BEAT THE BAN

The Patriot's Survival Guide for the Coming Threat to Your Freedom

WHAT TO DO • WHAT TO BUY • HOW TO PREPARE
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“Beat the Ban”
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Dear Fellow Armed American,

With the new administration, and with new anti-gun legislation seemingly introduced on a daily basis, our right to keep and bear arms may soon cease to exist as we know it- just as it did in 1994, when the Clinton/Biden Assault Weapons Ban (the Crime Bill) was signed into law.

Fortunately, the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban expired in 2004, and we were given a second chance to become prepared. For the last five years, we have been able to once again arm ourselves with weapons that criminals have always had complete access to- ones that at least give us a chance of fighting back against. A quick look at some of the latest headlines, and it becomes quickly apparent to us that we won’t be so lucky the next time around. This is right from the WhiteHouse.gov website, under “Urban Policy”:

“[Obama and Biden] also support making the expired “Crime Bill” permanent.”

Not even 100 days into the Obama/Biden administration, our rights are already being severely threatened. On an even scarier note, some of the anti-gun bills we are seeing introduced make the 1994 crime bill look relatively tame.

Can you imagine...

✓ Not being able to buy ANY gun magazine that held more than ten rounds- ever again?
✓ Not being able to buy a semi-automatic handgun, rifle, or shotgun?
✓ Not being able to buy ammunition in large quantities? (‘Large’ may mean more than 50 rounds per week.)
✓ Having to pay $129.99 for a 50-round pack of “Winchester White Box” ammo, because every bullet had to be micro-stamped with its own unique serial number?
✓ Having to go through a Federal background check every time you want to even buy ammunition?

These are all just a few of the restrictions facing us as gun owners. Obama has already said that he doesn’t support our right to carry concealed weapons to protect our lives and the lives of our families. Joe Biden is the guy who wrote the 1994 Assault Weapons ban- and he’s proud of it. Obama was even once rated as the most liberal senator... see what I mean? I don’t know about you, but I smell trouble. I smell change.

This much we know: The first anti-gun legislation that we see will likely be a more restricting version of the 1994 Assault Weapons ban. You and I both know that these did NOTHING to prevent crime or save lives, and that the only thing it achieved was to disarm law abiding citizens. This time around will be nothing new.

Like the 1994-2004 ban, if you already own these things, you are “grand-fathered” in- the bill only applied to weapons manufactured AFTER the date of the bill’s enactment. On September 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1994, if you bought an AR15, you were a patriotic citizen doing your duty to keep your country free. If you did the same thing 24 hours later, you were a felon.
This is why it is more important than ever that we prepare NOW, while we can. We may not get a second chance. That is the purpose of this guide. We want to tell you how you should go about preparing, and building up a stock of supplies—be they weapons, ammunition, magazines, or accessories. We want to even help you find reliable, low priced sources from which to buy this stuff.

If the 1994 Assault Weapons ban is made permanent, the kinds of weapons, magazines, and ammunition that you need will suddenly become VERY hard (and VERY, VERY expensive) to get.

God forbid an even more restricting version of the Crime Bill be introduced that didn’t even include a grandfather clause, but once again— that is why we need to have a stock on hand.

Read on, my friend.
You Snooze, You Lose

By Gabe Suarez of Suarez International

Editor’s Note: Mr. Suarez actually wrote this article for our website (USconcealedcarry.com), and therefore, if you are a USCCA member, you already had access to this article. I am including it here as well, because it’s that important. If you haven't read it yet, well, now is your chance. If you have, read it again.

These last few weeks I have been inundated with emails and calls about what people should buy. The concern, and it is not an unwarranted concern, is that if they don't equip themselves now, they may never be able to buy the weapons they want. Looking at the political upheaval taking place, I can't disagree with them.

I remember the buying frenzy in California in 1989. I bought the last Springfield M1A in stock at the now defunct B&B Gun Sales for a whopping $599. That was all I could afford but I knew that I either bought it then or I was not going to get another chance. As it happened, I was right.

I also recall high capacity Glock 17 magazines selling for $150 as recently as four years ago prior to the sunset of the Assault Weapons Ban under GW Bush. If I was to give any advice at all it would be this. Buy whatever you think you will want now. If you need to sell your plasma screen TV, or your cool Rolex watch, or even go to the limit on your credit card to do it, then I would say that you do it. You may be able to get another plasma and another watch, and you will pay off your debts, but whether you will be able to find another AR-15 or another Glock pistol is not certain. So buy it now; even at today's rapidly inflating prices. If you snooze, well...you know the rest.

So the next question is what should you buy?

I will list this in levels, as not everyone can go out and drop a couple of house payments on guns and ammo. Besides, some readers may already have some of these levels already taken care of.

**Level 1:** Everyone needs a pistol. And by pistol I mean a full-size, semi-automatic fighting handgun.

Revolvers may be cool for some readers, but you can buy them anywhere - even in Mexico. You may not be able to say the same about a Glock four years from now. The handgun is what most readers will be familiar with. Additionally, the handgun is important because of its utility and concealability. It can be carried and worn every waking moment and can go everywhere you go.

I remember the buying frenzy in California in 1989. I bought the last Springfield M1A in stock at the now defunct B&B Gun Sales for a whopping $599. That was all I could afford but I knew that I either bought it then or I was not going to get another chance. As it happened, I was right.

I would look at something like a Glock, SIG, or Springfield XD. Even the S&W M&P pistol. Buy something modern and as good as you can afford. Used service pistols will also be just fine. And having three 9mm Glocks is better than having one super-cool competition pistol in a super-cool caliber. Moreover, I would make sure you have several magazines for it. I would say five magazines are an absolute minimum, and more is better. In the event of anti-magazine legislation in the future, magazines may be worth more than gold. Remember the $150 Glock magazines I spoke of? Stock up on magazines.

The caliber should be something in common use like 9mm, 40 S&W, or 45.ACP. Avoid special calibers that would be difficult to find. For example, the 357 Sig may be a wonderful round
with fantastic ballistics, but I will bet you won't find as many pistols or boxes of ammo for that as you will 9mm.

Remember, if you can't find it easily, everywhere, choose a different caliber.

Ammo quantity? Be sure you have at least 1000 rounds of good self-defense ammo for your pistols. Don't scrimp here. Look at any self-defense ammo from Winchester, Remington, Corbon, etc. Training ammo is next, but make sure you have the best stuff to load in your pistol for defensive uses. Training ammo depends on how much you want to train. As an absolute minimum, I like to keep ammo available for a monthly training session of 200 rounds. And I can do with less if needed. One year's worth of training ammo would be would be 2400 rounds. Four years worth would be approximately 10,000 rounds. Yes you can do with less, but ammo, like magazines, will never be cheaper than it is today.

**Level 2:** Next to a pistol, I believe every American should have a rifle. What rifle you pick will be determined by where you live, what you can afford, and what type of freedom you enjoy. Again, just like the pistol, I think it will be a long time before the "sportsman's" Remington 700 deer gun will be in short supply. The same goes for the "Lever Gun". I would look at what may be in short supply now.

By "rifle" I am not referring to a sporting firearm, I am referring to a self-defense fighting weapon. Some might want to call it an assault rifle, and that is not a bad name. I would pick a fighting rifle first. I would look at an AR-15, FAL, M1A or an AK-47 first. These will be much more costly than the pistol, but remember ... this may be your last chance. Any of these are good, and as usual, price may be a good indication of quality.

Again, don't say, "I will get one someday". "Today" is someday.

There are other choices of course. The old M1 Carbine is experiencing a rebirth and it is a fine weapon that is often overlooked due to its historical appearance. Similarly, the always affordable Simonov SKS carbine is also a great choice. And folks who live in areas where any of these would not be allowed can get a Ruger Mini-14. Even the non-martialized Saiga rifles will work fine here, and at a very affordable price. The point is to get something, and get it now.

Along with the rifle, I would buy as many magazines as you can afford. You will want to keep at least five for your personal use, but if you get more you can store them as a speculative investment if nothing else. As an example, AR/M16 magazines and AK-47 magazines are selling now for between $10 and $35.

I would look at the ammo requirements next. The same rule applies. 1000 rounds of good defensive ammo with additional training ammo added on as affordable.

**Level 3:** Seek training in the use of the weapons you have bought. It may be a while before training is unavailable, but don't think elimination of gun training schools has not been considered.

Follow the same line of thinking and get trained up in pistol first, and then with rifle. Seek to get through basic level training with each weapon first. So it would make more sense to attend basic level schools in pistol and in rifle than to attend basic, intermediate and advanced levels with a pistol and ignore the rifle.

You can attend a great training session for probably less then the cost of the weapon you bought. Most two day sessions go for $400 or less. Additionally, if that is not possible for you, at least do some self-training via the available DVDs on
the market, and some well directed and consistent range training on your own.

My intent here is not to frighten anyone, but simply to convince you that putting off equipping yourself may lead to you not being able to equip yourself at all. Remember ... if you snooze, you lose.

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Gabe Suarez is the CEO of Suarez International, USA
www.suarezinternational.com
www.warriortalk.com
www.onesourcetactical.com

**Note from Pat:** I highly recommend that you look at two of his DVDs, Advanced Kalashnikov Rifle Gunfighting:


and Combative Pistol Marksmanship:

Many of you are no doubt concerned what our “leaders” have in store for us as a nation. I don’t think many readers here are as giddy-hope-filled as the half of the nation that actually wanted this. I get calls every day about what to buy and what to do. Seriously, if you haven’t already taken care of this, you have been, in fact, very foolish. However, being foolish can be easily fixed. So go out today and fix it.

The first thing you need is a good pistol and plenty of magazines. I know one man in another country, down south, that made a living selling black market guns during a time of difficulty in his country. I am not suggesting that this may be a future for you one way or the other, only that firearms can be a viable mode of exchange at some times and in some places. As well, magazines. So this is what I suggest you do. Make sure you have whatever pistol you like to carry, and at least ten magazines for it. I would avoid specialized calibers. For example, 357 SIG may be the bee’s knees in ballistic tests, but I will bet it will be easier to find and trade for 9mm. Additionally, while an Ed Brown custom 1911 may be a mouth-watering pistol, an XD or a Glock will be far easier to obtain and maintain, as well as to set up redundantly.

Redundantly? Yes, that is what I said. Redundant means not just one. You should have several of the same. I know one man who has ten Glock 17s. He has one in each vehicle as well as the ones he and his wife and two adult children have. This redundancy allows him to stockpile magazines, as well as have uniformity of those magazines and ammunition.

So what guns to get? I favor Glocks like I do AKs because they are simple to use, fix, clean and maintain. I am not interested in engineering or in clever modifications. When you are trading one of your Glock 17s for a Jeep, or a loaded Glock 17 magazine for a week’s provisions, those things won’t matter to you either.

Buy up pistols first. Then get as many magazines as you can justify. Glock magazines are going for about $35 now. A year ago they were under $20. At the height of the assault on freedom known as the Crime Bill, they were selling for $125. Forget Ameritrade, buy magazines.

Next is ammo. Buy up case lots of meat ammo. That is, ammo suitable for street carry. Then buy up cases of training ammo. Best case, you can train with it. Worst case, use it as a trade item.

Finally, use those guns and some of the ammo and come to a gunfighting class. Not some silly “target shooting – liability-avoiding” range class, but a class that will teach you what you need to know to win a fight. Knowledge is forever, knowledge cannot be taken away. Get it now before they attack that as well.

I don’t think we are facing what some think we are facing, but if we are, you should be ready.

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Gabe Suarez is the CEO of Suarez International, USA
www.suarezinternational.com
www.warriortalk.com
www.onesourcetactical.com

Go Out Today and Fix It
By Gabe Suarez of Suarez International
I have a co-worker who has been looking for pistols. He has asked questions and fired different pistols and researched some and I went with him to a pawn shop I check at periodically so he could see others. We were going to go this Saturday and check some more.

This same co-worker approached me and another shooter I work with just before the end of work today and said, "I done a bad thing." To wit:

He had narrowed his choices down to two: the Taurus 24/7 and the Springfield xD or xDm. During his lunch time today, he went to a local shop to buy. (No pawn shop cruising for me now. I will try to contain my disappointment long enough to finish writing this.) He was leaning toward the Taurus until he discovered a reported flaw—if you put pressure on the trigger while engaging the safety, the gun was still able to fire. (Sure, it seems unlikely that someone might keep the finger on the trigger like that, but why take the chance? I hope Taurus will address this issue quickly, as the 24/7 by most reports is a very fine weapon.) And besides that, he really, really wanted an xDm.

