

Introduction to the Comprehensive Guide on Firearms, Ammunition and Armor

In the great tapestry of American heritage and individual freedoms, the right to bear arms stands as one of the most cherished and fiercely protected pillars. This isn't just about owning a firearm; it's about upholding a tradition, safeguarding individual rights, and cherishing the self-reliance that the Founding Fathers envisioned. We the community understands this deeply, which is why this guide is dedicated to you.

Within this, you'll find a celebration of a timeless legacy. This guide aims to deepen your knowledge of firearms and ammunition, enhancing the understanding that every responsible gun owner should possess. Dive into the intricacies of each firearm type, the science behind the bullets. As advocates for the Second Amendment and the freedoms it ensures, let this guide serve as both an informative tool and a tribute to the enduring spirit of responsible gun ownership.

1. Types of Firearms and Their Detailed Uses:

a. Handguns:

Handguns are designed for portability and close-quarters use. Their compact nature makes them ideal for concealed carry and personal defense.

Revolver:

Mechanism: Utilizes a rotating cylinder, each chamber holding a single round. After each shot, the cylinder rotates to align the next chamber with the barrel.

Usage: While often considered an "old school" firearm, many appreciate its mechanical simplicity and reliability. It's often chosen for personal defense and backup guns.

Popular Calibers: .38 Special, .357 Magnum, .44 Magnum.

Semi-Automatic Pistol:

Mechanism: Uses the energy from the fired cartridge to cycle the action, eject the spent shell casing, and chamber a fresh round.

Usage: Favored for both civilian and law enforcement due to its quick reload capability and greater ammunition capacity. Popular for concealed carry, sport shooting, and self-defense.

Popular Calibers: 9mm, .40 S&W, .45 ACP, .380 ACP.

b. Rifles:

Rifles offer greater accuracy over longer distances, primarily due to their longer barrels and the use of both hands, providing a stable shooting platform.

Bolt-Action:

Mechanism: The shooter manually operates the bolt to eject a spent cartridge and chamber a new one.

Usage: Known for exceptional accuracy, these are often chosen for hunting and long-range target shooting.

Popular Calibers: .308 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield, .243 Winchester.

Semi-Automatic:

Mechanism: Similar to the semi-automatic pistol, it auto-chambers the next round after each shot.

Usage: Versatile, used for hunting, sport shooting, home defense, and by the military. The AR-15 platform, for instance, is popular due to its modularity and customization possibilities.

Popular Calibers: .223 Remington/5.56x45mm NATO, 7.62x39mm.

Lever-Action:

Mechanism: The shooter operates a lever to cycle the action.

Usage: A classic American design, often associated with the Old West. Commonly used for hunting and cowboy action shooting.

Popular Calibers: .30-30 Winchester, .45 Colt.

c. Shotguns:

Shotguns are unique for firing shells that can hold multiple pellets or a single slug, making them versatile for various tasks.

Pump-Action:

Mechanism: The shooter manually operates a sliding forend (pump) to eject and chamber shells.

Usage: One of the most popular designs, used for hunting, sport shooting, and home defense.

Common Load Types: Birdshot, Buckshot, Slugs.

Semi-Automatic:

Mechanism: Like other semi-automatic firearms, it cycles shells using the energy from the previously fired shell.

Usage: Offers quicker follow-up shots compared to pump-action. Used for hunting, sport shooting, and tactical applications.

Common Load Types: Birdshot, Buckshot, Slugs.

Break-Action:

Mechanism: The firearm's barrel(s) hinge downward to allow direct access to the chamber(s).

Usage: Often seen in double-barreled configurations. Popular for hunting and clay target shooting due to its simplicity and reliability.

Common Load Types: Birdshot, Buckshot, Slugs.

2. Common Ammunition Types, Bullet Designs, and Their Characteristics:

a. Handgun Ammunition:

9mm:

Full Metal Jacket (FMJ): Standard practice ammo. The bullet is encased in a soft metal, usually copper. Good for range use.

Hollow Point (HP): Expands upon impact, creating a larger wound channel. Preferred for self-defense and often used by law enforcement.

Open Tip Match (OTM): Primarily for precision shooting. Not designed to expand like HP.

.40 S&W:

FMJ: General practice ammo.

HP: Self-defense round, expanding on impact.

