striker-fire pistols. Not all pistols will need to pass through each condition. In fact, when I was in the Marine Corps, there were commonly only 4 conditions associated with most of our weapon systems. It seems there's an added "Condition 0" included nowadays — which just goes to show I'm getting old.

Condition 0 — Magazine inserted, round in the chamber, safety off. For SA/DA — Hammer is back.

Condition 1 — Magazine inserted, round in the chamber, safety on. For SA/DA — Hammer is back.

Condition 2 — Applies to Single-Action/Double-Action primarily. This is a magazine inserted, round in the chamber, hammer forward. For revolvers, it would be rounds inserted into cylinder, cylinder locked into place, hammer forward.

Condition 3 — Magazine inserted, no round in the chamber. For SA/DA — Hammer is forward.

Condition 4 — No magazine inserted, no round in the chamber. For SA/DA — Hammer is forward. For SA/DA revolvers — Hammer is forward, cylinder is clear of all rounds.

Condition 4 is considered safe for transport in a range environment. Some ranges have looser restrictions than others but all across the board — Condition 4 is always a good idea until you are given permission by the range safety officer (or ordinances governing the range) to proceed from Condition 4 to 1/0.

So, as you can see, Condition 0 and 1 are separated only by a manual safety. The

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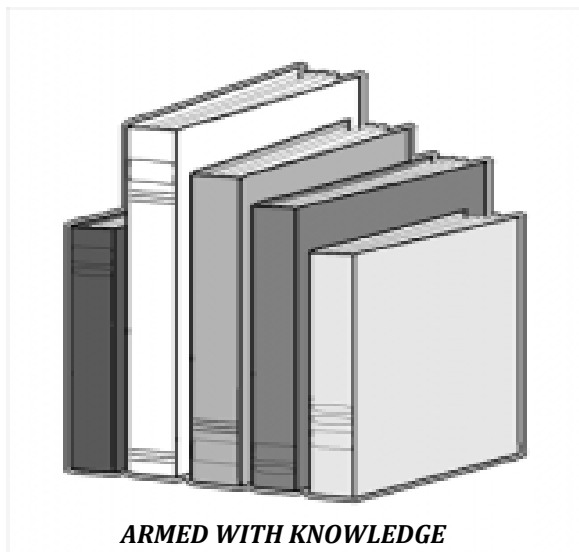
firearm is loaded, hammer to the rear, and a round is in the chamber. This firearm should be handled with caution and treated with respect (at ALL conditions – but especially these two).

While condition readiness truly applies to little outside the range environment, it is something that we consider in our situational awareness. For instance, many concealed carriers carry in Condition 3. That's because they don't want to have a round in the chamber.

It comes down to familiarity with the firearm, competency with its mechanics, and confidence that you can use it without doing harm to yourself or others unintentionally.

Condition readiness is a great way to communicate to other firearm operators where you're at and where they need to be. More importantly, it's a great way of communicating safety.

So, next time you hear a range safety officer say, "go to Condition 1", you know to make ready and be prepared to have a great day at the range." — it's helpful to actually know what that means.



ARMED WITH KNOWLEDGE

"A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and interest require that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent of others for essential, particularly military, supplies."

— George Washington

THINK SAFETY

By Kathy Jackson, *The Cornered Cat*

"The way we traditionally conceive of ignorance—as an absence of knowledge—leads us to think of education as its natural antidote. But education, even when done skillfully, can produce illusory confidence. Here's a particularly frightful example: Driver's education courses, particularly those aimed at handling emergency maneuvers, tend to increase, rather than decrease, accident rates. They do so because training people to handle, say, snow and ice leaves them with the lasting impression that they're permanent experts on the subject. In fact, their skills usually erode rapidly after they leave the course. And so, months or even decades later, they have confidence but little leftover competence when their wheels begin to spin." – Prof. David Dunning

My take: This is a serious weakness of **ALL** types of safety training, firearms skills included. There is no level of training that leaves any person "a permanent expert" with gun handling or any other life or death skill. This is true no matter what classes a person has taken or how often they practice.

Is there a cure?

... Maybe. Not a complete cure, but a few things might help.

First, a sense of humility. No matter what background we might have, each of us need to remember that we ourselves are **not** immune to common human failings. There's no such thing as a level of skill with firearms that excuses a person from following the overlapping, redundant safety rules. Avoid hanging out on the range with people who roll their eyes when the subject comes up, and never imitate the gun handling of any person who makes light of this subject.

Second, accept that the firearms safety rules do overlap. This means that sometimes, some of the rules will 'feel' unnecessary. Commit to following them anyway! The reason the rules overlap and seem redundant is because humans often make mistakes in one or more areas. The more layers of protection there are between a simple mistake and a tragedy, the less likely it is that a single error will kill someone. That's why "it's not loaded" is **NEVER** an acceptable excuse for allowing the muzzle to point at an innocent person, including oneself.