He walked out of that store with an xD.

Why? Well, the xD was priced at 479.00. The xDm was priced at 659.00.

That’s a few boxes of ammunition he can buy now that he wouldn’t otherwise have to practice with.

This article is for everybody that’s in his position.

It’s not that I disagree with Gabe. Glocks are not only good guns, they are a good value in guns. That is part of what’s making some calibers of Glock hard to find and a bit pricier than they used to be. So what I intend to do is offer suggestions for good pistols that will work for you that you can get in a range of prices in three bands: Kinda High, Mid-to-High, and Mid-To-Low. There will be some overlap, some exceptions, and the list will not be complete. I do hope that it will give you a good and solid start to your search and your decision process as you work to Beat the Ban. That said: A word about calibers.

I consider three calibers to be so common in the US now that you are likely to be able to find ammunition in those calibers pretty easily. In order of their ‘commonality’ they are 9mm (also sometimes called 9mm Luger or, less often, 9x19), .45 ACP, and .40 S&W. Because of the ‘installed user base’, as IT workers sometimes call it, these three calibers are carried on a lot of shelves in a lot of places and kept in a lot of warehouses waiting to be delivered to you as soon as you place your order by phone, mail, or Internet. I don’t believe you will have reason to worry about supply short of an absolute ban or catastrophic interruption of production or delivery systems where any of these three calibers is concerned.

That said, I recommend that even if you decide to get a .40 or .45 first, then if it is at-all possible, get something that will shoot 9mm to go with it. That can be the same model pistol in that caliber, or a different model 9mm pistol (there is no reason you can’t mix and match within your spending limits—a more expensive primary pistol and a lower-priced pistol in a different caliber). I would even consider it a good idea to have something in each caliber—that way you have the best possible chance of finding ammunition that you can use no matter what happens where. Stocking up just a little in each caliber can also be useful if you think you might want or need to use it for barter or re-sale in the future. After all, not everyone is going to hear or agree with Gabe's good advice on this subject.

DO NOT, however, buy multiple pistols if that means you won't be able to buy a rifle. One pistol, or two, and a rifle first. Then, as you begin setting
back some ammunition, consider additional weapons in either the same or different calibers. More rifles too, for that matter, if you're able. As long as you keep in mind that there can be too much of a good thing, why not? Just don't let this become an obsession; that's all I ask.

I've set the stage now, and it's time to go directly to the presentation, which will be brief. Some recommendations for good pistols in the Kinda High price range are:

- Glock
- Sig-Sauer (Look a little harder at the P250 if you're considering a Sig. They were designed from the start so that you can change the caliber of the weapon by just swapping the slide. This could give you the same flexibility in caliber choice as having multiple pistols.)
- Springfield xDm
- Most 1911-class pistols: Kimber, Wilson, Para-Ordnance, and the Springfield and Taurus versions of that classic design, including 9mm versions.
- Beretta 92s and Browning Hi-Powers come into this category anywhere from the bottom to solidly middle of the price range.

In the Mid-To-High band, I believe some of the following will serve you well: Reconditioned and used Sigs and Glocks will overlap from the top end of this band to the low end of the Kinda High band.

- Taurus PT92s
- Springfield xD
- Ruger pistols such as the SR9 and P9x models range in price from the solid middle to the high end of this band.
- Smith and Wesson M&P series.

In the Mid-To-Low band, I would consider the following:

- Hi-Point - They may be heavy and blocky and unattractive and big, and I would not buy one for carry, but they are made in the US and they have a lifetime warranty and a solid reputation so far. As a house or car gun, or something to cover the other calibers after you purchase your primary pistol, they're worth a look.
- Kel-Tec - the P11 and PF9, primarily. Like the Taurus, some people did have problems with these pistols, mainly in the first year of their issue. The company has responded, these pistols are in their second and sometimes third generation of production, and Kel-Tec customer service is highly praised. There is no need to deny them consideration.
- Bersas in 9mm and .40 come in overlapping this group at the upper end and the Mid-To-High band at the lower end.

So there it is. There are certainly other good pistols that could go on each list, but these are the ones I have the best information, direct or indirect about, and that I consider pretty common and available in the US. I very much hope this helps you in your efforts to Beat The Ban.

Good Hunting, and Good Luck.
It is 2009, and we are several weeks into the Obama administration and the firearm buying continues at a record pace. NICS background checks for January were up over 30 percent from a year ago and I am sure the trend will continue. If you are one of the thousands of people buying their first AR pattern rifle, what decisions should you make before you buy?

First, decide how you want to use your rifle. An AR for precision target shooting is a much different animal that one for varmint hunting or for home defense. If you just want what you can get, head to the local gun shop, fill out the paperwork, pay your money, and take your new baby home. If you want a rifle that will serve you well with a minimum of frustration, you'll need to consider that there is a lot more to buying your first AR than just pointing to the first one on the rack and saying “gimme”. Each of the criteria we will be discussing can get very involved and there is a ton of information available on each. My goal is to give you the 1000-foot view of rifle selection, not get down in the weeds.

Before we get too far into the process, you will need to do your homework. Check the reviews, forums, and other websites to decide on a brand. Several manufacturers out there make a very nice rifle. I will leave the decision up to you as to who you choose, but stick with a major manufacturer.

There is enormous aftermarket support for the AR pattern rifles. You can replace virtually any part of the gun with another part from a different manufacturer. Some parts are better and some are not. You can find thousands of accessories for these rifles as well. Do not get overwhelmed or go overboard with your choices here. Save your money and invest it in ammo and training.

The next consideration is caliber. There are a few different options to choose from, not just the default 5.56/.223 we all know and love. Make sure you get the rifle specifically chambered for the 5.56 NATO and not the .223 Remington. The 5.56 rounds will not feed reliably in a .223 rifle but a rifle chambered for the NATO round will eat .223 all day long and never complain.

There are ARs in .308 Winchester as well as some more exotic calibers such as 6.5 Grendel, .458 SOCOM, and .50 Beowulf. Realize the nonstandard calibers will cost you more in ammunition, and the equipment will be very expensive. Some nonstandard uppers are more costly than a complete standard rifle.

Barrel type, material, and barrel length are another consideration. Longer generally means more accurate, but the trade off is weight and having to move that longer barrel around. I prefer the shorter 16-inch barrel on my ARs as I use them in the CQB (close quarters battle) environment more than I do in a target or hunting environment. I find that I really do not lose anything with a shorter barrel for my purposes. If you plan to enter precision rifle matches, you will want a longer barrel. Another thing to consider is the rifling twist rate. The standard ones you will likely find on the shelf are 1:7 and 1:9. For most purposes, either twist rate is fine. If you find that you prefer a heavier bullet, you want to buy the 1:7 over the 1:9. You have a couple choices in barrel materials. The common one is chrome lined steel. This is fine for most uses. If the rifle you are choosing is a match rifle, consider getting a
stainless steel barrel. The trade off is greater weight and cost.

ARs have a neat design feature. The rifle breaks down quickly into two main sections, the upper and the lower. This allows you to have multiple pattern uppers for a single lower. At this point, you will want to decide what upper you want. They are the A1, A2, and A3. The A1 is the common upper with the carry handle. Most “no-frill” rifles feature this upper. The A2 is very similar but was designed for the Army Marksmanship Program. Both the A1 and A2 make it very hard to use optics. The A3 is known as the flat top upper. The A3 makes it very easy to use most any sort of optic. I use the A3 upper on my M4 pattern rifle. With this upper, you will need to get back up iron sights (BUIS) of some type in case your optic goes down.

When looking at the uppers, you will also be looking at barrel type and length as we discussed. Another consideration is whether you want a standard configuration or the M4 pattern. I lean toward the M4 quite heavily because I find it comfortable to shoot. You will have to go out and handle some rifles to see what you prefer. If you can take the time shoot several different configurations, you can see what fits you and your needs.

Next is the question of optics or iron sights. The answer is yes, please. I have an EOTech on my rifle as well as a set of BUIS installed. That way if my optic goes down, I can still shoot using my iron sights. At this point, you do not need to pick out your optic, just know you will have a place to put it if you have purchased a flat top upper. Depending on what you buy, the optic can cost as much or more than the rifle itself. You will want to have iron sights that co-witness with your optic. This means you can use the iron sights with the optic still on the rifle. You simply sight through the optic as if it was not even there.

Triggers are worth mentioning. Make sure the trigger feels smooth and has a positive, repeatable reset. If your rifle is being set up for target shooting, investing in a match grade trigger is wise. You can always add one later if you find you do not like the stock trigger on your gun.

You should get a rifle with a flash hider installed if the laws in your state allow it. Most rifles come with the A2 birdeage flash hider on it. It works well enough and if you so choose, there are several aftermarket replacements available.

Magazines are an important consideration. Stick with USGI, USGI with MagPul followers, or MagPul P-Mags and you cannot go wrong. There are more expensive options out there, but more expensive is not necessarily better. Buy a stock of 20 and 30 round magazines and even a few 10 round magazines if you plan on working from a prone position.

ARs can be purchased with either fixed or collapsible stocks. This boils down to personal preference. If you are going to have multiple people (spouse, children) shooting the rifle, an adjustable stock is a great option. I run my guns short so I use an adjustable stock on my gun. Some people like the firmer, more solid feel of the full stock. My advice is try them out and see what feels good and what you shoot well.

One accessory I consider a necessity is a sling. A simple and sturdy two-point sling is all you really need to work with your rifle. If you plan to carry the rifle for any length of time, a sling makes life easier. Most of us do not need or want the tactical three point slings. If you like them, please feel free to get what works for you. Just get a sling of some type.

That sums up the high points of selecting a rifle. The main goal is to buy a weapon that fits you well and that you can shoot accurately. Do not get
caught up in the need to hang every accessory known to man off your rifle. It makes a fast handling rifle unwieldy and cumbersome to use.

Now that you are the proud owner of a brand new Evil Black Rifle (EBR), go to the range and have some fun. Remember, when the zombies attack, only headshots count.
I Joined the Russian Revolution,
And You Can Too.

By CR Williams


That's most of what I hear about Russian rifles (for this discussion, that will be the AK and SKS series and variants thereof). Most of it is still mostly true, sometimes, depending, and relatively speaking.

I did not set out to buy Russian weapons at first. I only set out to buy something I could afford and that I could put on lay-away at my favorite gunshop, since gone out of business. What met those original criteria was a WASR-10, a Romanian rifle that had been de-militarized by having it's receiver cut apart before it was sent to America to be reborn by Century Arms as a semi-auto rifle suitable for sale to someone like me. It's what I would classify now as an 'entry level' AK-47. That one, at that time, cost me 349.00. Now, at this time, I would pay anywhere from 450.00, if I was lucky, up to 600.00 for the same rifle in the same condition as that first one of mine was.

Times have changed.

Since that first purchase, I have continued to buy, and sell, members of the AK family. I started with them because I could afford it and because they would continue to work even if I was not meticulous in their cleaning and care between firings. I have continued with them, with one brief exception, because I wanted consistency in the way the rifles work and the way I work them...and, to be honest, because I still am not too meticulous about cleaning and care between firings.

What I hope to do here is to help you through the process of deciding, first, whether to buy a member of the Russian family of rifles instead of some other kind, and second, to help you decide which of that family would best suit you. I want also to try and give you some idea of what to avoid in the process. I hope this will help you. That said, let's begin:

First, think about what you want out of the rifle and what you think you may have to do with it. Some sample questions: Do you live in a town, a city, out in the country? How far do you think you'll have to shoot? Who else in your family will, or may, have to pick the rifle up and shoot it? How much time are you willing to put into normal maintenance and cleaning? How often do you think you will or intend to shoot the rifle in practice? Will it often be carried in your car or truck? Do you see a significant chance that you will have to shoot at/into a car or through a wall/tree/thick brush? How easy is it to get ammunition in the caliber you choose for the rifle? Are there any restrictions where you live about what kind of rifle you can own or what features and accessories you can have on a rifle? What kind of features and accessories will you want to have on the rifle?

There are probably other questions that will help, but these come to mind as good ones to try and answer ahead of time. Think about those first before you answer the next question, which is:

What caliber of ammunition do you want to shoot in the rifle?