Frangible: Shatters upon impact, reducing the risk of over-penetration.

.45 ACP:

FMJ: Common for range practice.

HP: Expanding self-defense round.

Ballistic Tip: Features a plastic tip over a lead core, providing the aerodynamics of FMJ and the expansion of HP.

.38 Special & .357 Magnum:

FMJ: For range use.

HP: For self-defense, with expansion characteristics.

Soft Point (SP): Expands slower than HP, often used for hunting.

b. Rifle Ammunition:

.223 Remington/5.56x45mm NATO:

M193: 55-grain FMJ, standard for early AR-15s/M16s.

M855 "Green Tip": 62-grain with a steel penetrator tip and lead core. Partially armor-piercing.

Open Tip Match (OTM): Precision bullet, not designed for expansion.

7.62x39mm:

FMJ: Standard practice ammo.

HP: Can be used for hunting or self-defense.

Soft Point (SP): Designed to expand more slowly than HP, commonly used for hunting.

.308 Winchester/7.62x51mm NATO:

FMJ: Training and general use.

HPBT (Hollow Point Boat Tail): For long-range shooting, where the boat tail design increases ballistic efficiency.

Open Tip Match (OTM): Precision shooting.

c. Shotgun Ammunition:

Birdshot:

No. 7-9: Small pellets suitable for smaller birds.

No. 4-6: Larger pellets used for game birds like pheasants.

Buckshot:

No. 4 Buck: Smaller pellets but more of them. Suitable for medium game.

00 Buck (Double Ought): Standard for self-defense with larger pellets.

Slugs:

Sabot Slug: Designed for rifled shotgun barrels, offering better accuracy.

Foster Slug: Standard rifled slug, suitable for smoothbore barrels.

Different ammo types serve different purposes, from self-defense, hunting, precision shooting, to general practice. It's essential to understand and choose the right ammunition based on the intended use and firearm specifications. The most common type is typically FMJ which ranges to being on the more cheaper side yet being effective for almost every purpose.

3. Imports, Prices, and Quality:

NOTE: It's crucial to realize that the firearms and ammunition market can be volatile, with prices and availability influenced by political decisions, global events, demand, and other factors. Always check with multiple sources before making a purchase and ensure that the chosen firearm or ammunition meets your specific needs and legalities in your jurisdiction.

1. Imported Firearms:

a. Glock (Austria):

Models: Glock 17, 19, 43, among others.

Quality: Glock is known for its durability and reliability. They have a "combat-proven" reputation.

Price Range: Depending on the model and specifics, \$500 - \$700 USD for most standard models.

b. Sig Sauer (Germany/Switzerland):

Models: P320, P365, P226, among others.

Quality: Sig Sauer has a reputation for premium quality and is used by many law enforcement agencies globally.

Price Range: \$500 - \$1,200 USD depending on the model and variant.

c. Heckler & Koch (Germany):

Models: VP9, USP, P30, among others.

Quality: H&K is renowned for its innovation and high-quality manufacturing.

Price Range: \$600 - \$1,000 USD for most standard models.

d. Beretta (Italy):

Models: 92FS (M9), PX4 Storm, APX, among others.

Quality: Beretta is one of the oldest gun manufacturers and is known for its consistent quality and design.

Price Range: \$500 - \$900 USD for most standard models.

e. Taurus (Brazil):

Models: G2C, Judge, TX22, among others.

Quality: Taurus offers budget-friendly options. While historically faced with some quality control issues, recent models have garnered positive feedback for value.

Price Range: \$250 - \$500 USD for most models.

2. Imported Ammunition:

a. Sellier & Bellot (Czech Republic):

Quality: Known for its consistent quality and reliability. Often used for range shooting.

Price Range (per 50 rounds of 9mm): \$10 - \$20 USD, depending on market conditions.

b. Fiocchi (Italy):

Quality: A reputable brand offering a range of ammunition from target to defense rounds.

Price Range (per 50 rounds of 9mm): \$12 - \$25 USD.

c. Prvi Partizan (Serbia):

Quality: Offers a wide variety of calibers, including many older and harder-to-find ones. Generally reliable for the price.

Price Range (per 50 rounds of 9mm): \$10 - \$20 USD.

d. Wolf (Russia):

Quality: Budget-friendly, often steel-cased which may not be suitable for all firearms or ranges.