Three, remember that just as healthy people occasionally make an appointment to see a doctor or dentist ("How'm I doing? Still healthy?"), a smart gun owner occasionally gets a gun handling checkup from a qualified other. This might be inside the context of a weekend class, or just giving a highly-competent friend permission to nitpick your gun handling skills on an ongoing basis. The point is to get someone's eyes **other than your own** on your gun handling on a regular basis -- and to change existing habits when the other person spots a problem.

Stay safe!

Posted by TheCorneredCat, August 2017. Used by permission.

RELYING ON TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

By Board of Directors Member Pat Webb

One thing that has always ruffled my feathers is the way many people on both sides of the armed civilian debate have the opinion that law enforcement officers are automatically more qualified with firearms than the average gun owner.

This may be true in many cases, but it is also false in many cases. Many civilians take proficiency seriously and engage in regular practice, take classes and strive to maintain or improve their skill set.

On the other hand, there are law enforcement officers who never touched a firearm before the Police Academy. After their initial training, they many only fire their service pistol once or twice a year.

From the PoliceOne.com website we find the following statement:

"At a recent use-of-force class I was instructing for a Public Risk Management group, the topic of firearms training frequency came up. The discussion was prompted by the fact that during the latest round of FBI suspect interviews conducted for the third book in the Officer Assaulted and Murdered trilogy ("Violent Encounters"), it was revealed that those suspects believed that police officers trained between two and three times a week with their firearms. In reality, most police departments only train about two times a year, averaging less than 15 hours annually. In contrast to our frequency of training, those same suspects revealed that they practiced on average 23 times a year (or almost twice a month) with their handguns.

"During a poll taken during this class which represented about a half dozen Florida law enforcement agencies, I asked how many train more than twice a year. No hands went up. When asked how many train or qualify with their duty guns only once a year. Everyone raised their hands. Hence, the genesis for this article."

The above quote is from an article written by columnist Dave Grossi titled, *Police firearms training: How often should you be shooting?*

But this is just one side of a multifaceted topic. Another well-used argument is that law enforcement is somehow more trustworthy with a gun. In fact the implication is often that private citizens are somehow suspected criminals if they carry firearms.

Let's look at the statistics. A recent U.S. Dept. of Justice funded study has indicated that police officers are arrested as much as 3 times per day. In 2016 the Washington Post ran an article about the incidence of crime among police officers. The article quotes the study as follows:

"Police crimes are not uncommon," Stinson concluded. "Our data directly contradicts some of the prevailing assumptions and the proposition that only a small group

of rotten apples perpetrate the vast majority of police crime." Although nearly 60 percent of the crimes "occurred when the officer was technically off-duty," Stinson wrote, "a significant portion of these so-called off-duty crimes also lies within the context of police work and the perpetrator's role as a police officer, including instances where off-duty officers flash a badge, an official weapon, or otherwise use their power, authority, and the respect afforded to them as a means to commit crime."

"This is probably the tip of the iceberg," said Cara Rabe-Hemp, a professor at Illinois State University who has studied police deviance. She said the effort is the "first-ever study to quantify police crime" and shows it is "much much more common than what police scholars and police administrators previously thought."

The article further states that the conviction rate among law enforcement was similar to that of the general civilian population. However once you isolate the Concealed Carry Permit Holder the difference is remarkable. According to CrimeResearch.org, studies have shown that cops are as much as 10 times more likely to commit crimes than concealed carry permit holders.

But we don't have to take the word of some bean counter, we can look at the crime rates in areas with strict restrictions on personal defense verses the rates in places where we are trusted to protect ourselves from crime. The evidence is clear and they myth is debunked.

The truth is that the victim of a crime is the true first responder. As a responsible adult we are supposed to watch out for our own well-being. That can include carrying the proper tools for personal defense and taking the time to be proficient with their use. The argument that we should rely on trained professionals falls short of the mark if for no other reason that when seconds count, the police are just minutes away. But even more poignant is the fact that they are human, just like us. Some will be more skilled and some not as much. We appreciate the job that law enforcement does, but to rely on them as our only source of defense is foolhardy and potentially dangerous.

Sources

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/06/22/study-finds-1100-police-officers-per-year-or-3-per-day-are-arrested-nationwide/?utm_term=.1a59795c673f

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249850.pdf>

<https://crimeresearch.org/2015/02/comparing-conviction-rates-between-police-and-concealed-carry-permit-holders/>



VCDL President Philip Van Cleave thanks State Senator and Candidate for Lieutenant Governor Jill Vogel at a VCDL picnic in Winchester, July 2017.