Among the choices, and with some of the rifles that fire them:

- 5.45 x 39 - AK-74, AK-107, SAR-2, AR
- .223/5.56 x 45 - AK-101, AK-107, SLR-106, SAR-3, Saiga, Galil, AR
- 7.62 x 39 - AK-47, AK-103/104, SLR-107, WASR, Saiga, Galil, SKS, AR
- .308 - Saiga, AR

I include the AR in this list because you can purchase uppers for the AR in any of these calibers and others besides. This would allow not only some flexibility and redundancy where ammunition availability is a concern, but it might also allow you to shoot an AR at lower cost than you do now. This is an option worth knowing and
thinking about if you prefer and/or are already invested in the AR platform.

A Note about Regulatory Restrictions: Some states are more restrictive than others, and may not even now allow features such as pistol grips, removable and/or high-capacity magazines, or accessories such as folding stocks or flash hiders. For those in these areas, look hard at the SKS and Saiga series of rifles. The Saiga especially was designed by Izmash to be legal under the terms of the original Assault Weapons Ban. Though it may be outlawed in the future, in most of the still-restrictive areas, it is still legal to have one of those so far as I know. They are also still among the lower-priced of the AK family.

Let’s talk about calibers now. The consideration here is in two parts: What a given caliber will do, or what you think it will do, and how easy it is to get it (in both cost and availability). Of the four I’ve listed, I can split them into two pairs:

.223 is, of course, the caliber used in the 'standard' AR/M-16/M4 family of rifles. Some AKs were built to use it, and other brands and models before that. The 5.45 x 39 round used in the AK-74 and AK-107, among others, is to my mind the Russian answer to the .223 question. They are both light rounds, comparatively speaking--.223 runs from under 40 grains in bullet weight to upwards of 75 grains, with most militaries standardizing at 55 to 62 grains as of the time of this article, while 5.45 x 39 sends out a bullet weighing about 60 or 70 grains. And they both send them out very fast indeed. Just like the .223 (5.56), the 5.45 round was reported to be very effective in its initial combat deployment. And just like the .223 (5.56), the round fell out of favor in later combat deployments because it wasn’t working as well as it did previously.

That said, both of these rounds has continued to do the job they were built for in military and law-enforcement arenas, and they are well capable of doing the job for you. That said:

Availability is a key question. .223 is produced in the US and, though more expensive than it used to be and set to become more expensive than it is, can be found on many store shelves around the country, including Walmart. 5.45 x 39 is not produced locally at the time of this writing and is subject to import restrictions that can be applied with a decision and the stroke of a pen. And while there may be gun shops that have it on their shelves, they are the exception to the rule in my experience; mail-order and the Internet will be your friends in the quest for supplies of this round. And I will be honest with you—supplies are drying up. That’s the bad news.

The good news is that it is still lower in price, if anything gun-related can be called low these days. A spot-check of two suppliers indicates the following differences:

In one case, this is Bernaul and Wolf brand ammunition compared, in the other it is all Wolf brand. So far, Wolf has produced the lowest-cost ammunition I’ve found in almost any caliber I’ve looked at. Let me note also that one of the suppliers was out of 5.45 as of the time of this check, while the other had only the Bernaul ammunition listed.

One other issue may be variety. 5.45 x 39 is currently only available in either FMJ (Full Metal Jacket) or HP (Hollow Point) versions. .223 is available in a number of variations of FMJ, as well as HP and SP (Soft Point).

Now, it might be that if 5.45 import is banned, then an American producer might well take the opportunity to service the user base of AK-74 owners. That’s what capitalism is all about, after all. I am not at this moment willing to guarantee that happening, though, even though I believe it would. So the possibility of an import ban is a factor and should be part of the consideration.

The converse situation applies when we look at finding AKs chambered in .223. A spot-check at
gunbroker.com provides a listing of 35 AK-74s and SAR-2s, ranging in bid price from 535.00 to 900.00 (I do not include custom builds or modifications in this) against only 12 AKs of various brands and models (including Saigas) in .223, ranging from 500.00 to 800.00 dollars in current bid price.

The situation with magazine availability for .223-caliber AKs is actually a bit worse. You have a choice between US-made and a couple of different foreign-made brands. Best of all is Bulgarian mags, usually identified by a circled number “10” on the mag. These are the best; these are the hardest to find; these are the most expensive when you find them. The US manufacturer Pro-Mag also makes magazines for AKs in this caliber. I have not had good experiences with their products and it’s been inconsistent at best for others. I regret to recommend at this time that you not purchase magazines for this caliber from Pro-Mag.

Even with the relative dearth of AK platforms in .223 this indicates, the sum total of the factors discussed here lead me to recommend that, if you choose to go with a ‘small’ caliber, go with the .223. For now, that seems to be the surest way to keep the beast reliably fed.

A Note To AR Owners: If you haven’t already, check with the builder and/or test your rifles to see if they will shoot the less-expensive Wolf and Silver Bear ammunition reliably. Some will feed it very well; some will not; some require only some extra attention to cleaning when firing it. If you can fire it in your rifle, you can lower your cost of shooting some. It’s worth a try, isn’t it?

When I say ‘larger’ caliber round, I judge that only by diameter, not power, for now. Though both are the same diameter, the .308 is considered a ‘full-power’ round for a good reason, whereas the 7.62 x 39, the original and still-quintessential AK caliber, is placed in the ‘intermediate-power’ category that all assault rifles fall under.

This part of the discussion will be short: Unless something in your situation or circumstances indicates a need for a full-power round that can reach to a thousand yards, choose a rifle that fires 7.62 x 39. It has plenty of barrier and brush penetration, it is more controllable in rapid-fire, it is just as available in the US as .308 in most areas, it is less expensive than .308 wherever you do find it, and it is manufactured in the US as well as imported.

If you do wish to purchase an AK in .308, the only one I’m aware of at this time is the Saiga. If you can afford it, though, I would recommend you consider the Cetme, the M1A, and other FAL/HK-91/M-14 clones available to civilians in this caliber.

A Note And A Caution: 7.62 x 54 is the military designation of the .308 caliber (there is an actual difference in case dimensions if I recall correctly, but that’s not relevant to this discussion at this time). There is a 7.62 x 54R caliber, which is designed originally for use in the Russian Dragunov sniper rifles and their variants. Both the rifles that fire it and the ammunition that they shoot are available in the US, but it is far less common than .308/7.62 x 54. Unless it’s a ‘hobby gun’ or special-interest project and separate from any efforts to Beat The Ban, avoid this caliber.

For deciding which platform might best fit your situation, what differences are worth noting between AKs and ARs. (Picking what appear to be the two most popular platforms.) I’ll be referring to the basic 7.62 x 39-caliber AK-47 and the basic .223-caliber AR in this comparison.

Cost: Quality stock AKs are still less expensive than good stock ARs, but the price difference is not what it used to be. Using the price of an Olympic Arms AR as a baseline figure, I see a difference in price ranging from zero to 300.00. You may think 300.00 is very good indeed, but the AK that difference would buy you today is not as good a quality as an AK that would have cost you less than half as much less than two years ago. (I’ll get more specific about brand and model recommendations shortly.)

And since you never buy just the gun, you must consider ammunition, magazines, and some accessories as well:

Magazines – steel AK magazines still beat most AR magazines in price. Some of the composite ‘waffle’
magazines are about equal in price.

Ammunition – 7.62 x 39 ammo is less than .223 in nearly every category and from every producer. What I classify as ‘premium’ ammo, such as match-grade or defensive-use rounds such as the Hornady TAP, is much more equal, however. One thing to note, though, is that the difference in price between what you might normally consider practice ammunition, usually FMJ, and defensive or hunting ammunition, HP or SP, is very small or nonexistent in some cases where AK rounds are concerned. You can, if you wish, stock and practice with exactly the same ammunition you might use in an AK for self-defense without spending but, at most, a very few dollars more. It’s harder to find that kind of consistency in .223.

Accessories – there are more and more varied and more interesting accessories for ARs than for AKs. Some of them are actually useful, too. (A little joke, there.) What might you might not know is that with the appropriate, easy-to-find mounts, almost anything you can mount on an AR can be mounted on an AK. There are also some Russian-made versions of things like red-dot/holographic sights and telescopic sights that are a little harder to find, but also less expensive than their American/AR equivalents. Consider Kobras and PK-As for CQB sights and POSP for telescopic sights. Or you can mount Picatinny rails and run anything that will fit. (More on accessories later.)

Availability – Both rifles can still be found, if not on local shelves, then on the Internet. Ammunition has been getting harder to find in immediate stock, but it, with the exceptions noted, can also be found. In recent months it appears to me that AKs have been selling out more than ARs, which has accounted for a more rapid increase in prices for that platform. If you’re prepared to meet the price, however, you will at worst have to go on backorder for a while. That will depend on what you order and who from more than anything else; it is still possible to get rifles delivered to your dealer for transfer very quickly.

Besides costs and availability:

Weight – stock AKs are between 2 and 3 pounds heavier than stock ARs on average. Ammunition is heavier, metal magazines are heavier, some of the Russian accessories are heavier than their American equivalents. Carrying and moving and holding firing positions might be somewhat more difficult with an AK.

Dimensions – stock AK-47s are within an inch of the same length as a fixed-stock AR. Stock AK-74s are longer by about two inches. Folding and collapsible stocks, naturally, change that. Russian stocks, both fixed and folding, are shorter than American stocks. This causes some Americans a little discomfort or awkwardness when handling AKs. This also makes them more comfortable and natural for women and teenagers. These dimensions become important also when maneuvering with the rifle in cluttered and indoor areas. Since more and more people are choosing rifles and carbines over shotguns for home defense, this can be an important consideration.

Felt Recoil – This is a subjective rating; I personally feel about equal recoil from an AK-47 as I do from an M4gery (civilian-available copy of the Army’s M4 carbine), while others feel like the AK hits them back a little harder. The AK-74 is lighter in felt recoil, and combined with the shorter stock, that might make it a more attractive choice for women and teenagers. Otherwise, I rate the platforms about even in this respect.

Reliability - You know, I’m tired of people saying how unreliable ARs are and how you have to spend more time with cleaning and maintenance. Unless you’re carrying one in a combat theater pretty often, an AR is going to work pretty much like you want it to without a whole lot of attention. It does require some more care and concentration to keep running than an AK, yes. AKs do have a proven and well-deserved reputation for running under the harshest conditions and the most brutal treatment and the most unimaginable lack of maintenance you can imagine. But they are machines; they do require maintenance; they do need to be cleaned and lubricated. Not as often or as much as ARs, but they do still need it. Still...where reliability is concerned, the AK is superior to the AR. They sometimes speak of the Glock as the AK of pistols; the AK is the Glock of rifles.
Accuracy - I'm also tired of people saying how inaccurate the AK is. Here is a truth: The average AK is not as accurate as the average AR, if you judge accuracy by the size of a multi-shot group. Here is another truth: The average AK is accurate enough to save your life if you ever need it to. I read reports from people I trust that were hitting a torso-sized target 8 out of 10 times at 400 and 500 yards with an 'entry level' AK from a company that's putting out products I'm shortly going to recommend you be suspicious of, using Wolf ammunition. Attendees at Suarez International courses were hitting IDPA-target-sized steel consistently at 180 yards after just two days of training (about 500 rounds for that course, I believe). Without nearly that level of experience, I can get consistent Center-Of-Mass region hits at 100 yards and knock bowling pins down all day from 60 to 100 feet away, which is actually much nearer to the distance I’d expect to ever have to shoot at in a defensive situation. Most AKs will render 4-5 Minute Of Angle groups at 100 yards if you do your job right; with premium/match-grade ammunition, that group size can be cut in half. An AR would do better and group tighter at the same distances, but how much better do you need to be? Honestly, now. Evan Marshall refers to it as 'Minute Of Felon' accuracy, and if it's good enough for him, it's good enough for me.

Ease of operation - The controls, their placement, and the way they are operated are different according to the design which is based on the military philosophies in each army at that time. The American Army considered every soldier a rifleman and wanted them to have flexibility and control; the old Soviet military considered each soldier an expendable piece of equipment and wanted them to do shut up and be controlled. AR controls are set so that they can be easily manipulated without taking the shooting hand away from the trigger. Want to know something? You can manipulate the safety of an AK and chamber a round without taking your shooting hand far away from the trigger. It is not as easy and fast to do that as with an AR, though, so the AR traditionally rates higher in ease of operation. If you take a little time and consider the philosophy of use of the AK, however, you will understand that that difference does not matter as much it looks like it should.

And whichever platform you choose, remember this:

An AK does not work like an AR; it is a mistake to try and make it do so.

An AR does not work like an AK; it is a mistake to try and make it do so.