Price Range (per 50 rounds of 9mm): \$8 - \$16 USD.

e. Barnaul (Russia):

Quality: Another steel-cased option, known for its reliability in firearms designed for such ammo (like AK variants).

Price Range (per 50 rounds of 9mm): \$8 - \$18 USD.

4. Common Firearms Used by U.S. Law Enforcement and Armed Forces:

1. Civilians:

a. Handguns:

Glock 19:

Caliber: 9mm.

Common Ammunition: 9mm FMJ for practice, 9mm Hollow Point (HP) for self-defense.

Smith & Wesson M&P Shield:

Caliber: Most popularly in 9mm, but also available in .40 S&W and .45 ACP.

Common Ammunition: FMJ for practice, HP for self-defense in respective calibers.

Sig Sauer P365:

Caliber: 9mm.

Common Ammunition: 9mm FMJ for practice, 9mm HP for self-defense.

b. Rifles (mostly for home defense or sport):

AR-15:

Caliber: Most commonly in .223 Remington/5.56x45mm NATO.

Common Ammunition: FMJ for practice, Hollow Point or Soft Point for home defense.

Ruger 10/22:

Caliber: .22 LR.

Common Ammunition: .22 LR standard or high velocity for sport shooting and practice.

2. Law Enforcement:

a. Handguns:

Glock 17/19:

Caliber: 9mm.

Common Ammunition: Duty ammo often includes 9mm HP, like the Speer Gold Dot or Federal HST.

Sig Sauer P320:

Caliber: 9mm.

Common Ammunition: 9mm HP, popular duty rounds include the Speer Gold Dot or Federal HST.

b. Rifles:

AR-15 (Various manufacturers):

Caliber: .223 Remington/5.56x45mm NATO.

Common Ammunition: HP or Soft Point for duty use.

Shotguns:

Brands: Remington 870, Mossberg 500.

Common Ammunition: 00 Buckshot for duty use.

3. U.S. Armed Forces:

a. Rifles:

M4 Carbine:

Caliber: 5.56x45mm NATO.

Common Ammunition: M855 "Green Tip" FMJ for standard issue, MK262 Mod 1 for special operations.

M16 Rifle:

Caliber: 5.56x45mm NATO.

Common Ammunition: M855 "Green Tip" FMJ.

b. Handguns:

M17/M18 (Military versions of the Sig Sauer P320):

Caliber: 9mm.

Common Ammunition: M1152 FMJ and M1153 Special Purpose (a jacketed hollow point round).

5. Penetration Characteristics & Armor Resistance/Characteristics:

Understanding the penetration capability of various ammunition types is crucial for both self-defense considerations and understanding safety risks. Below, we've detailed some general penetration characteristics and which NIJ armor levels certain rounds can defeat:

a. Handgun Ammunition:

Ammo Type	Penetration in Soft Targets	NIJ Armor Level Penetration
9mm FMJ	12-18 inches	Level IIA
9mm Hollow Point	9-15 inches	Level IIA
.40 S&W FMJ	14-20 inches	Level IIA - II
.40 S&W HP	10-16 inches	Level IIA
.45 ACP FMJ	14-22 inches	Level II
.45 ACP HP	11-17 inches	Level IIA

b. Rifle Ammunition:

Ammo Type	Penetration in Soft Targets	NIJ Armor Level Penetration
.223 Remington/5.56x45mm M193 FMJ	10-14 inches	Level IIIA (may penetrate)
.223 Remington/5.56x45mm M855 "Green Tip"	12-16 inches	Level III
7.62x39mm FMJ	18-24 inches	Level III (special steel core may penetrate)
.308 Winchester/7.62x51mm FMJ	22-28 inches	Level III

c. Shotgun Ammunition:

Ammo Type	Penetration in Soft Targets	NIJ Armor Level Penetration
Birdshot	4-6 inches	Level IIA (typically stopped)
00 Buckshot	12-18 inches	Level II - IIIA
Slugs	20-30 inches	Level IIIA (may penetrate)

Armor Plate Characteristics:

