



GUN SAFE BUYERS GUIDE

Maximum Security Safes offers a wide variety of gun safes with options to meet every need. Let us help you get educated so you can choose the right one for you. While pricing is important to the consumer, one should consider other factors such as how much protection you need, where the safe will go, and what accessories will be helpful. With this guide, and the assistance of our gun safe specialists, you will be sure to make a good investment.

Buying a Gun Safe

If you have a gun, you should have a safe. Gun safes are important to protect from inappropriate use, theft, fire damage, and in some cases, to protect from liability. In California, firearms owners may be held liable if their gun is not protected in a safe and is stolen.

There is no excuse to not have a DOJ approved gun safe. There are gun safes available at a wide range of price points to meet any need. However, this wide selection can make choosing the right gun safe a challenge. This Gun Safe Buyers' Guide will help you find your way as you select the right safe, with the right features, at the right price, for your needs.

Questions to consider:

- **What type or style of gun safe do I want?**
- **How much burglar protection makes sense?**
- **Do I need fire protection, if so how much?**
- **How big of a safe should I buy?**
- **Where should I put my safe?**
- **Should I bolt my safe down?**
- **What kind of lock do I prefer?**
- **How much do I have to spend?**
- **Do I need protection from humidity?**
- **What accessories should I get?**

Types of Gun Safes

Safes for firearms run the gamut. Do you want to secure a single handgun for home protection, do you have an arsenal, or is it something in between?

Pistol Safes are great for storing one or two pistols in a convenient location with easy access via an electronic or biometric/fingerprint lock. Back up key locks are common on these safes as generally the batteries are located in-side the safe. These safes generally do not have fire protection due to their small size. They are great for home protection, but they have limited burglar protection, so don't store expensive jewelry or lots of cash here.

If you want to be able to secure the safe at home and keep your pistol safe secure when you take it to the range, there is an option for that as well.

CA DOJ approved pistol safes to consider:



VS20I

Tough and rugged, quick access safe with Smart Safe Technology providing highly interactive experience from your smartphone. Opens with fingerprint, backlit keypad, keys or smartphone app.



PS1210HD

Take this with you to the range, heavy duty pistol safe with handle and option to tether in car or at home with cable purchased separately.



NSL20I

Slim vertical design with mounting plate. Secure under a desk or nightstand, discreetly on a bookshelf, or conspicuously in a vehicle. Quick access safe with Smart Safe Technology.



AMSEC WEST2114

In-wall safe that can be easily hidden in a closet, behind clothes or behind a picture.

Rifle Safes protect one or more rifles, most are vertically oriented, either stand-alone or in-wall, and some are horizontal to fit under the bed.. They come in a wide range of sizes with room for as few as one rifle or, theoretically, as many as 100. You can get them with or without fire protection, with a mechanical, electronic, biometric or redundant lock and with steel thickness from 16 gauge to ½” thick.

A few popular rifle safes to consider:



TF5517

Very versatile small gun safe, 18” wide with the option for either a gun or all shelf interior.



BFII6030

Best burglar protection with 2 hour fire protection, ½” steel door and combined ½” steel in body.



V-LINE 51653-S

In-wall rifle safe, a great way to store firearms without taking up precious floor space. Mounts between standard 16” on center studs. Easy access push button lock.



UBS648

Under-bed rifle safe, out of the way convenient access when you need it.

Burglar Protection

First, understand that there is no such thing as a burglar proof safe; there are degrees of burglar resistance. As you have seen in the movies, even the very most secure safe or vault can be broken into given the right tools, expertise, and most importantly, time. Safes are designed to deter and slow down a thief. They are not the only, but the last line of defense after your locked door, barking dog and alarm system.

When shopping for good burglar protection, look for a gun safe with blend of security features. Burglar ratings and classifications can get technical and complicated. Boiling it down, the most important characteristic is steel, plenty of it and the thicker the better. The most common way a burglar attacks a safe is by trying to pry it open. Plenty of steel will foil a pry attack as well as slow the use of a grinder or drill, should your burglar be so prepared. Look for a minimum of 12-gauge steel, better yet two layers of steel in the body, and significantly thicker steel in the door. Hint: where gauge is concerned, the larger the number the thinner the steel.

In order to prevent a successful pry attack, look for a safe with minimal gap between the door and the frame of the safe and substantial door thickness. Larger gaps provide space for a burglar to wedge in a tool. When considering door thickness, look at the protective portion of the door, not the compartment where the bolt work is located. Most guns safes are “composite”, a combination of steel and fire retardant material. A thicker door will be more difficult for a burglar to get their tool around to pry it open.

Look for plenty of bolts, the thinner the steel and door, the more important the bolts will be in a pry attack. The lock should be rated by U.L. as high security to ensure quality protection and reliability.



Safes don't wear out, purchase the right safe the first time.