Simple concepts, but you might be surprised how many people ignore them and get frustrated and mad and make the wrong choices and the wrong conclusions because they do.

Now let's talk about SKSs, Saigas, and Galils for a minute:

The SKS is a semi-automatic gas-operated rifle that fires the 7.62 x 39 round and was issued for a time prior to the production of the AK-47. The basic SKS will be found without a pistol grip, will have a barrel about 20” long, and will have a non-removable 10rd magazine which is loaded from the top through the open bolt using a 10rd stripper clip. It is a simple and rugged design that rivals the AK in reliability and exceeds it in accuracy even using the same ammunition. You can even find it pretty often with a bayonet still attached. (I like the foot-long triangular one best.)

The ‘pros’ of the SKS appear to be -

They are still remarkably inexpensive. You can expect to pay $250-$350 for a basic SKS of good quality. Under current conditions, expect to go higher rather than lower. There are two variations of the SKS that will command higher prices: A Chinese paratrooper version with a shorter barrel; I see them when they are available at around $400.00, and the SKS D model, which has been modified to accept standard AK-47 magazines; I also see them most often starting at $400.00 and often going higher.

They are legal in places where AKs and ARs are not. Some of the rifles are old enough to qualify as Curio and Relic items, which might allow you to get one in places where even an SKS-type semiauto is frowned upon.

They resemble hunting rifles more than they do
‘assault rifles’. This makes ‘hiding in plain sight’ easier, and will help in keeping your more sensitive neighbors from getting as nervous.

There is a pretty good line of accessories for them. You can get collapsible and folding stocks, synthetic ‘furniture’ including pistol grips, scope mounts and you can even replaced the fixed magazine with removable magazines. Some of this will be against the law in some areas, and that should be kept in mind. But the options are there for those who wish to examine them.

They are considered to be as tough and reliable as the AKs they were replaced by.

They are more accurate with the same ammunition than the AK.

The ‘cons’ of the SKS appear to be –

The standard, most commonly-available models are long and heavy to some people. Weight can be mitigated some by replacing wood stocks with synthetics. Altering the length is best done by a gunsmith.

Ten-round capacity in the stock SKS bothers some. There are, where allowable, aftermarket items that will increase that and allow removable magazines as well.

Loading from stripper clips is considered a ‘con’ sometimes as well. That can be changed with aftermarket options if you want to and are able to do so.

The major sources of SKSs sold in America appear to be Russia, China, and Yugoslavia. The biggest differences appear to be that China (Norinco) produced more ‘sporter’ models meant for US markets, and that Yugoslavian SKSs do not have chrome-lined barrels. (The chrome lining helps reduce barrel wear and fouling some, but the difference is otherwise not enough to justify more than a small increase in price if you have a choice between a Norinco and a “Yugo”.)

The Saiga series of rifles and shotguns is worth a look for two reasons: 1. They are built by the same company that produces AKs, and 2. They were designed specifically to be acceptable under the terms of the original Assault Weapons Ban.

The first point, combined with a growing parts, accessory, and services market that has developed around them, means that it’s not hard to convert a Saiga into (some would say ‘back into’) an AK configuration. This not only can make it much less expensive to support the gun (Saiga magazines, which work only in Saigas, are hideously expensive), but since Saigas are new-built and not decommissioned military weapons with a new receiver and maybe some compliance parts added, you can be sure that the only wear and tear you’ll have on the rifle is the wear and tear you put on it.

Left in the stock configuration, Saigas may also be acceptable in those areas that deny purchase and/or ownership of ARs and AKs, and are likely to make neighbors and local authorities less nervous than an AR or AK, though probably a bit more nervous than an SKS would. In the stock configuration, Saigas are also still somewhat less expensive than the same-caliber AK. And you can adapt them to accept non-proprietary magazines at small or no expense without changing that external configuration if you wish. So there’s an interesting amount of flexibility in this series.

Saigas are available in .223, 7.62 x 39, and .308 caliber, each with a choice of barrel length. There are a few companies that will convert them and a large amount of material available to guide you in doing your own modifications if you wish. The Saiga-12 forum at forum.saiga-12.com, which covers all Saigas including the shotguns, is an excellent place to start.

Finally, a brief word about Galils. They are Israeli made and have the same controls and operate the same way as AKs, and some are available in the US. They can be found in .223 and 7.62 x 39 caliber (I see them most often in .223), and I have seen one or two in .308, but I don’t know if they are special builds or not. What I will say about them is to avoid buying one built by Century Arms, because I have a number of bad reports about these builds. That creates a problem for some of us, in that most of the others available are double (or more) the price of the CA Galils, but if you want a Galil that works the first time, I advise
you to avoid Century Arms. And that’s all I have to say about Galils at this time.

There is one other way to get an AK—build it:

AKs are not imported as they began, as military-owned select-fire weapons. Our government does not trust us with possession of those. And so they are ‘de-militarized’ first, by having their receivers sawed or slashed with welding torches or removed entirely, before they are shipped. They arrive as kits, minus the receiver, which the US builder supplies from US makers. Everything is put together, sometimes US-made parts are added besides the receiver, and your AK is put on the shelf to wait for you to order it.

It turns out that you can make yourself your own middleman in that process. They are not as numerous nor as inexpensive as they used to be, but you can still buy that rifle-minus-receiver and then order a receiver (this is considered the same as a whole gun by BATFE and will have to be sent to an FFL for transfer to you just like a working firearm), and then you can either put everything together yourself or have someone do it for you.

Though I haven’t tried it, it does not appear to be very difficult to put one together yourself. There is a great deal of information including step-by-step instructions with video and pictures available to guide you through a build, and it doesn’t require specialized tools or knowledge. It seems to be an excellent way to learn something about guns in general and AKs specifically. And you could potentially get an Arsenal-quality rifle for a WASR-10 price. For a kit-build, and an AK of good quality, this is not a bad way to go.

There are also a number of very good and highly respected builders that will take your parts and your money and within a few weeks or months (more months than weeks—the good builders are seeing a lot of business lately) return to you an AK of the finest quality you can imagine. That it will cost you more than doing it yourself is a given. In fact, even the most basic build using just what comes in the parts kit and the receiver will probably cost at least as much as a good quality off-the-shelf AK from Arsenal or Vector Arms. Add options to that, and the price will go up from that quickly. I have seen rifles built by Rifle Dynamics, a growing business in Nevada, put up for sale for 1500.00-plus dollars and getting snatched off the market so quickly you’d think they had teleportation technology available.

It is something to consider if you cannot afford a good-to-high quality AK outright, however. You can get a kit and accumulate the add-on parts and receiver and then save money for the price of the build over time and get a high-quality rifle without taking out a home equity line.

Parts kits are not as numerous as they used to be, though, and what kits there are have doubled in price on average. If you go the kit route, start shopping now for what you need.

I believe it’s time to make more specific recommendations. I’m going to put packages together for you—pistol, rifle, shotgun, any extras that seem most useful. Keep in mind, please, that the shotgun is not a necessary part of these packages. If you can only get one long-gun, begin with the rifle. It will be the most versatile and flexible weapon of the two. That said:

If you don’t have a lot of money, consider:

An SKS.

Remington 870 shotgun.

If you’re not going to carry it, add Hi-Point to this list. Otherwise, consider Kel-Tec, Tokarev, and Makarov pistols, mainly in 9mm.

Many stripper clips, extra high-capacity magazines for the chosen pistol, and as much ammunition for everything as you can get, focusing on the rifle and pistol rounds first. Shotguns will go later in a ban situation.

If you have a bit more than that, consider synthetic furniture for the rifle to reduce the weight, and perhaps folding/adjustable stocks and larger/removable magazines. Tapco is most popular for those items.

If you have more than not a lot of money, but not a whole lot of money, consider:
An AK – brands and models to consider are Arsenal, Yugo, Norinco, the AMD-65, the MAK-90, Tantal. There are others, but those will get you started pretty well. Avoid WASR-10s and other AKs produced by Century Arms unless you can examine them personally before buying one and know what to look for. There have been quality-control issues reported with these and the Galils they make.

Saiga rifles.

Some lower-end AR models (that are still of very good quality) will fit into this group.

You may can find a Galil you can get at this level, but most of them will not qualify for this price range.

Higher end pump, or a semiauto shotgun. Saigas other than the Saiga-12 may fall into this listing. Any of the pistols mentioned, plus Bersas, Taurus, Springfield xD (original—xDms are priced higher so far), Smith & Wesson M&P series.

One note: The Czech VZ-58 model AK will not as-is accept standard AK-47 magazines. There are magazines specific to that model. They are not as expensive as the Saiga’s proprietary magazines.

Consider folding stocks for the rifles and shotguns if they don’t have them already, and start looking at what are called CQB optics—red dots, holographic sights, high-visibility iron sights. For Saiga, consider some modifications and conversion work—at the very least, modify them to accept non-proprietary mags. That will save you a lot of money as you go.

And extra magazines for the rifle and the pistol (and the shotgun if you get one that’s magazine-fed), and as much ammunition for everything, focusing again on pistol and rifle, as you can manage and store.

If you have more money than this but have not won the lottery, add this to the other groups for consideration:

AKs from custom builders or have one built like you want it.

Galil.

Saiga, with the intention to convert it to a full-on AK configuration.

ARs, and think about extra uppers for different calibers too.

Any shotgun you want, but look hard at the Saiga-12.

Pistols—add Glocks, xDms, Sig-Sauer and H&K and FN to the other brands and models to think about.

It goes without saying that there are brands and models and specific weapons that are not mentioned in these groups that will nonetheless do you a very, very good job. I don’t believe you would go wrong with what I have suggested, though.

And now, a final word:

I very much hope this helps you in your decisions and choices. Good luck, and God Bless the United States of America.

Sources and Resources:

Kobra Resource Center
The AK Files Forums
AKParts.com
Arizona Response Systems
Cope’s Distributing
K-Var
NoDak Spud
CDNN Sports, Inc.
Centerfire Systems, Inc.
Classic Arms, Inc.
Forum.saiga-12.com
One Source Tactical
Beat the Ban

Selecting Good Magazines
By Patrick Kilchermann, of the Delta Media team

A gun without a magazine is like a truck without fuel. It’s still worth a lot, it still looks great, but you can’t really do anything with it. I can hear you already: “Okay Pat- where are you going with this subpar analogy?” Well, I think this will drive my point home:

What about sticking bad fuel in the truck? The truck is not only as immobile as it was with no gas, but you actually run the risk of ruining spark plugs, oxygen sensors, and stuff like that. Plus, you’re clogging up fuel lines and making the situation way worse than if you just had an empty tank.

With an empty tank, you can always at least just throw some gas in it when you find it. But with bad fuel, you have a bunch of work to do to get back to just plain old ‘out of gas’.

The point I’m trying to make, as it relates to magazines, is that it is vital that you don’t buy cheap, poor quality magazines. You waste time, money, ammunition... everything. Trust me- it’s better to buy a $50 magazine that does its job perfectly than a $10 magazine that does its job 99.5% of the time- and that’s no joke. More on how to avoid bad, harmful magazines that could get you killed in a moment. First, let’s change gears for a minute...

There is a long standing debate as to how many magazines one should have per weapon. I believe that one extra magazine for your rifle or pistol is better than zero, and I believe two magazines are better than one.

I also believe that twenty magazines are better than two- again, no joke.

When you’re looking at a ban such as the one before us, you have to ask yourself: How many magazines do I think I will go through in ten years? How many magazines do I think I will go through during my lifetime?

Most experts recommend that you have at least five “high capacity” magazines (I don’t think that a fifteen round capacity is very many) for your pistol, and a dozen for your rifle. I would say these numbers are a minimum, and apply to “normal conditions” when you can simply jump online and get more if you need to.

When you think of a “pre-ban high capacity magazine” as something that is going to cost up to $300 to acquire in the midst of a ban- the tables are turned slightly, and suddenly a dozen spare magazines don’t sound like very many.

Time out- what do I mean when I say “pre-ban”? Basically, magazines manufactured BEFORE a ban is passed are still legal to own after the ban has passed (at least, that’s the way it was with the ’94 ban, and the way it will probably stay through the bans we face in our immediate future).

Note that magazines can be repaired: You can get new springs and followers (and you probably will always be able to... maybe not, but probably), but they do wear out. They wear out much more quickly if you practice “tactical” reloads, where your magazines are dropped onto a hard floor, or if you expose them to elements.
Metal magazines can rust, bend, and break. Polymer magazines can crack, be crushed, and just become wore down on the “high contact” areas—especially if the area around the opening, the feed lips, make a lot of contact with moving parts / ammunition during the operation of the firearm. My most-used GLOCK magazines show plenty of wear around the areas that make a lot of contact with the frame of the pistol, such as where the magazine hold/release clip locks the magazine into place.