NIJ Level	Description	Stops Most...	Typical Price Range	Typical Weight (per plate)
	Common Materials			
IIA	Minimum level of protection	9mm, .40 S&W	\$100 - \$250	0.8 - 1.5 lbs (soft armor)
	Aramid fibers like Kevlar, Twaron			
II	Protection against some higher velocity 9mm and .357 Magnum 9mm FMJ at higher velocities, .357 Magnum JSP	\$100 - \$300	1 - 2 lbs (soft armor)	Aramid fibers, layered fabrics
IIIA	Highest level of soft armor protection	.357 SIG FMJ, .44 Magnum SJHP	\$150 - \$500	1.5 - 2.5 lbs (soft armor)
	Aramid fibers, polyethylene layers			
III	Basic level for hard armor	7.62mm FMJ (M80 – NATO Ball Bullet)	\$250 - \$600	5 - 9 lbs (hard armor)
	Steel, polyethylene, or ceramic			
IV	Protection against armor-piercing rounds	.30 caliber armor-piercing bullets	\$400 - \$1,000	7 - 12 lbs (hard armor)
	Ceramic/composite or steel			

Notes:

Weight: The weight of armor plates can vary widely based on the exact materials used, the design, and the manufacturer. Polyethylene plates are generally lighter than their ceramic or steel counterparts but may be thicker.

Price: The price can fluctuate based on brand, materials, and other factors like the inclusion of additional coatings or features (e.g., anti-spall coatings).

Materials:

Aramid Fibers: Materials like Kevlar are used in soft armor and are effective at stopping handgun rounds.

Polyethylene: A type of plastic, ultra-high-molecular-weight polyethylene (UHMWPE) is used in some modern armor plates. It's light and can be very effective but tends to be thicker than ceramic or steel plates.

Steel: While effective and often less expensive than ceramic or polyethylene, steel plates are heavier and can be susceptible to spalling (where fragments from the bullet or plate itself can be ejected from the point of impact).

Ceramic: Often used in combination with other materials in composite armor, ceramic plates distribute the force of the bullet throughout the plate, helping to stop the round.

Risks Associated with Steel Armor Plates

Spalling and Fragmentation Danger:

When a bullet strikes steel armor, it often disintegrates upon impact, creating a burst of fragments or spall. These fragments can travel at high speeds in various directions, potentially causing severe injury or even death. While the plate may effectively stop the bullet's penetration, the fragmentation can pose a risk to the wearer's face, neck, arms, and other unprotected areas.

To mitigate this risk:

Anti-spall coatings: Many manufacturers apply coatings to their steel plates, such as special layers of rubber, polymer, or other materials, designed to capture or reduce spalling. It's essential to ensure your steel armor plate includes such a coating and regularly inspect it for wear or damage.

Wear appropriate gear: Using additional protective gear like throat protectors, side armor, and full coverage helmets can further reduce the risk from spalling.

Regular Inspection: Steel plates, especially those with anti-spall coatings, should be regularly inspected for signs of wear, damage, or deterioration. Repeated impacts can reduce the plate's integrity and its spall protection effectiveness.

Consider Alternatives: While steel plates offer durability and can be more affordable than ceramic or polyethylene options, weigh the benefits against the potential risks. Depending on your needs and budget, other armor types might offer better safety with less risk of spalling.

Important Note: Common Armor Choices for U.S. Police and Military Forces

1. U.S. Law Enforcement:

Patrol Officers:

Typically wear soft body armor under their uniforms.

Commonly NIJ Level II or IIIA, which offers protection against most handgun threats.

Tactical/SWAT Units:

Often equipped with hard armor plates in addition to soft armor.

Usually NIJ Level III or IV, allowing protection against rifle threats. Plate carriers or tactical vests often used for added equipment storage.

2. U.S. Military Forces:

Standard Infantry:

Use Improved Outer Tactical Vest (IOTV) or Scalable Plate Carrier (SPC) with hard armor plates.

Plates are generally equivalent to NIJ Level III with some Level IV capability, designed to stop rifle rounds, including some armor-piercing threats.

Special Operations:

Armor choices vary based on the mission. Lightweight plate carriers with NIJ Level III or IV plates are common.

Use of specialized or commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) equipment is more prevalent, tailored to specific operational needs.

Final Thoughts: Firearms and ammunition selection is vast, with many considerations based on intended use, budget, and personal preference. Safety, training, and responsible use are paramount. Always research and consult with professionals when considering purchasing or using firearms.