When working with a reputable dealer and a quality brand, the familiar saying, you get what you pay for, holds true. Only you can decide how much you are willing to pay to protect your guns. But keep in mind, most people find they put more than just guns in their safe. Over time there may be jewelry, cash, important documents, possibly even pre-

cious metals that you want to secure in the safe that you originally had in mind, just for guns. Safes don't wear out, purchase the right safe the first time. We recommend the AMSEC BFII Series with a ½" total steel body and ½" steel plate composite door as the best value in high end gun safes.

Fire Protection

Yes, purchasing a safe with fire protection is recommended. As mentioned previously, the safe you intend just for guns, will likely end up with any number of other valuables over time. Also, keep in mind that all fire ratings are NOT the same. Some claimed ratings are not supported by testing, and those that are, may not be comparable.

There are a number of testing companies that use different procedures. A 30-minute test or rating may include 15 minutes of heat up time and only 15 minutes at 1200°. Underwriters Laboratories has the highest testing standards but are very expensive, and not used by most gun safe manufacturers.

A fire rating typically includes three numbers, the external temperature that the safe was exposed to, the maximum internal temperature in the safe (usually 350°F) and the length of time of the test. The safe is put in an oven and probes positioned; top, bottom and center of the safe are monitored. Test lengths generally run 30, 45, 60, 90, or 120 minutes. A typical house fire burns at approximately 1100°F, with paper igniting at approximately 450°F.

Look for a safe with a good door seal. A good door seal helps keep out heat and smoke. The seal can also help block moist air that may cause rust forming on your guns. Look for the seal strip to run all the way around the door frame. Palusol is a popular brand of seal, expanding to eight times its normal thickness when exposed to heat.

For those of us living in the city or suburb with a fire station in close proximity, we recommend a minimum of 45 minutes fire protection. If you live out from the more populated areas you may want more. As with burglar protection, only you can make the decision of how much is enough.

Internal or External Hinges

A quick word about hinges. Provided the safe you are considering is UL rated as RSC or better, the purpose of the hinges is for door swing, while it's the bolts or dead bar that secure the door. As a result, other things being equal, there isn't a difference in burglar security between internal

and external hinges. Fire security on the other hand can be impacted by hinge placement. Some internal hinged safes have a section of fire board removed to make room for the hinges to move in and out. This design seriously compromises the fire resistance provided by the safe. Internal hinges provide a nice clean look on the outside

of the safe but may restrict the door opening to 90°. That reduces access to the right side of the safe by a few inches, which is a concern for safes 24" wide or less but isn't a significant problem with wider safes. Safes with external hinges allow door swings of 180° with full access.

Size

Gun safe manufacturers indicate the number of guns a particular safe will hold. Those suggestions are based on the number of slots they put in the racks, but often are not an accurate reflection of what the safe will actually fit. Keep in mind you may fit closer to 50 – 75% of the number of guns suggested by the manufacturer. Accessories such as Rifle Rods and Handgun Hangers will help you use your space more efficiently.

Rifle Safes should be a minimum of 55" tall inside, but the most popular are 58" tall offering more flexibility for longer guns and a shelf above to store other items. The narrow rifle safes, less than 24" wide most often have only one section for rifles, where those 24" and wider generally have a divider with two or more sections allowing the option to put shelves for miscellaneous items in one or more section.

The largest size that fits in most closets is 60"h x 24"w x 24"d. The most popular rifle safe size is around 60"h x 30"w x 24"d. Keep the future in mind. Customers regularly say they wish they bought a bigger safe.

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Where to Put the Safe

Safes used to secure home defense weapons must be conveniently located. You may want to have personal defense weapons in multiple locations around your home. The most popular places are the master bedroom, kitchen

and entry closet. Secure the safe in a place that isn't visible to kids or intruders, such as under the bed, in a closet hidden by clothes, or in a kitchen cabinet.

Rifle safes securing weapons used for sporting purposes are commonly located in the garage, under a bed or in a less frequently used room in the house. Don't store drills or grinders near your safe – you don't want to give the burglar any ideas. If you put it in the garage keep it out of sight by positioning it in the corner that can't be seen when the garage door is open, build a cabinet around it or cover it with a safe cloak or tarp. A covered gun safe looks just like an old refrigerator, which isn't of interest to most burglars.

Bolt Down

Bolting down is especially important for safes under 450 lbs. Bolt down deters a safe from being removed and from being tipped over, thus avoiding more leverage in a pry attack. This extra degree of security is always a good idea, however there are issues to consider when deciding whether to bolt your safe to your floor.

If the safe is going on a concrete foundation the real question is, why not? A safe bolted to this type of floor will be very difficult to tip over or remove. If the safe is going on a raised foundation constructed with plywood over 2x8 floor joist, the common bolt down involves four lag bolts drilled in from top down. This approach will provide some stabilization, but the wrong person could rock the safe or get a pry-bar under it and break it loose! A better approach is to come up from under the house and use a carriage bolt, tightening the nut and washer inside the safe. If the safe is going upstairs the scenario is much like that of a raised foundation, but bolting up from underneath is likely not possible. Instead, it is best to choose a safe that weighs 450 lbs. or more. This is enough weight that a couple of even the strongest guys won't be able to pick it up and get it out to their truck.

