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### All firearms are considered loaded all the time

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- Anytime you pickup a firearm consider it loaded. Even if you put it down for a second, turn around and then pick it up again, you need to handle it as if it's loaded.
- Remember a loaded firearm is one that will discharge when the trigger is pulled.
- The terminal resting-place of a bullet from your gun is your responsibility.
- I was told the gun was unloaded, so I don't have to be careful with it. Have you heard these words before?

Uncounted firearm tragedies are "explained" by people who believed the gun they held was not loaded.

You can prevent enormous tragedy if you always treat each gun as if it is loaded...even if you put it down or if someone tells you "it's OK, it's not loaded"

At the gun store or shooting range, check any gun you handle to determine that it is indeed unloaded. Learn to check for ammunition in the gun by sight and touch. Some semi-automatic pistols have chambers that are obscured by the slide even when locked open. A round of ammunition may be in the chamber, ready to fire if the trigger is pulled. By probing with a finger, you can detect the presence of a cartridge you can not see. Training yourself to verify an empty gun by sight and touch increases understanding of the gun intend to use under stress of self-defense emergency, sometimes in the darkness or other unfavorable conditions.

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### Never point your firearm at anything you are not willing to destroy

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- Consider your firearm like a StarWars light saber, anything that crosses it's path WILL be destroyed.
- This rule applies equally to loaded and unloaded guns. Always know at what and whom the muzzle will point. Determine a safe muzzle direction before picking up the weapon, that way you won't cross yourself or someone else with the muzzle while looking for a safe place to point it.

And remember, a visual obstruction, like sheet rock wall will not stop bullets.

Don't show off the gun like a toy or curiosity. Treat your personal protection weapon as a very private item, even more personal then lingerie or cosmetics. By doing so will avoid curiosity by people who don't understand firearms or people who are put off by them.

Avoid handling firearms off the range unless you are safely practicing dry fire, cleaning the gun, or securing it for the night with emphasis on using a safe backstop.

- In your home at a safe backstop like a fireplace. DO NOT LOSE focus of what you are doing
- Don't be distracted when handling a firearm, remember where the eyes go the hands follow e.g. engaging in a conversation

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### NEVER touch the trigger until YOU HAVE MADE THE DECISION TO SHOOT

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- Show example of drawing and then re-holstering the firearm with finger on the side of the firearm.
- Explain extreme body alarm, how keep safe muzzle control will prevent a bullet discharging where it's not intended because of prematurely pulling the trigger.
- Use Shoulder holster example; architect of the beast in your local Mall with innocent people behind, to the side, sweeping the side to get on target.
- [Startle response](#), hand closes on gun, trigger finger follows

Suppose you hear noises in the kitchen some night. Gun in hand you go downstairs to investigate. As you approach, the noises continue. You are concerned you will soon face an unknown intruder.

In the grip of this stress and fear, any thing unexpected will startle you. If startled, your muscles will contract as part of the body's natural "[fight-or-flight](#)" response.

When the finger gripping the handgun convulse, the trigger finger also contracts. It can do nothing else; the hand and finger respond as one unit.

- [Sympathetic response](#), hand closes when seeing someone else close their hand, the trigger finger follows and pulls the

trigger.

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**ALWAYS know your target AND what is beyond**

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- You and you alone are responsible for the bullet where it ends its flight. You must always know the terminal resting place of the bullets fired from you gun. Bullets can travel a great distance and must be realized when shooting in wide open areas i.e. shooting in the boonies.
- Be sure when firing the firearm whatever is behind the intended target its something you are willing to destroy.
- Talk about [hollow points](#) Vs [Ball ammunition](#), self-defense rounds are designed to stop in eight to ten inches of fluid tissue but there are no guarantees. Use the following example; a [45ACP round](#) will go through and through 2.5 people. Even so this does not mean there will be any dynamic hits to stop the assailant but may go through several innocent people and kill them.
- Sometimes you will end up in a no-shoot situation because there is no safe backstop.

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**ALWAYS keep all firearms unloaded and secure UNTIL YOU ARE READY TO USE THEM**

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- There are only two ways responsible methods for safely store a firearm, on you or in a lockable container.
- The firearm you carry for protection must be fully loaded
- When your firearm is not being used for self-protection, lock it away using a secure method such as a gun safe.
- Never leave an unattended firearm in your car unless locked in a secure container.
- Note there are times when your firearm needs to be safely, locked up. For instance, if there is a felon in your home or there are neighborhood children who are not tutored in firearm safety in your house and you are not wearing the firearm.