So... how many magazines are enough?

I recommend that you get at least a couple dozen magazines for each weapon. This figure will either sound to you like a life-time supply of magazines, or it may sound like the amount of magazines that you wore out last year. Either way, it’s a good minimum.

Why so many? Lots of reasons— including as investments. If you bought a dozen magazines for $15 or $20 each, and in five years you have people offering you $200 each for them- well, that would be seen as a pretty good investment. Still, if that did happen (as it already did during the last gun ban), that’s all the more reason to hang on to them- and NOT sell them.

Remember— your weapon is useless without magazines, so buy plenty of them while you can.

This brings us back to the issue of quality of magazine.

Just as not all rifles of the same “type” are created equally, nor are magazines for the rifles. This applies to handgun magazines as well.

There are a LOT of cheap knock-offs out there. They are usually foreign made, and they usually look very similar to the “factory originals”. Obviously, looks aren’t important though— it’s the functionality that matters. Things such as the way the magazine fits the weapon, the way they look and feel, and their durability. Most importantly of all, beyond all of these qualities: the way the magazine feeds. That is, the way it gets the bullet standing next in line up to the chamber of the gun.

This seems like a very basic, rudimentary task— but it is where cheap magazines fail, and it is what will get you killed. Poor quality magazines jam. They cause failure to feed malfunctions, and if your gun doesn’t go “bang” and send a bullet down range when you tell it to— you would be better off swinging a ball bat at your adversary.

So— I can’t stress enough that it is VITAL that you get high quality magazines. The most obvious solution is to buy them right from the place that made your gun— what is referred to as a “factory original” magazine.

Here’s the problem: Factory original magazines are expensive. I’m talking anywhere from $30 to $100 for a SINGLE magazine, depending on the weapon you’re getting them for. Ruger Mini-14 factory 20-round magazines are about $40, Springfield M1A/M14 magazines are about $50, and Colt or Bushmaster AR15 magazines are generally about $35.

If money is no issue to you, by all means— get the factory originals. They are usually the best quality. But if money is an issue, you’re probably going to have to buy some off-brand magazines. As long as you do your homework and buy good quality off-brands (they do exist!), you will be good to go.

Lucky for you, you’re reading this report, and I’ve done some homework for you. That’s what this report is all about— a crash course in preparation and a crash course in WHAT to buy and WHERE to buy it from.
How do you tell if a magazine is a factory original or an off-brand? You tell by “the markings”. What I mean by this, is the stamp (or lack of stamp) into the metal itself. Sometimes they are very easy to spot. Most factory original magazines are clearly marked. For example, GLOCK factory magazines have the GLOCK logo on the bottom and on the back of the magazine itself. Ruger magazines have the Ruger logo, usually located on the base-plate (the bottom).

Other markings can be a bit trickier to spot, especially if it’s an off-brand. Not always, but usually, a magazine with no markings is “severely” off-brand, and you might want to steer clear of them. The reason is simply that I tend to prefer dealing with companies who are proud to let you know that they manufactured the product you are using.

Most off-brand markings have a simply consist of one letter to a couple words stamped directly into the magazine itself. Examples of such markings are OM, W, and WRA. (Which all happen to imply that the magazine was made by one Winchester plant or another).

So, here is a crash course designed to help you make educated decision when shopping for magazines for your weapons. I’ll also provide some direct links to some trustworthy online locations where you can buy magazines for some of the most popular platforms on the market (platforms, at least, that most people will be stocking up for). Note that not ALL guns will have off-brand magazines available to them- just the weapons popular enough for the demand of cheap, reliable magazines to have reached a profitable level.

Lastly, note that you should ALWAYS test a magazine thoroughly at the range before adopting it into your “trusted battle gear”. Okay… here goes.

**AR-15**

AR15 owners, you have it pretty easy. Your platform is standard issue military, and there are about a billion companies out there tripping over themselves to get a corner on the AR15 magazine niche (some are even lucky enough to secure military contracts). For these reasons, there are a ton of magazine options out there- both military surplus and new from third parties. Once the AR platform is replaced (assuming the new design uses a different style of magazine), there will be even more available (for a while, at least).

I have done some homework for you, and have found you an EXCELLENT resource for a complete lowdown on AR magazines. Here is the link:

http://www.fulton-armory.com/ARMags.htm

As to specific locations from which to buy AR15 magazines:

I cannot attest to their quality or reliability, but these appear to be some solid magazines for the AR platform:

http://www.sportsmansguide.com/net/cb/cb.asp?a=388211

A place that I assume would sell very high quality magazines for the AR platform would be Bushmaster. From their website, 30 round mags are just barely over $20 each. Not bad at all:


**M14 / M1A**

For the M14/M1A riflemen out there, you don’t have it so lucky. Your rifle fell out of standard issue four or five decades ago- but you don’t care; if you wanted something that was abundant you would have bought an AR15. As an M14 riflemen
myself- I understand why you chose the rifle, regardless of how expensive or rare ammunition and magazines are. If you buy them from Springfield Armory, they are $50 each. http://www.springfield-armory.com/ The good thing about buying from Springfield Armory, is that you know you are getting the best product out there.

But, there are several options for off-brand magazines that function well.

Your best bet is going to be in finding surplus USGI ‘military contract overrun’ magazines, as these were made to military specifications and should be 100% reliable. The way I see it- if they are good enough for the military, they are good enough for me.

Here is a webpage that has ALL the info you need about buying off-brand M14 magazines, and it is what I referenced when making my last purchase:

http://www.fulton-armory.com/M14Mags.htm

Below is a link to a CHEAP M14 magazine, which I probably wouldn’t trust. Unless I have a really good source, I don’t trust any M14 magazine that costs less than $25. That may be silly, but it’s my personal rule.


I have never tried these M14 Magazines, and I’m not sure who made them, but they seem to be good quality:


AK47

I have to admit that I don’t have a ton of experience with AK47s, as I have never even fired one. That is why I am leaving this section largely up to CR Williams in his Russian Revolution chapter of this report. Still, I have done a little bit of homework on your behalf, and here is what I have come up with:

http://www.ak-47.us/Article_Detail.php?g=content1153191494

I can tell you that there are A TON of options out there for AK magazines- probably more so than even for the AR platform. Not only this, but due to the low tolerances and the sheer ruggedness of the AK rifle itself, I would imagine that they would be able function properly with a much more inexact magazine design than most other weapons. Therefore, I’m going to assume that any magazine that will test reliably will work for you in this department.

Lucky for you, AK magazines appear to be some of the cheapest out there- they are usually a mere $10 or $15 each.

Here are a couple links that appear to be to pretty decent quality AK magazines:


Ruger Mini 14 / 30

For the Ruger Ranch rifles, I have heard from a LOT of reliable sources that Factory originals are the only truly reliable magazines available. Because of the nature of the way these ranch rifles function, they don’t have a lot of tolerance for cheap, low quality magazines, with weak, corruptible springs and followers. Therefore, with deepest regret and sympathy, I have to officially
recommend that you just fork over the money for factory originals... You can find them all over the web, but here is a link:

Mini14 Magazines, from Ruger:
http://shopruger.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?catalogId=10051&storeId=10051&categoryIds=11972&productId=58755&langId=-1&parent_category_rn=19056&lastCatId=null

Unfortunately, since Ruger no longer makes their Mini-30 ranch rifle (firing the 7.62x39mm cartridge), you cannot purchase factory original magazines directly from Ruger any longer- at least not that I found.

But... there is ONE more option. Remember that I officially recommended factory original magazines for the Ruger Mini 14 and 30 (if you can find them used), but there is ONE company that I have actually had good luck with.

I no longer own a Ruger Mini 14, but when I did, I purchased a few 20-round magazines from ProMag Industries.

http://www.promagindustries.com/ruger.asp

Now, I have to warn you: about HALF the people who buy ProMag magazines for their Ruger rifles (or any rifle) say they are junk, while the other half says they are perfect. I must have gotten lucky, because the three that I purchased and used NEVER malfunctioned. You have to note, however, that I actually only fired about 200 rounds through each magazines, total. So, perhaps it is in their longevity which they suffer.

Anyway, if you DO decide to go ProMag, buy at your own risk, and make sure to TEST them thoroughly before accepting them as “combat ready”.

Here is another location to get off-brand Mini-14 magazines, but again, I cannot personally vouch for their quality:

http://www.sportsmansguide.com/net/cb/cb.asp?x=a=308894

GLOCK

Factory GLOCK magazines aren’t cheap, but unfortunately, there aren’t a ton of reliable off-brand options out there, and most people suggest that in the case of GLOCK, you just spend the extra money and just get the factory originals... but there are a few off brand options.

Here is one that I can personally vouch for: KCI. They are made in Korea (if you are okay with that- personally, I am- and since GLOCKs are made in Austria anyway, you probably are too), but I just ordered a ten pack of GLOCK 19 magazines for $130 ‘out the door’ from this website: http://www.ammoman.com. I am still awaiting the arrival of my GLOCK 19, but they all tested flawlessly through my GLOCK 26 at least once. Several of them I am “testing” to be daily carry backup magazines, and I haven’t experienced any malfunctions yet. They seem just as good as factory originals. They are tight and designed to what appears to be exact standards.

If you enter the site that I listed above and click on “CLICK HERE FOR ALL MAGAZINES”, and scroll down a bit, you will see a headline that says “New GLOCK 19 MAGS – Made in Korea”.

Note that things are moving so fast right now, that these may very well be gone by the time you get to that website, but you may be able to find KCI off brand magazines from other web locations. Here is a public web forum conversation on the reliability of these exact magazines:
Beat the Ban


There are places where you can usually get used GLOCK magazines for cheap as well, but most of these places are out of stock at the moment. One such example is here:
http://www.cdnninvestments.com/gl199mm15lef.html

Otherwise, here is a link directly to Factory Original NEW GLOCK magazines:
http://www.cdnninvestments.com/glock.html

Browning 1911

I don’t know a whole lot about 1911 magazines, other than they are REALLY cheap- as low as $10 each, for brand new magazines. That’s crazy to me. Here is a link to a bunch of different 1911 magazines:
http://www.cdnninvestments.com/colt.html

Springfield XD

Though I don’t see any XDM magazines, there are a ton of XD magazines here:
http://www.cdnninvestments.com/springfield.html

If you’re looking for XDM magazines, I think getting them directly from Springfield is going to be your best bet at this point. It’s always such a tricky thing with pistol designs as new as the XDM. Third parties are hesitant, I think, to jump into making magazines for a handgun that they aren’t sure will or will not become popular.

For all other pistols, I encourage you to check this link:
http://www.cdnninvestments.com/higcapfacor.html. Simply click on the name of the company that manufactured your handgun and see if they have factory (or off brand) magazines available for it. If that doesn’t pan out for you, simply going to www.Google.com and searching for the make and model of your pistol plus the words “magazine” or “buy magazines” usually works well.
For the primary intent and purpose, a weapon is useless without ammunition. The anti-gunners know this, and even those who do acknowledge our right to keep and bear arms, think they can sneak in the back door and instead of inhibiting our right to own a gun- make it inconceivably expensive to shoot them.

New restrictions on ammunition include (but are not limited to):

✓ A proposed 400% tax on ammunition.
✓ An Ammo-stamping bill that would require that each and every piece of ammunition be imprinted with its own serial number. What a stupid idea.
✓ Other, more ridiculous attempts to block our access to ammo, such as requiring a background check to each purchase.

These are just TWO restrictions that are GREAT reasons why you should be stocking up on ammo right now. Note: If the ammo-stamping bill ever becomes law, all non-stamped ammo will be illegal after a certain date. But, if you are like me, you either don’t care, or plan on “using” it all by then. Pardon my blatant abhorrence to this law, but I do believe that if it ever became law, it would be a ‘last straw’, and would be right up there with a mandatory gun buyback program. Not on my watch.

Anyway...

As I write these words on February 3rd, 2009, I am not the only one thinking about stocking up on ammo- not by a long shot. In fact, I hope you have already stocked up to some degree, simply because ammunition sales have been so through-the-roof since even prior to the election that it’s actually becoming difficult to buy. It’s literally moved beyond simply being more expensive, and is now into the realm of ‘out of stock’ in many areas.