VCDL Member Tyler Yeomans found this sign at the entrance to the Nations Gun Show in Chantilly, VA. Join the VCDL Facebook page to see conversations on this and other topics of interest to VCDL members.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

Many of us understand that the use of our firearms goes beyond technical proficiency with that firearm. There is a mindset that accompanies the decision to carry. Modern American Shooting & Firearms (MASF) will sponsor a CIVILIAN CARRY MINDSET seminar on 4 November. Speakers will include VCDL President Philip Van Cleave and a VCDL attorney Dan Hawes, of Virginia Legal Defense. The goal is go bring together some of the best local trainers and subject matter experts for a full day of knowledge. Topics will range from mindset, daily concealed carry, law, justified shootings and much more! The day will include presentations and a one-hour panel discussion.

Not only will you be expanding your horizon on self-defense but the fee is going to a charity to help spread the word on the importance of self-defense for citizens. All attendees are eligible to be entered in multiple door prizes. Some of our donated items include XP-15 DELTA – 5.56 , Trijicon MRO® – 2.0 MOA Adjustable Red Dot with Low Mount, TacStrike Steel, PMAG® D-60™ AR/M4 5.56X45MM NATO, Green Ops One Day Class, FPF Training One Day Class (John Murphy) and more.

The complete list of speakers includes:

Dick Black, Virginia state-senator
Mike Chapman, Loudoun County Sheriff
Brett Harnish, firearms instructor and retired military
Daniel Hawes, firearms attorney, and VCDL EM
Nathan Murr, publisher and writer and retired military
Rob Tackett, founder of Critical Carry Firearms Training
Philip Van Cleave, President, VCDL

There is a fee to attend this seminar. For information or to register, go to <http://masf.co/2017/07/28/masfs-civilian-carry-mindset-seminar-2017/>

VCDL Membership Application

☐ **New** ☐ **Renewal** (Member # _____)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

☐ 1 **VCDL** membership: \$ **25.00**

☐ Donation to **VCDL**: \$ _____

☐ Donation to **PAC**: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

(Note: Membership processing can take 4-6 weeks)

Method of payment

☐ Cash (Do not send cash through the mail.)

☐ Check (Make checks payable to **VCDL**)

☐ Charge: ☐ American Express

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Name as it appears on the card

Signature of Card Holder

Mail to:

VCDL Membership Processing Center

P.O. Box 5752

Fredericksburg VA 22403

Or save postage and use credit card or PayPal at vcdl.org/join

Contributions, gifts, or membership dues are not deductible for Federal income tax purposes.

VCDL/RRRC MATCH

VCDL THANKS GENEROUS SPONSORS AND ENCOURAGES PATRONAGE

The VCDL/Roanoke Rifle and Revolver Club match took place on May 13th. We had 75 shooters and served 190 hot dogs. There were 8 stations, with a variety of challenging scenarios. Many thanks to Sherrill Smith, Ken Modica, and Board member Al Steed Jr., for bringing this event together on the VCDL side and to the Roanoke Rifle and Revolver Club, Simon Leray and his team of range safety officers for making this match possible and safe. (We estimate over 12,000 rounds fired in about 4 hours.)

There were drawings for guns and over 100 door prizes were handed out, giving each person two or three prizes!

Please consider supporting the following businesses, and thank them for their support of VCDL and RRRC.

* **BIG BOYZ GUNS—4568 Blue Ridge Blvd, Blue Ridge, VA 540-650-2520** (two miles east of the Blue Ridge Parkway) Donated the prizes for our drawing: a Sig Sauer P250 40 cal and a Springfield Armory XK 40 cal pistol. On top of that, they also provided several smaller prizes.

* **TRADER JERRY'S GUN STORE—724 W 4th ST; Salem, VA 540-389-8095** Donated 15 assorted items for this event.

* **TRAPPER DAN'S TRADING—15780A Stewartsville Rd., Vinton, VA 540-492-2568** Donated 35 assorted items for the event!

* **FIREPOWER TACTICAL—WES BOOZER, 3785 Peters Creek Ext, SW, Roanoke, VA 540-982-0694** Donated a GIFT CERTIFICATE for time on his Firearms Training Simulators. (Wes also sponsors the monthly VCDL laser shoot and a Friday night "league" shoot--both events open to all!)

* **EXECUTIVE MEMBER KEN MODICA** donated gift certificates to Firepower Tactical's Simulator Training

(804) 639-0600 (703) 372-3285
(757) 271-3705 (540) 446-5783

Please feel free to contact any of the Officers or Directors should you have any questions or if you would like to volunteer your services in VCDL.

EXPIRES	RENEW IN
January	August-October
February	September-November
March	October-December
April	November-January
May	December-February
June	January-March
July	February-April
August	March-May
September	April-June
October	May-July
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