



SURVIVAL PAPER #SP94-3

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HOW TO CACHE FIREARMS

By Phil Hunter

(The following article reflects the author's opinions and does not necessarily those of Live Free, its officers, or members.)

Lately there's been a lot of justified fear that the gun grabbers are out to take away various types of firearms. Whether to give up your guns to government officials or hide them is a personal decision, and I don't intend to encourage readers to break the law or counsel them to do so.

On the other hand, the time may come when a despotic government tries to take away our rights and freedom. Historically, the first step toward such ends started with gun confiscation.

When a despotic government tries to take over, firearms in the hands of the common man are needed to preserve freedom. With this in mind, this article outlines the steps needed to protect a firearm from its environment as well as detection.

If you're hiding a gun or its ammunition, great care must be taken that the firearm and cartridges aren't destroyed in storage. In the past, some partisan fighters in Europe and the Philippines buried guns and ammunition improperly. Later, the weapons were retrieved to fight the invaders – but rust and moisture had made them inoperable.

Such damage can be avoided. One way to do this is to purchase a stainless steel gun or one with nickel, chrome, or one of the newer tough finishes that are rustproof. Stainless steel guns DO corrode; stainless steel isn't entirely stainless. You need to keep stainless steel guns lightly oiled when they are in use as well to avoid discoloration spots. A light coat of oil isn't necessary on guns with painted finishes, Teflon, chrome nickel, or similar finishes. Blued or parkerized firearms must always have a light coat of oil on their surfaces to help prevent rust.

Avoid getting oil on plastic or wooden grips as the oil may damage them with time. Never apply heavy amounts of oil to a firearm. Oil attracts dirt and grit, which will damage moving parts on a gun. All that's needed is very light coat for protection and lubrication.

Modest rust spots can be removed by lightly rubbing steel wool soaked in oil over the corrosion. The metal doesn't need to be refinished if it is kept lightly oiled, though touch up blue can be used to cover any metal exposed by the removal of the rust.

If you're caching a gun for long periods, there are several chemical formulas in the marketplace that give added protection against rust. Outers' "Metal Seal" is one that's readily available at most gun stores; the chemical displaces water somewhat, adheres to the surface of steel, and acts as a lubricant as well.

Cached arms can be encased in paraffin, cosmoline, or other grease and/or wax combination to prevent rust formation. These can be improvised by melting candles and mixing them with a heavy oil,

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taking care not to set the mixture aflame. An easier alternative to this is simply to buy Outers' "Gun Grease". This product is formulated for long-term storage use and is sold at many large gun stores. Before storing the gun, clean the metal surfaces. Wear rubber or cloth gloves while cleaning and packing the firearm in grease so sweat doesn't get onto the metal to promote rust.

Two important areas of any firearm are its bolt and the bore of its barrel. Be sure to coat the inside of the gun with grease as well as its exterior. Cover the internal parts and bolt face since these are of greater importance than protecting the exterior of the gun from rust.

The storage container for the firearm should allow air movement through it. This prevents moisture from accumulating inside the container. If you must use a watertight container (and in some very damp places this may be called for), place a hygroscopic chemical packet inside the container, away from the firearm.

Silica gel is the hygroscopic chemical of choice. It's available at most drug stores or can be purchased from the Hydrosorbent Company, Box 437, Ashley Falls, MA 01222.

If you're simply hiding a weapon in a house (say inside a wall or under insulation), be sure the firearm is stored where it won't get wet. Setting a gun in a basement where a leak may go unnoticed for a year or so isn't ideal.

If you opt to burying a firearm, cache it in an area slightly higher than its surroundings. This will prevent moisture from pooling over the spot where the gun is buried.

The firearm's container should be buried with a thick layer of rocks or gravel under it. This will allow water to pool below the gun to seep into the soil. Roofing paper or plastic should be layered over the gun's container to divert water away. The earth and plants over the cache should be carefully camouflaged.

If authorities believe you buried a weapon, it is probable that metal detectors will be used to search for it. Fortunately, there are cheap countermeasures to metal detectors. Just sprinkle bits of metal, aluminum foil, BBs, tacks, or scrap metal around the area. This metal sets most metal detectors off. Unless the searchers want to dig up a huge area, they will most likely give up before locating your firearm.

Also be sure to avoid hiding a weapon near buried utility lines or where construction work might occur.

Hopefully, it will never be necessary for you to hide your firearms from a repressive government. But if the time comes, it is possible to do so with a minimum of time and work.