“Military calibers” are especially scarce- If you shoot 5.56x45mm (.223 Remington), 9x19mm “Luger”, or 7.62x51mm (.308 Winchester), you may have a tough time of finding both cheap practice AND self defense ammunition. For these calibers, your best bet is still going to be to find bulk military contract over-runs, but even these (I should say, especially these) are becoming more and more hard to find.

For example, a mere week ago I ordered 2,000 rounds for my M14 from AmmoMan.com:

http://www.ammoman.com/webstore_308.htm

When I found the website, it simply said the specific kind of ammo that I wanted was “In Stock”. By the time I ordered the 2,000 rounds when I got home that night, it’s status had changed to “Running Low”. About two days after I placed my order, the status went to “Out of Stock- Coming Soon”. Though I did receive my order, I have seen VERY few promises on any website of “out of stock – coming soon” return to “In Stock”. It seems as though once it’s sold, it’s indefinitely unavailable. At least for now.

It’s as if even the manufacturers cannot keep up with the current demand.
The good news about this is that it signifies tens of thousands of Americans digging in, and becoming well armed for whatever lies ahead.

The bad news is that if you haven’t stocked up yet, you may not get as lucky as I did.

This section is going to be a little tricky for me to give specific links for, because of how rapidly things are changing. Another example to further drive this point home is this: Walmart is easily the cheapest place that I have found from which to purchase “Winchester White Box” 9mm Luger 115 grain Full Metal Jacket practice rounds.

Well, I’ve been buying them out every time they came into stock, because up until very recently, I kept almost NO stock of ammo at my house. I would buy ammo on my way to the range, use it, and that was the end of it. I saw no need to “stock up”- not when Walmart always had 15 or 20 boxes of 100 on hand.

That has obviously changed, which brings me back to my Walmart story. Well, about two weeks ago, I walked in to buy some more 9mm practice ammo to add to my growing collection, and I bought the last three boxes of 100 that they had in stock. I asked the guy behind the counter (who I have come to know quite well over the last month) when the next shipment was due. After he scanned the barcode, he said “Wow”. “What?” I asked him.

“The warehouse in Arkansas is out... that’s never happened before.”

Scary.

So, I jumped onto MidwayUSA.com, and found a case of 1,000 (ten boxes of 100) Winchester Whitebox for $238 after shipping. Not too bad of a deal, considering that Walmart’s price was $19.96+tax. I bought a case, and had it shipped to my house.

Well, only a week later, unless I am somehow missing something, even MidwayUSA.com is out of these 1,000 round cases. I still see some 500 round boxes available, though who knows for how long.

Unbelievably scary.

The first step to stocking up on ammo, even before looking at specific calibers, is to decide whether or not your gun can shoot WOLF (steel case) ammo. If it can, you’re in luck, because WOLF is usually significantly cheaper than its brass counterpart-especially if you buy in bulk.

The problems with WOLF ammo are twofold. One, the steel cases can damage feed ramps on weapons designed for using brass casings. Two, the primers on WOLF ammo is apparently harder, and can damage the firing pins on weapons designed for use with softer primers. Another issue is that I don’t think you can reload steel-cased ammunition. It’s at very least, not as easy as reloading brass casings.

So- can your gun use WOLF?

**AK47 / Russian pattern rifles**

Generally speaking (by that, I mean you MIGHT want to check with the person/place you bought it from, just to make sure), AK47s aren’t hurt a bit by using steel cased ammunition.

**All others... (AR15 / M14 / FN/FAL / GLOCK / XD, ect)**

For all other types of firearms, you should play it safe and do a bit of research before using steel-cased ammunition. For all the types of weapons listed above, I have heard from at least one source that steel cased ammunition DOES harm the systems in some way, and so I personally recommend that you don’t use it. It’s not that big
of a deal- there’s not a huge price difference anyway.

Okay, onto the numbers.

How much ammunition should you buy? One way to figure this out is to simply extrapolate based on how much ammo you usually use in a given amount of time. If you do this, the amount you need to buy could be huge, or it could be very small. If it’s a huge amount (over 5,000 rounds per year), you might have to scale back on ammo usage by cutting your pleasure shooting down to almost nothing, and find ways of training that involve using less ammo than usual.

If your extrapolation tells of very little ammo usage (less than 1,000 rounds per year), you may actually not be shooting enough. I’m not judging- but before you begin stocking up, make sure you have the skill needed to put the ammo to good use.

A very wise man (though I forget who) once said “It’s better to have 900 rounds of skill and 100 rounds of ammo for battle than no skill and 1,000 rounds of ammo for battle”.

For your rifle (and by rifle, I mean your combat rifle- not your hunting rifle):

1,000 rounds of good quality, self defense ammunition.

Gabe says to buy practice ammunition “as affordable”, but I would recommend the same numbers as for the pistol: 2,400 rounds of practice ammunition per year.

Note that when I say “practice”, I don’t mean standing out in front of a backstop plinking bulls at 20 yards (with your handgun) or 100 yards (with your rifle). You can dryfire practice just as effectively as that- When I say practice, I mean honest to God training- such as in a professional class.

A $400 training class may seem like a lot right now, but after you see that 1,000 rounds of practice ammo for your rifle is a lot more than that... well, I think you’ll see the importance of using it wisely. You need each and every bullet that you fire to add skill to your ability. You can’t afford to use ammo in a trivial fashion.

Friend, remember- these numbers are just numbers. Any ammunition is better than no ammunition. If you can’t reach your goal for whatever reason, whether it’s financial or simple availability, you’re still doing better buying what you can than you would be if you “waiting until the price came down”.

Okay, now let’s jump right into this and find you some ammo. Please note that the websites that I list here are very popular, and even if there is ammo available today (February 3rd), there may not be by tomorrow, let alone by the time you read this.
So, if you visit each of these websites and ammunition is no longer available, don’t be discouraged.

Very quickly, before I list the websites, let’s go over cost: How much should you plan on paying?

Needless to say, nothing on this planet has a fixed cost- everything is worth what its purchaser is willing to pay for it. This has never been truer than it is today. With ammunition sales through the roof, retailers are raising their prices like crazy to try to keep some in stock. But, it’s still not working.

If money isn’t an object to you, you should be able to get whatever you want. Not in all cases, because there are a lot of people out there who also don’t care about price, buying all the ammo they can as it becomes available.

If money is an object, you will want to know what the “going rate” is. You want to know if you’re paying too much, or if you are getting a good deal. Well, as of early February, 2009- here are some guidelines as far as price goes (prices given are by the case of 1,000 rounds). You should expect to pay about...

$250 to have a case of 9mm Luger FMJs delivered to your door.

$400 to have a case of .40 S&W delivered to your door.

$500 to have a case of .45 ACP delivered to your door.

$550 to have a case of 5.56x45mm (.223 Remington) delivered to your door.

$250 to have a case of .45x39mm delivered to your door.

$600 to have a case of 7.62x51mm (.308 Winchester) delivered to your door.

$550 to have a case of .762x39mm Russian delivered to your door.

$800 to have a case of .30-'06 Springfield delivered to your door.* READ BELOW ABOUT THE CMP IF YOU SHOOT AN ’06!

These are just guidelines. If you find available ammunition for less than this, I would consider it a great deal, and would scoop it up if you have the cash.

**I said available, because there are TONS of places where ammo is listed for less than this but is on backorder. It would be like seeing a gas station sign that stopped being changed in 1998 saying $0.85 / gallon. Just because it sold at that price at one time doesn’t mean it’s worth that any more.

Also note that I am not being alarmist or sensational when I say that I doubt that ammo will ever be cheaper than it is now. I hope I am wrong, but I don’t think I am. I am anti-alarmist, believe me. I think Al Gore is full of junk, and I don’t think the world is ending. I am an optimistic realist. Anyway...

Let’s get you into some ammo. Last ‘note’: Make SURE that you’re not buying something on ‘back order’. Triple check it to make sure it says ‘available’! You never know when it might come back into stock- I know some guys who are still waiting from ‘back-ordered’ ammo from September. Also note that some smaller websites, like AmmoMan, don’t update quantities during the night or over the weekend- so it’s very possible that it might say available Sunday night, but Monday morning you find out that your order is on back order. If this DOES happen to you, 99% of
places will happily cancel your order so you can keep shopping, which is what I recommend.

MidwayUSA: http://www.midwayusa.com/

I have ordered ammunition from this website several times. They ship very quickly, have Walmart-like prices, and I have never had a problem with them. The only problem is, their supply for popular calibers is already becoming sparse.

AmmoMan: http://www.ammoman.com/

This is one of my favorite places to buy ammunition. The site looks HORRIBLE, but they ship very quickly, and I like how shipping costs are already included in the listed price. Most importantly, they have some GREAT prices. Buuut, it is a popular site, and almost as quickly as new stock is listed, it is sold off. Note that you might have to email or fax them a copy of your driver’s license to prove your age- though that might simply be to prevent having to sign for the package.

Sportsman’s guide:  
http://sportsmansguide.com/

I have never ordered ammo from this site, though I know a lot of people who have, and they have been very happy with the business. The only beef I have with it, is that they don’t have many ‘bulk order’ prices, and I don’t much like the idea of buying 2,000 rounds of ammo by the box of 20 rounds. You pay more, plus it’s harder to manage than nice 140 round water proof battle packs.

Cheaper Than Dirt:  
http://www.cheaperthandirt.com

These guys have pretty good prices, but again, don’t have much in the line of military surplus, or 500 or 1,000 round cases. Still, at least right now, their supply seems to be holding out, so if you need some ammo in a pinch, these guys might be the ones to go with. Plus, I’ve heard that if you join their “buyers club”, you can spread the payment of an order out over three or four months- handy.

Dakota Ammo: https://www.dakotaammo.net

These guys make high quality, self defense ammo. It’s not cheap at all, but it’s there.

Georgia Arms: http://georgia-arms.com

These guys have a ton of bulk-quantity stuff, which I am a big fan of. Their prices aren’t the lowest, but they are reasonable- especially for the current political environment. Not to mention, their supply seems intact. I would check these guys out.

Ammo Connection:  
http://www.ammo-connection.com/

As I write this, this site is completely sold out... but, it might be a good site to keep your eye on. I’ve heard that they have some good deals on good ammo, when they have stock.

Ammunition To Go:  
http://www.ammunitiontogo.com

Their site is a bit tricky to navigate, but if you can find your caliber, you just might find some good deals. I don’t see a ton of military surplus anymore, but even their name-brand stuff isn’t priced too badly.

*Civilian Marksmanship Program:  
http://www.odcmp.com/

If you shoot a .30-’06 (M1 Garand), you might do well by joining the CMP and gaining access to their ammunition sales area:

http://www.thecmp.org/ammosales.htm
They have some GREAT deals on old Military surplus- but be warned that their ammo is sold “as is”, and you may find some to be corroded or deteriorated. I believe it’s all non-corrosive though, and I believe they have a bunch of it in stock.

I truly hope that **if** you plan on being a rifleman or an effective armed citizen, you are able to find plenty of ammo to stay sharp and prepared.

**REMEMBER-** part of the British strategy leading up to the American Revolution was to prevent colonist access to powder stores.

**THEY ALWAYS GO FOR THE GUNS FIRST!**

Don’t let this happen to you. If you have to take out a loan to buy ammo, do it. You will not regret it- I promise you. If you have to, sell enough off each month to make the payment on the loan- as the price increases don’t show any sign of slowing, I guarantee you that you could pay the entire loan off this way over time, and still have over half of your ammo purchase remaining.

Good luck.
Beating the Ban

Spare Parts & Bad Gas
By Patrick Kilchermann, of the Delta Media team

Guns break. And when they do, they usually don’t work anymore. This may sound silly and obvious, but think about an automobile. There are a TON of things that can go wrong on an automobile that will not take away from the vehicle’s ability to get you home in one piece.

It’s not usually so with a gun. Unlike automobiles, firearms are almost always as stripped down and simple as possible, leaving only parts that have an important role in the function of the weapon. I’m not even referring, in my automobile analogy, to things like air conditioning units or dome lights—there are many mechanical things on an automobile that can operate in a less-than-optimal state, or even fail completely, and have very little effect on a car’s ability to move from point A to point B.

You don’t have that luxury with a firearm—if something breaks, you’re probably out of the fight. With firearms however, you do have a luxury that you do not have with automobiles: the ability to predict what will break, when it will probably break, and hence, you are able to have parts on hand to fix it.

