

GUN CLEANING PARTY

Taking the time to clean something isn't necessarily at the top of my favorite-things-to-do list. But I know it's a task that must be done – whether it's the refrigerator, the teenager's closet, the trunk of my car, the kids themselves, or my pistols. And what's better than completing an otherwise tedious and dull task than finishing your gun-cleaning regimen in the presence of your closest group of friends?

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Technically, handguns should be cleaned and lubricated as soon after you use them as possible if they are going to be stored and put away. And they should be cleaned regularly if they are shot often. As well, your defensive firearms (and everyday carry guns) should follow a pretty strict cleaning routine. This includes cleaning them immediately after hitting the range, storing them clean, and checking them about once a month for any build-up or problems.

What you'll need to do before cleaning your firearm is review your owner's manual. Be sure to understand your pistol and the tools needed for disassembly and reassembly, and look for instructions and tips on how and where to clean and lube your gun. They're all a little different. And a little planning and knowledge beforehand can help you avoid causing damage to the gun ... or to yourself. Too, you don't want to end up leaving key sections unlubricated, losing a tool or a part, or launching a spring into the unknown.

Seems logical enough, right? And, thankfully, cleaning your handgun is usually a lot easier than tackling that refrigerator.

WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING

- Your Firearms Owner's Manual (*and the knowledge of how to field strip and reassemble your firearm*)
- A Gun Cleaning Kit or Supplies (*typically including cleaner, grease, and oil, along with patches and bore brushes*)
- Old T-shirts or Rags (*for the nitty gritty cleaning part*)
- Toothbrushes or Q-Tips (*for the really nitty gritty cleaning part*)

THE BASIC STEPS

After you enjoy food, fun, and fellowship, while chatting about the whys, whens, and hows of gun cleaning, clear away the food and get down to the dirty business. Be sure to check (and double-check) each gun with each participant to ensure safety before the firearms are even allowed in the room. (And make a rule that no ammo of any kind is allowed at the party.) Step by step, go over the following cleaning basics, ask questions, make errors, correct errors, and accomplish your task at hand!

- 1 Prepare the area (*be sure to have clear work spaces and good ventilation*)
- 2 Ensure the gun is unloaded and always pointed in the safest direction (**IMPORTANT – NO AMMO ALLOWED!**)
- 3 Field strip your firearm to its basic components (*typically frame, magazine, slide, barrel, spring, and guide rod*)
- 4 Apply cleaner/degreaser
- 5 Clean, scrub, and wipe components clean (*using rags, patches, toothbrushes, bore brushes, bore snake, etc.*)
- 6 Lightly apply lubricant (*check your manual; usually you should apply to the "moving pieces" where parts rub together and cause the most friction and wear*)
- 7 Reassemble your pistol, and cycle the slide a few times (*wipe off any excess product*)

Optional: apply a light coat of oil to the gun to protect the finish

Not Optional: sit back and enjoy the fruits of your labor – *a clean firearm!*

- Bore Snake (*if you have one, because they are very helpful cleaning tools*)
- Old Towel or Placemat (*to keep your work surface clean and to keep your gun and parts in one place*)
- SNACKS (*what's a party without the food and beverages, right?*)

