

## Handling

1. Consider a firearm always loaded. Treat it with the proper respect at all times.
2. Be aware of the direction that the muzzle is pointed. Never point a handgun at anything that you are unwilling to shoot.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire.
4. When handling a firearm, always confirm that it is unloaded. Etiquette dictates that the cylinder should be open or slide locked back when handing a firearm to someone.

## Range Safety

1. Wear eye and ear protection at all times.
2. Loaded firearms never point any where but down range. If at any time you are unsure of a firearm's status, clear it, or seek assistance.
3. Activate any manual safeties if placing a firearm down for any reason.
4. If a cartridge fails to shoot (misfire), continue holding the firearm pointing down range and count to ten. Then clear the weapon and discard the cartridge, or seek assistance.

## Types and safeties

Handguns can be divided into several categories. The first two categories are: Revolvers and Semi Automatics (or Automatics). The revolver is a firearm with a cylinder that rotates between firings to place a cartridge in line with the firing pin and barrell. Semi Auto's have a magazine (placed in the handle) to hold cartridges and automatically load a round into the chamber for firing.

The next two categories are: Single Action and Double Action. Single action handguns require the hammer to be manually put in the firing position prior to shooting (cocking), while double action's will cock the gun and fire upon a single pull of the trigger. Single action auto's will require cocking on the first shot only (racking the slide or chambering a round) as the hammer will

be cocked as the next round is chambered. Single action revolvers must be cocked between each shot (like the old West). Double action revolvers can be fired either single action style (if the hammer is accessible) or by just pulling the trigger. Double action automatics work the same as single action auto's except if you lower the hammer (de-cocking), the firearm can still shoot by just pulling the trigger. There is also a newer type of automatic called a Double Action Only (DAO). This weapon has no hammer and functions in a similar fashion to a hammerless double action revolver ("internal hammer" being cocked and released by a single trigger pull).

Handguns also have safeties to prevent accidental discharge. Revolvers and DAO's usually have NO external or manual safeties. This means that the trigger, if pulled, will always fire the handgun. They (and all quality handguns) have internal or passive safeties designed to prevent a discharge in the event the firearm is dropped or struck (common safeties are a hammer block, transfer bar, or inertia firing pin). Single action auto's will traditionally have a trigger lock on the side of the weapon at the rear (may or may not be ambidextrous). DA's will have a similar arrangement, but may also have a de-cocker. This lever, in addition to being a safety, will lower the hammer, if cocked, without firing the weapon.

Each handgun is different and can (and will) have varying ways that they operate. Check owners manuals for specific information.

### Unloading (or Clearing)

#### Revolvers

1. Hold firearm in right hand and activate the cylinder release with right thumb.
2. With right forefinger push cylinder out.
3. Tip fire arm back (slightly) and place left palm at rear of cylinder.
4. Activate (push) the extractor to eject any cartridges into palm.
5. If prior to step 3, no cartridges are seen or felt then the firearm is unloaded.

#### Semi-Automatics

1. Eject magazine by activating the magazine release button.
2. Rack slide with an over hand, forward grip, ie. the front of the slide should be between your left thumb and forefinger - not pinky and palm. (a chambered round should eject either out the ejection port or the magazine well)
3. The slide release may need to be pushed in place with your right thumb (a bit tricky with larger autos, but much easier with practice)
4. Look into the chamber through the ejection port to confirm that no cartridge is present. You may also confirm by feel - take care that the slide doesn't release on a finger.
6. The semi -auto is now unloaded.