Sure, there are SOME instances where you can predict how your car will fail. For example, most car owners know that keeping an extra serpentine belt on hand is a good idea. Maybe even an idler pulley. Tires are a big one. They fail so frequently that manufacturers even leave room in a car’s design for an extra tire.

So, what spare tires should you have on hand for when your gun breaks?

I’m going to cover Handguns, then Rifles, then Shotguns, and I’m going to list exactly which parts you should have on hand for each weapon, and where you can find these parts.

Handguns

For your handgun(s), the following are pretty much standard “across the board” parts that you should have on hand, regardless of brand or model of handgun.

- A replacement barrel
- A spring rebuild kit
- A trigger assembly
- Extra firing pin(s)
- Rebuild supplies for your handgun magazines (Spring, followers, and base plates).

Now, where to get these things? Since the goal of this report is to save you the legwork, I’m going to list some sites that sell this stuff for the most common types of handguns—1911, GLOCK, XD, and Kahr. For Sig, S&W, and others, please see the very last section. Revolvers are much simpler in function than autos, but there are still plenty of breakable parts that you should be weary of.

Note that I also highly recommend a repair / rebuild manual for every gun you own. Since there are far too many to list here, I am simply going to recommend that you go to http://www.amazon.com/ and search for your model of handgun. Trust me—Amazon has manuals for every gun every made. You might have to do some digging through search results, but they are there.
Browning 1911

Let me start out by saying that I am not a 1911 guy. I wish I was, I think they 1911 design is very pretty, and I love the idea of a design that has been around for almost one hundred years... but I am not a 1911 expert. I know that there are tons of different builds of this design nowadays, in different sizes and whatnot- so you may just have to do your own homework in addition to the research that I’ve collected here. That said, I am a ‘Google’ expert, and I believe I have found some sites that you will find valuable.

Wilson Combat:  
http://www.wilsoncombat.com/index_1911_part_acc.htm

Wilson Combat makes some of the most effective 1911 pistols out there, and I assume therefore, that their ‘spare parts’ would be of the highest grade out there.

Kimber America:  
http://www.kimberamerica.com/shop/section.php?xSec=7

Right up there with Wilson in the 1911 field is Kimber. I’m not sure if either brand is any better than the other, but I’ll bet spare parts from each are better than most others.

Sarco, Inc: http://www.sarcoinc.com/cgm.html

Sarco, Inc carries a lot of parts for the 1911 pistol- from total repair kits to slides, and everything in between. They have a decent return policy as well, but ordering from them is a little different than most standard online “shopping cart” retailers. Here is a link to their order page:  
http://www.sarcoinc.com/order1.html

BuyMilSurp.com:  
http://www.buymilsurp.com/1911-pistol-1911-parts-c-3546_3137_3139.html?zenid=9e458c537e13e1f72d3099904f816bd9

My apologies for the weird hyperlink, but this place has a ton of great 1911 parts with pictures for each, and a more uniform ordering process. I’ve never dealt with this company, but a little bit of research online seems to suggest that they are fairly easy to work with.

GLOCK

Ghost, Inc:  
http://www.ghostinc.com/category/glockparts/

I have dealt with this company several times, and they offered professional service and fast shipping. I would do business with them again.

GlockParts.com: http://glockparts.com/

I’ve never dealt with this company, but they have a ton of parts listed under the “Catalog” link in the upper menu bar on their site, and some VERY helpful diagrams within the left-most column. Click on “Disassembly” and “Mag Rebuild” within that left column and you’ll see what I mean.

Glockmeister: http://www.glockmeister.com/

I’ve never ordered anything from this guy, but I’ve always wanted to. His site sells just about any and every part you can think of for a GLOCK handgun.

Springfield XD

The XD has become very popular, and it has already cemented itself into the minds of shooters as having a GLOCK-like level of reliability.
Combined with simplicity, XDs are a good choice. Like the GLOCK, there are a few key sites that offer most parts that you will need.

Brownells: [http://www.brownells.com](http://www.brownells.com)

Their site can be a bear to navigate, but a lot of people I know have ordered from Brownells, and I believe they all have been happy with their experience. The best way to get XD parts that I have found, is to simply use the “Search” box in the upper-left hand corner of the website, and enter: Springfield XD.

Hit enter, and I got a list of some pretty essential XD parts, such as barrels, sights, springs, sears, and triggers.

Unfortunately, none of my searches really turned up much else on the XD, but I think you should be able to get what you need from Brownells.

**Kahr**

Those of you who are looking for spare Kahr parts have it easy. I’m only going to give you one website, and it will be all that you need to get any part that you will need for every model of Kahr out there.

KahrShop.com: [http://www.kahrshop.com](http://www.kahrshop.com)

Click on the link, and then select the model of Kahr that you need parts for, and then just follow the prompts and instructions. They have EVERYTHING, and their site isn’t that difficult to navigate through. Just note that it is split into frames, so once you select the top or bottom half of the pistol for parts, you need to move your mouse over to the right half of the page to be able to scroll up and down.

Alternatively, here is a print-out order form directly from Kahr that you can use to order directly from the manufacturer: [http://www.kahr.com/DL/kahrpartslist.pdf](http://www.kahr.com/DL/kahrpartslist.pdf)

**Ruger**

For revolvers, here is a page with all of the repair manuals and spare part forms, in PDF format.

[http://www.ruger-firearms.com/Firearms/PS-PartsBooklets-RE.html](http://www.ruger-firearms.com/Firearms/PS-PartsBooklets-RE.html)

For Ruger pistols, the same type of page exists:


**All Other Handguns...**

For all others, I encourage you to at least check with Brownells. Their prices are competitive, and they have a great reputation. Simply go to the following link, and click on the manufacturer of your pistol in order to get parts:


**Rifles**

**The AR Platform**

Firing pin
Hammer and trigger springs
Safety spring
Disconnector spring
Extractor spring with insert
Extractor with pin
Ejector plunger
Firing pin retainer
All of these parts can be found here: http://www.bushmaster.com/products.asp?cat=501

The AK Platform

- Bolt repair kit.
- Couple of spare firing pins.
- Spare hammer spring.
- Spare extractor spring
- Spare recoil assembly
- Spare disconnector spring
- Retainer plate or wire.

All of these parts can be found here: http://www.gunaccessories.com/AK47-MAK90/SpareParts.asp

M14/M1A Battle Rifle

- Various springs: Recoil, Extractor, Ejector, Trigger group, & Magazine latch spring
- Extractor
- Extractor plunger
- Ejector
- Firing pin(s)
- Trigger group housing pins
- Bolt roller and clip

All of these parts can be found here: http://www.chestnutridge.com/products/m14.asp

Shotguns

For the Remington 870 and Mossberg 500 shotguns, you might just want to consider buying a twin shotgun and keeping it as a backup. The reason for this is because there are MANY of both of these models of weapon which have had TOUSANDS of shells fired through them and have never had an issue. I personally have run a 20ga 870 so severely through the ropes that I expected it to die on me, and it just keeps coming back for more- no failures.

You can keep parts such as firing pins on hand, but again, an entire back-up shotgun might be a better idea.
When it comes to accessories, the sky is the limit. With most of the things I am about to discuss, there isn’t so much a rush to ‘beat the ban’ as there is to simply ‘be prepared’. What I mean by this, is that Obummer will probably never ban things like magazine pouches, tactical vests, or tactical LEDS; even though these are all things that you really should think about acquiring if you are taking action right now to become prepared.

You can equip yourself for a very wide range of adventures, from as light and casual as a walk in the woods, all the way up to ‘battle-ready soldier’. I know there will be people from all areas of that spectrum reading this, and I want to help you all. Some of the gear listed in the coming chapter may seem over the top to you, such as a bullet resistant vest- but just keep in mind that to many people, the choice to buy body armor is as second nature as the choice to stock up on spare lithium batteries for your tactical LED.

..you do own a tactical LED, don’t you? ;)

Just note, that all of the items listed below assume that you already have the ammunition and magazines that you need / want. I certainly would put ammunition and magazines at a higher priority than the stuff here, except for maybe a few items that will allow you to carry magazines and ammunition more effectively (which you will read about soon enough).

One almost has to go about equipping themselves with tactical gear in a tiered fashion, depending on their budget / level of desired preparation. Fortunately, the cost increases with your desired level of ‘battle-readiness’, so we are able to start out slowly, on the low end of the scale, and work our way up. Here are the different levels that we’re going to cover.

Level 1: Home Defense Gear
Level 2: Concealed Carry / Duty Gear
Level 3: Open Carry Gear
Level 4: SHTF Survival Gear
Level 5: Minuteman Gear

This chapter could get REALLY long if I let it, so I’m going to have to stay brief. Keep in mind, if you will, that each level of preparedness in cumulative- that is, level three includes all the gear from levels one and two as well, and so on.

Now that you’re all pumped up about moving through the levels and learning what gear to get and where to get it, let’s get right to it!

**Level 1: Home Defense Gear**

The most basic level that we’re going to talk about is home defense gear. Note that I’m not placing defense of home on the lowest level of importance- all this means is that it’s the least expensive thing to prepare for, and one can go from ‘not ready at all’ to ‘completely ready’ in the smallest amount of time. Plus, it’s generally a person’s first step towards preparedness and self defense.

Also note, that home defense is like an onion, in that there are tons of layers. An entire report could be written on this topic alone (and has- see our “How to Protect Your Family From a Brutal Home Invasion” report). For the sake of staying on topic,
I am ONLY going to talk about the gear involved that is at risk of being banned, or that may be hard to get in the near future for any other reason, or that you simply may want to get before you think you might need it.

Strategy and planning aside, here are the basic things you will want to make sure you have on hand in order to be equipped to properly defend your home:

A pump action 12 gauge shotgun.

Though I personally recommend the Remington brand, model 870 (don’t ask me why), the Mossberg 500 is a very similar set up. I’m sure there are plenty of people out there who prefer the Mossberg 500 over the Remington 870, I’m just not one of them. Anyway, for a pump shotgun of either model, you should plan on paying anywhere from $250 - $400 for a base model. Here are some things you will want to look for in your home defense shotgun:

The shortest barrel possible, while remaining within the confines of the law. This is usually 18 inches, or 18.5 inches for a shotgun. Make sure the barrel has a “smooth bore” and not a rifled barrel. Rifled barrels are designed to add stability to sabbotted slugs (for hunting), and the twisting effect (centrifugal force) the rifling will have on scatter-shot will cause the shot to spread to the point of ineffectiveness in just a few yards.

Shotgun barrels can be bought from most online gun retailers, and even some local places. I just ordered a smoothbore 18 inch barrel from a Gander Mountain store here in Michigan, and after tax and everything, it ended up costing only $158. I say ‘only’, because it allowed me to transform my “slug gun” that I use for deer hunting into a home defense / tactical shotgun. So in a sense, I bought a second gun for less than $200.

Here is a great online location for shotgun barrels:

Your Shotgun Barrel Source:
http://www.barrelexchange.com/

A magazine tube extension. If you can find a shotgun with one of these already equipped, you’re ahead of the game. They can be added easy enough, but cost about $50. Adding an after-market extension is easiest accomplished on a Remington 870, but can be done on a Mossberg with relative ease as well- or so I’ve heard. A magazine tube extension adds extra-shell capacity to your shotgun, which you will never regret. For a shotgun with an 18 inch barrel, you should plan on being able to hold six or seven rounds in the extended magazine tube of your shotgun.

http://www.midwayusa.com

Go here and search for “Choate tube extensions”. There are several brands that manufacture these extensions, but I’ve heard that Choate brand extensions are the best.

One note on the magazine tube extensions, is that if you have a Remington 870 Express model, you will have to deal with two dimples on the existing magazine tube before you can install the extension. I have heard of a few ways to accomplish this, but the manufacturer simply recommends drilling them out. I did this myself, but I’ll note that it took a lot of hand filing in order to smooth out the drill burrs enough to allow the follower to pass correctly. A dremel tool would make this a lot easier.

A shell carrier. These either wrap around the stock of your shotgun, or clip to it, or affix to the receiver of the shotgun in some way. They basically just hold extra rounds for your shotgun. They are handy, because to reload, you don’t have to go all the way down to your pocket and back up to the gun to load each shell, but most logically,
they keep extra ammo on your gun. If you wake up at 3am to investigate the sound of broken glass, you’re probably not going to have your PJs pre-stocked with 12ga buckshot shells.

