



Carrying your Shotgun

Before you receive a firearms license for any category or type of firearm you will be required to undertake an approved safety course.

Carrying a firearm will be an important part of material addressed in that course. However, some tips are useful in that period where you may be looking at or handling someone else's shotgun or looking at the wonderful offerings at your local gun shop.

At all times remember, a shotgun should always be considered loaded until proven empty and, even then, still handled as if it were loaded...

In general shotguns are carried:

- Dismantled in a case
- Muzzle down in a gun slip
- Broken and as recommended across the crook of your arm



Obsessive is Good

Join the most safety obsessive shotgun owners who...

- Immediately open any shotgun they touch
- Never point it in an unsafe direction – they are always aware of where it is pointed
- Always carry their shotgun in a way that other people can see it is unloaded
- Never carry a loaded shotgun one step further than is necessary – break the gun and remove the shells

Remember, shotguns do not have the same internal firing pin locks that feature on modern rifles. If the gun is closed with a shell in the chamber a sharp knock or jolt at either end of the gun or to the breach and barrel can cause the pins to jump against their springs and the gun may fire.

Many, many instances have been reported where a shotgun has discharged because it has been dropped or knocked over while loaded. Quite a few have resulted in tragedy.

Using A Gun Slip

On shooting ranges it is normal for slings on shotguns to be banned. It is normally required that all shooters carry their gun open or in a suitable gun slip.



- The gun slip has a sling and it should be carried muzzle down over your shoulder
- This will prevent the shotgun falling out if the zip fails
- It ensures the gun is carried with the muzzle pointed to the ground (never point the muzzle end of the slip toward anyone else)

Whenever you are inserting your gun into or removing your gun from a gun slip develop a habit of:

- Sliding the barrels of the gun into the slip while the gun is open, checking the breach and closing the gun as you slide it forward
- Opening the gun as you extract it from the slip so that it is open when your barrels clear the end of the slip and you can double check the barrels are clear
- Keeping your hands well clear of the trigger.



The Open Carry

Unless it is being aimed or placed in a gun slip or case, a shotgun is always open for:

- Carrying
- Passing to another person
- Placing on a table or the ground
- Navigating fences or gates
- Waiting your turn to shoot
- Inspecting in a gun shop
- Showing or bragging to someone else
- Whenever it's in your hands



And there is always a fashion accessory available – Dingo Toe Caps will keep the muzzle of your shotgun out of the dirt and firmly centred on the toe of your boot!

It is always recommended you carry your shotgun open and over the crook of the arm. Experienced shooters will balance the open shotgun on their shoulder or on the toe of their boot. In the best of company both these habits may attract some tut-tuts and frowns.

However you carry your shotgun always make sure it is open and you and everyone around you can see that it is unloaded.

Proving Empty

The most important lesson to learn and habit to develop is one of constantly proving your shotgun is empty and the barrels are clear.

- Whenever you touch a shotgun immediately open it and prove it is empty.

Passing a Shotgun to another person – ALWAYS do so:

- With the gun open and empty
- After you have checked the gun is empty and the barrels are clear
- In a manner that presents the stock first so the recipient can see the chambers are empty
- In a manner that does not result in the barrels facing yourself or anyone else.

Crossing a Barrier or Fence – On your Own or in Company.

Whenever you have to cross a barrier DO NOT try to carry the gun over the barrier.

- Open the gun
- Prove it is Empty
- Place the gun on the ground where you can reach it from the other side or
- Lean it against a support with the muzzles up and the stock down ensuring it cannot slip, fall or be knocked over as you climb the obstacle
- Retrieve the gun in a way that it remains pointing in a safe direction at all times
- Finish by once again opening the gun and proving it is unloaded and the barrels are clear.

Crossing a Fence with a Mate

- One of you holds both shotguns, open, empty and pointed in a safe direction
- Wait until your mate is through the fence and has a firm footing on the other side
- Pass both guns across the barrier to the other person following all the rules listed above
- Clear the fence and then recheck all is safe and your own shotgun is firmly within your grasp before walking on.

Vehicle Dangers

- Never travel in any vehicle with a loaded shotgun anywhere in the vehicle
- Never travel standing in a ute with a closed or loaded shotgun (yes it still happens on spotlighting expeditions)
- Never try to shoot from a moving vehicle
- Remember dogs, guns, children and inexperienced shooters in vehicles can all create dangerous combinations that too often end in tragedy.

A Note on Flags

- On many shooting ranges safety flags for all types of firearms are becoming commonly required. This is especially important for Category C shotguns that do not open at the breach. Flags relate more to rifles and pistols than shotguns at this time but the future could be different.

