

Safe gun storage

- gun safe installation

by Craig Richards

It is the responsibility of all firearms users to ensure that their firearms are properly stored. There are regulations in each state determining minimum storage requirements, but I like to think responsible shooters will not only meet, but exceed these specifications and do all they can to ensure their firearms are safe and secured. So do the right thing not only for yourself, but for the future of our sport and fellow shooters as well and secure those firearms in a properly installed safe.

Safe positioning

Before you permanently install your safe, put some thought into where to locate it, both for maximum security and for the well being of your firearms as well. You don't want to store your guns anywhere there is a chance of leaking water or high humidity as both are corrosion starters. Also, temperature extremes should be avoided if possible, particularly with wooden gunstocks, which can warp, and ammunition storage. It is for these reasons that the safe is better positioned under the main roof of the house where insulation and security is much better than in an unlined shed.

With many of us living in coastal or tropical areas, it is a good idea to position some form of moisture absorber inside the safe to keep the air within dry to prevent rust from taking hold on your firearms. Tubs of moisture-absorbing crystals are available from supermarkets and hardware stores. Alternatively, many items you buy from the shops come packed with silica gel sachets, which can be thrown in the safe. These can come in everything from electrical goods and reloading gear to taco shells! Remington also make a specialist dehumidifier, which is a more expensive option but is said to provide excellent protection for your guns.

Take care to position your safe away from prying eyes, where it cannot easily be seen from windows. Roller doors on garages are another consideration. A safe needs to be positioned where it cannot be seen by the whole street every time you drive in and out of your garage. A mate of mine has his safe mounted inside a linen cupboard and no-one would ever know it was there - a great idea. While we all should be publicly proud to be shooters, it's certainly not a good idea to advertise to the world that there are guns in your house and where they are located.

The security of the room containing the safe should also be given some consideration and strong door and window locks are cheap insurance. For standard sliding aluminium windows, a simple piece of 12mm dowel dropped into the bottom channel will prevent the window being slid open from the outside - another cheap but effective hint.

I am lucky enough to have an understanding wife and my new house has a purpose-built gunroom under the main roof. It is about the size of a single bedroom, has a solid-core door with a deadlock and security mesh inside the window for added security. Inside it are my bolted safes, ammo locker and my reloading bench and related equipment. The walls have enough space left to mount my trophies, which nicely complete the room. It gives me peace of mind to know that my firearms are safe.

Securing a safe

Having a good safe is one thing, but unless it is properly fastened to the floor or the wall, it is hardly worth having. Most new safes come with pre-drilled mounting holes, but it is no great hardship to drill some if it doesn't. The safe can be attached by one or both of two methods: to the



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It is a simple procedure to bolt down a safe. All that is needed is an impact drill, some dynabolts and the correct size masonry bit. A piece of electrical tape wrapped around the bit at the correct depth will tell you how deep to drill.

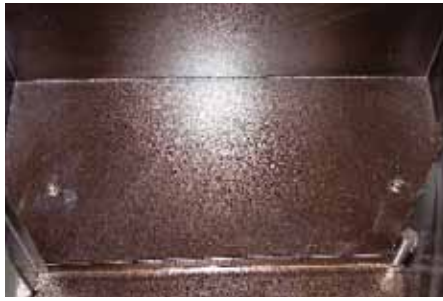


The dynabolts will need to be tapped into the hole with a hammer, but it is important to do this with the nut lightly screwed on to prevent losing the bolt down the hole.

wall or floor. I must admit I like to bolt my safes down into the concrete so I know they cannot go anywhere. This is easily achieved with an impact drill, masonry bit and some dynabolts, which are specially designed to expand in their holes as they are tightened with a spanner. Refer to the photos for the required steps. I like to use larger 12mmx60mm dynabolts, as they are much harder to rip out of the concrete than smaller versions.

If attaching your safe to the wall, you must use masonry bolts or plugs for solid walls. For the now-common plasterboard walls, you will need to find a timber wall stud first, either by tapping gently with your knuckle or with a laser stud finder. Insert a few long wood screws from inside the safe straight through the plasterboard and into the stud and you are done. It is a good idea to pass these screws or bolts through a piece of timber behind the safe the same thickness as your skirting boards, to stop the safe from tilting back as the screws are tightened.

An even better method than these two is the use of Chemset anchor bolts. These work in a similar way to dynabolts, but instead of a bolt, a tube of chemical compound is dropped down the hole into the concrete and a bolt is then driven into this



With the bolts seated in their holes, it is a simple matter to fasten them firmly with a spanner or socket wrench. The job is almost complete!

tube with an impact drill. This sets off a chemical reaction, which sets the bolt permanently in place. These bolts are used by professional safe fitters in applications such as bank and business safes; but remember, they are pretty much a permanent proposition, so you want to be very satisfied with the position of your safe first.

It does not take a lot of time or effort to properly secure your gun safe and the peace of mind it brings makes it well worth the effort. Besides the fact that the police can make random visits to check on your storage arrangements, it is worth knowing that your firearms will be where you locked them the next time you head out for a shoot. ●



The finished item. Some form of gun-rack inside the safe is necessary to prevent guns from falling over. Since this photo was taken, Craig Richards has added a rubber floor mat for the same reason. The things in the bottom are sachets of silica gel to absorb moisture from the air within the safe to prevent rust.