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Lock Choices

Gun safes come with mechanical, electronic, redundant and biometric locks. Regardless of style, the most important consideration is to get a safe with a UL rated, high security lock. This rating is a requirement to ensure the security and reliability you expect. Safe manufacturers choose what brand and type of lock to put on their safes. The better quality locks are interchangeable. Lock brands that we recommend are Sargent & Greenleaf and La Gard for mechanical locks, La Gard and AMSEC for electronic locks, LP and AMSEC for redundant and Sargent & Greenleaf for biometric locks.

The mechanical style lock is what we typically see in movies. Dialing open one of these locks requires time and patience, as well as good light. The three or four number combination is usually preset at the factory and requires a locksmith to change. Mechanical locks can come with a key locking dial as shown in our photo. A key is required to allow the dial to spin, adding an additional layer of protection. Mechanical locks can also come with a spy proof dial which makes it difficult for another to see what number is being dialed.



Mechanical



Redundant



Electronic



Biometric

Electronic locks have surpassed mechanical locks in popularity because of their ease of use. Electronic aka digital locks, are quick and simple to open with large, easy to read keypads. They allow you to select your own six-digit combination and change it at will. Power is supplied by one or two 9-volt batteries, located outside the safe, in the keypad.

Redundant locks integrate both the mechanical and electronic technology offering the best of both worlds. These locks also address concerns regarding EMP scenarios.

Biometric locks are gaining in reliability and popularity, but the better quality, and more reliable, ones are still quite expensive. For those early adopters, who want the hottest new thing this may be a great fit for you.

Accessories

The accessories you select can make all the difference in the convenience of your gun safe. LED lights maximize visibility, while hand gun hangers, pistol racks, rifle rods and storage cabinets can make organizing the contents of your safe a cinch. Dehumidifiers help control the environment within, keeping items protected from moisture over time.

Some versatile accessories include:



Storage Cabinet

Organize and protect your high value items with a 2 or 4 drawer cabinet. Fits select AMSEC gun safes and is great for storing guns, jewelry, and even paper files.



Mini Dehumidifier

Protect the interior of your safe from moisture, mold, mildew and odor. This compact unit is filled with highly absorbent silica gel. Renew the unit by pugging into an outlet overnight to release the water vapor.



Electric Dehumidifier

This device slightly warms the temperature inside your safe, keeping moisture in the air and not on your guns. Electrical access is required.



Interior Lighting

LED lighting provides illumination even when the room is dark. Requires AC power.



4-Gun Pistol Rack

Easily organize up to four pistols with this wire-frame rack. A plastic coating ensures protection of your handguns. Fits in most gun safes.



4 Pack Handgun Hangers

An inexpensive solution for freeing up space while organizing handguns, these hangers allow pistols to hang under the shelf leaving space on top of the shelf available for other valuables.



Rifle Rod Starter Kit

Fit more guns in your safe. With this kit, position your guns at intervals that work for your collection rather than being stuck with the manufacturer's rack. Additional rods available.

Cost

There is a gun safe at everyone's price point. Firearms safes start at under \$200 for a small pistol safe or the mid \$600's for a rifle safe with fire protection, and run up into several thousand for true "high security" gun safes.



There is a gun safe at everyone's price point.

Safes are often categorized by fire rating, and as you move up from one level to another, burglar security generally increases as well. Within a class of safes, stepping up in size is relatively inexpensive. If you have room, it's a good investment to buy one size larger than you think you need.

Installation

After choosing the right gun safe for your needs, next you have to think about installation. The task can be extremely dangerous for someone without experience, even if you're just tucking the safe away in the garage. Some safes have to be transported over grass, delicate floors, and upstairs. Homes inherently have tight spaces, which can cause trouble when installing large items. Maximum Security Safes has experienced technicians, unmarked vehicles and specialized equipment to get the job done discretely and safely. Paying a professional to install your safe is less costly than doing it yourself and paying for chiropractic care!

Why Maximum Security Safes?

Maximum Security Safes specializes in safes of all types and size. With a brick and mortar store for our local customers in Southern California and an informative website for customers near and far, we are committed to offering the best products and service. Our safe specialists are available to provide education to ensure you get the best safe for your needs. Why settle for less and risk not getting the best security, installation, and customer service? Put our 28 years of expertise to work for you.

Recommendations

- **Choose a safe from a well-known manufacturer and reputable dealer.**
- **Buy a safe larger than you think you need, all safes get small.**
- **Choose an electronic or redundant lock if multiple members of the family will be using the safe.**
- **Bolt your safe down to a concrete slab if it weighs less than 450 lbs.**



Maximum Security Safes offers safes of any type and size, with expertise and customer service backed by over 28 years in the business. The family owned and operated company carries the best in safes, and works to ensure customers feel confident in their decision.

Visit the website, call, or email Maximum Security Safes today to find out which home gun safe is right for you.