
Where Can I Learn More?

If you're confused or intimidated by the equipment presented, or the idea of firing a gun, you're not alone! Fortunately, you are also in good company. Your local SRA chapter may be able to teach you how to safely handle a pistol.

Some SRA chapters also offer licensing classes, to help you get your permit to carry a firearm

Choosing a handgun is a personal and involved process. When choosing your first pistol, try a variety of models and bring someone along who can help answer your questions

Once you've learned the basics of pistol shooting and chosen your first pistol, consider taking concealed carry and defensive shooting classes, or find resources to improve your marksmanship for recreational or competitive shooting. Your local SRA chapter can help get you in touch with all of those resources.

How Do I Join the SRA?

The Socialist Rifle Association's mission is to uphold the right of the working class to keep and bear arms and maintain the skills necessary for self and community defense.

You can learn more and join us at:

Socialistra.org

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Pistol Components



This educational guide is produced by the Education and Instruction Committee of the Socialist Rifle Association.

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SOCIALIST RIFLE ASSOCIATION
Gun safety is everyone's duty. We keep us safe.

Pistol Basics

What's a Pistol?

Broadly speaking, a pistol is a semi-automatic firearm designed to be fired with one hand. There are exceptions, but this definition covers the vast majority of pistols. There are thousands of models and types of pistols, in many shapes and sizes, but almost all of them share a common set of features and layout.

Why carry a pistol?

Pistols are the most common firearm carried for self defense outside the home, and are also a frequent choice for recreational and competitive shooters. With proper training and practice, a pistol vastly increases your capacity to defend yourself or others in life-or-death situations, while being small and light enough to be carried concealed in a manner that won't alarm those around you. Recreational shooters may enjoy the wide variety of choices available and the reduced size, weight, and cost of pistol shooting compared to a rifle or shotgun



Springfield 1911 with cable lock

Pistol Components

Not all pistols will have all of the components pictured here; some will not have a hammer, safety, or rail, and some may have grip safety (see picture on the bottom left).

- Barrel: The tube through which the bullet moves, usually with rifling (spiral grooves)
- Front/Rear Sight: Used to acquire target and aim the pistol
- Slide: Contains the extractor and ejector and moves back and forth to cycle the pistol
- Ejection Port: Empty cases are ejected here
- Cocking Serrations: Help provide grip when manually racking the slide
- Hammer: Falls forward to hit the firing pin when the trigger is squeezed
- Safety: Keeps the gun from firing unintentionally when engaged
- Grip: Pistol is held here
- Magazine Well: Magazine is inserted here
- Magazine Release: Push to drop the magazine. Some guns can fire even when the magazine is removed!
- Trigger Guard: Prevents accidentally squeezing the trigger
- Trigger: Fires the pistol
- Slide Release: Locks back and releases the pistol slide for inspection/clearing
- Rail: Lights and laser mount here
- Muzzle: Bullet fires from here
- Magazine: Holds ammunition for the pistol
- Follower: Orients ammunition for proper feed
- Floorplate: Sometimes has extensions for improved grip on smaller pistols



CZ P-09 and magazine