Shot shell carrier (for a receiver):  

Shot shell carrier (for stock):  

A shortened stock. The purpose of this is the same as the 18 inch barrel, and that is mobility. You thought I was going to say that it makes your shotgun look way cooler, didn’t you? Well, it does, but that’s not the point. Hunting shotguns with their stationary wooden stocks are REALLY hard to maneuver around a home- through doorways and down hallways. Plus, if your barrel sticks out there four feet, you’re making it too easy for someone waiting around a corner to grab your gun. There are a lot of options out there for shortened stocks. You can go Schwarzenegger-style and get a simple pistol grip if you’d like. This is the shortest option, at very least. I prefer to retain the option to shoulder the weapon, as shouldering significantly increases your ability to hit what you’re aiming at, as well as leverage the weapon if it comes to hand-to-hand fighting. For this, I suggest either a folding stock, or a telescoping stock. With a folder, you get all the advantages of a pistol grip and a standard stock (just make sure you can fire it with the stock folded closed!).

Folding and Telescoping stocks:  
http://www.combatstocks.com/Shotgun_Stocks_Folding.cfm

Night sights. These can get a bit pricey, but they are WORTH it. Just like for your pistol, these sights contain a trace (safe) amount of a radioactive element. In short, they glow for a long time. When I bought a set, it guaranteed them to glow for ten years- not bad at all!

http://www.trijicon.com/Trijicon.cfm

A Mounted Tactical Flashlight. With a pistol, you can get away with lighting with one hand and shooting with the other- but not with a shotgun. You must be able to rack and steady the forearm. You can mount a light and have a pressure switch on the forearm:

http://www.tjgeneralstore.com/tacstar.htm

Or, you can go all out and have a forearm with a built in weapon light. These are VERY expensive, but incredibly useful.

http://www.surefire.com/ShotgunWeaponLights

Level 2: Concealed Carry Gear

If you’re reading this report, you probably already have all that you need in order to effectively concealed carry. But, just in case, here is what you’re going to need:

A Concealable Handgun. Again, there could be a 2,000 page book on this heading alone, but I’ll give you the ultra-condensed version: Any pistol or revolver that you can fire 300 rounds through in an hour and not have any gun-caused misfires that is .380 caliber or larger. Did I mention you have to be proficient and deadly with it? You probably have a carry gun, but if by chance you don’t, I’m going to recommend either a GLOCK or a Smith and Wesson Airweight 38 special. Why? They work. I know this isn’t much info, and so be sure to head over to the ‘Guns’ chapter of this report and listen to what Mr. Suarez and Mr. Williams have to say on the subject.
Extra Magazines. Most people recommend at least one change of ammo, regardless of whether your carry gun holds five rounds or twenty. I would say this is pretty reasonable, but if you can carry more, you will never regret having it if you need to use your handgun in self defense. See the chapter called “Magazines” for more info on where to get this stuff and how to make sure you don’t end up with junk magazines that could get you killed.

Magazine carriers. These are what you carry your extra magazine(s) in. Personally, I just drop my extra magazine into my jeans pocket, but if these work for you, I’d say they are a better idea, for the reason that they are consistent. Often, my magazine gets jarred around and moved upside down in my pocket. Here’s some examples of some Mag carriers. This one goes in your pocket to keep them steady: http://www.opticsplanet.net/galco-group-pmc-pocket-magazine-carrier-c1.html. This one goes on your belt: http://www.desantisholster.com/storefrontB2CWEB/browse.do?action=refresh_browse&ctg_id=120076

A Tactical Flashlight. I recommend that you make sure to get one that uses an LED instead of an incandescent bulb, and I also recommend that you make sure it uses the expensive lithium CR123 batteries. It has to be bright enough to hurt really bad to have it shined in your eyes- this is usually 60 lumens minimum, with literally no maximum. If someone is threatening you in an alley, hurting their eyes is kind of the idea. This is what I carry:

http://www.novatac.com/

But here is another REALLY solid, professional company that I can personally vouch for:

http://www.surefire.com/

A Concealment Holster. You’re just going to have to try what works here, but to get an idea of the HUNDREDS of options you have in this department, just have a look at the categories on one of our free holster exchange sites: http://www.holstertrade.com. This is a great holster company that I have done a lot of business with: http://desantisholster.com/. As a rule of thumb, you should be able to draw your pistol from concealment and fire a couple shots in just a second or two- without shooting yourself.

Level 3: Open Carry Gear

The reason I am not categorizing open carry gear with concealed carry gear, is because for this category, I am assuming a little different situation then your traditional Arizona / Wyoming friendly style of open carry. I am referring to the kind of carry that you would do if society has crumbled to the point where the mere idea that you are armed is no longer enough to deter crime and threats against you. Let’s say it’s gotten so bad that you need to SHOW that you are armed in order to get any respect.

Some people think that open carry attracts bullets and makes you a target. I think this is true in the case of mass murders who plan on committing suicide after a shooting spree, but I don’t think your average criminal would pick on someone with a gun on their hip.

All that said, the gear for ‘open carry’ will be a bit different than concealed carry.

A Duty / Combat Handgun. This differs from a Concealable gun in that it is larger, more powerful, and can hold more ammo. Once you take away the need to conceal your weapon, there’s nothing to stop you from carrying a full size, full power, “high capacity” handgun. So, if you concealed a GLOCK 26, why not step it up for open carry to a GLOCK 17?
An Open Carry Holster. Unlike your concealment rig, your open carry holster needs to have some type of retention system, both for the general cause of safety, and so that there’s at least something in the way of someone just yanking your gun out of its holster—though simply being in condition yellow should prevent that. Your open carry holster can be on your belt, on your chest, or thigh. All of these positions work, you will just have to experiment to find whichever works best for you.

A bullet resistant vest. Ahh, now we’re talking. Seriously though, if it gets to the point where you need to carry openly to prevent being robbed, you probably shouldn’t be spending too much time in town. But if you do have to go to town, you are basically telling everyone around you that I am ready for a fight. With that in mind, it’s time to add another layer of protection to your arsenal, and go on the defensive a bit. You want something comfortable that you can wear under a shirt or jacket. This isn’t required, but if I had a vest I’d make sure nobody knew it. The last thing I want is for a murderer to shoot at my face because he knows that my torso is protected. Disgustingly, I’ve seen police videos of this happening. Here are some options:

http://www.bulletproofme.com/
http://www.dangerproof.com/
http://www.blackarmor.com/
http://www.bulletproofvests.com/
http://www.usabodyarmor.com/

My only advice here, is don’t go cheap. Even a cheap bulletproof vest is going to set you back quite a bit, so just get something good. Read reviews, and ask people who have experience with them. Unfortunately, I don’t have a specific brand or vest to suggest to you, and I apologize for that, but I don’t think it will be too difficult to find something that works for you personally.

Level 4: SHTF Survival Gear

Now we’re really getting into the serious stuff. If you have never heard the acronym ‘SHTF’ before, excuse me, but it literally stands for sh*t hits the fan. What this implies in daily usage, is that there has been a complete breakdown of order. Law enforcement can’t keep up or no longer exists due to officers abandoning their posts to look after their own families. Cell phone towers have long since been knocked out. Government has declared martial law, and is scooping up most of the electrical and fuel supply to maintain order.

In short, Obama got his hands on the economy. Kidding... sort of.

Anyway, in our SHTF example, 80% of people depend on government food depots to eat. Metropolitan areas are where the government has the most authority and control, yet even they are so dangerous that police patrols are fully armed and armored, and they are transported in armored vehicles. TV and radio, when they work, show that riots are daily occurrences in cities. City dwellers with family ‘in the sticks’ have long since evacuated. It’s basically post-Katrina New Orleans.

The countryside is the home of the self sufficient, and that is where I hope you, my dear friends, will be if S ever HTF.

The United States Dollar is worthless. People who stocked up on gold and silver are darn glad they did, as this is about the only form of ‘currency’ in existence. Everyone else relies on bartering to get what they want. Exchange rates change on a minute-by-minute basis, depending completely on
how much the person you want to trade with wants in exchange for their goods.

A zip-lock baggie of .22LR shells may get you five cans of tomato soup from one person, or it may get you a single .30-’06 cartridge from another. SHTF is chaos, lawlessness, and disorder. Weak people cling to the strong, evil people come out of the shadows, and good, strong people are seen as heros.

With all that in mind, here are some things you may find incredibly useful..., if SHTF:

A bicycle and bike repair kit. Cheap transportation, and no petrol required.

A .22 caliber Long Rifle and about 10,000 rounds of hollow-point, hunting ammunition. Because you still have to feed your family, and small game reproduces very rapidly. Might I give a STRONG recommendation for the Ruger 10/22? I have both the Carbine version as well as the ‘full length’ version, and they are both very accurate. I highly recommend some GOOD optics. You will want to be able to head-shoot small game to preserve as much meat as possible. My Ruger 10/22 topped with a Leupold 4 power scope has taken a LOT of game over the years. If you are able to, in the state where you live, a sound suppressor on a small-game hunting firearm might prove VERY useful in allowing you to take game without scaring all the rest away. Note that the license for a suppressor would be irrelevant if S ever HTF, but you still need one right now.

A hi-powered hunting rifle. Meat can be hard to preserve without aid of either old man winter or a freezer, but sometimes it’s easier to bag one deer every few days than it would be to kill several squirrels or rabbits per day. You will certainly want some quality optics on this one. If you can’t see it, you can’t shoot it- and a rifle capable of taking a deer at 500 yards is best served with some nice optics anyway. I have no preference for hunting rifles. A surplus Mosin Nagant or a polished Remington 700- as long as you can feed them ammo and take game with them, your choice is irrelevant.

A Radio. If you team up with someone else, or if you have a family unit, it would be useful to be able to communicate over distance without relying on cell phone towers. Radios do take a lot of power to blast transmissions long distances though, so this is where a hand-generated unit would come in handy (in case electricity becomes sparse). If power isn’t an issue, this won’t matter. Or, if access to gasoline or diesel fuel isn’t an issue, using a vehicle-based radio to communicate with a partner with a battery-powered handset would be a good idea.

An alternative power source. Depending on your climate, solar power, wind power, or water driven generators are all good things to have on hand. Living off the grid is yet another topic that could be expanded to thousands of pages, but here is a web URL that will give you a ton more information if you are prepared.

http://www.off-grid.net/

Water purification systems. As rudimentary as a jug of bleach, or as sophisticated as a manual filtration system, a water purification system is a must. Even if you have some big water reservoirs and/or a hand-pump well, a method to purify water would be useful- especially if you’re in an area prone to flooding.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_purification

Food. Even if hunting is a viable option- and especially if it isn’t, you’re going to want to make sure to have a big stock of food on hand. Non-perishables, such as MREs and canned food are best. I’m not suggesting that you ‘go all Y2K’, just
that you build up a reasonable, rational store of food in case of an emergency.

I have to believe that any instance of SHTF will blow over relatively quickly- within a couple months, max. I only say that, because SHTF is a pretty unprecedented concept, and unlike the government, businesses can’t afford too much down-time. Power companies, super stores, and gas chains will find a way to get their product to people- because customers are on who livelihood depends. You may not agree, but I am certain that at least, business will save us from a SHTF scenario in the end.

You just have to live through the worst of it.

Level 5: Minuteman Gear

I’m betting the title of this section conveys the message well enough, but just so we’re clear...

This country was forged by minute-man patriots. Everyday citizens who recognized that their participation in eradicating their homeland from tyranny was necessary, and that they couldn’t participate without the proper tools and state of mental readiness.

What these men did was stand up and fight against the governing system that was infringing on their basic, human rights. Don’t get me wrong, I am not suggesting that we are anywhere near a point where this is necessary in our country. I don’t agree with the current administration on most counts- but I love my country and I believe that we can still peacefully fix our government. I know we can.

What I’m saying is, I am not one of these guys who are suggesting that we’re under tyrannical rule. Yes, we have allowed ourselves to become over-burdened with socialism- but that just means we have some serious voting to do.

Anyway... I don’t have to be ‘that kind of person’ to acknowledge that one of my basic duties as an American is to be a well equipped, well trained, and well prepared rifleman. I am trying to become the modern-day equivalent of the 1775 minuteman. I’m still a good amount of gear and skill away from that level- but I am getting there.

Before I get into the gear, please note that it is the SKILL that makes the rifleman- not the gear. This is where you need to be to develop the skill:

http://www.appleseedinfo.org/

Dive into that URL and don’t come out until you are signed up for an appleseed event! Okay, moving on...

Here are some of the things that you might want to get your hands on while you can- stuff that you need if you want to become a rifleman / minuteman:

A Combat Rifle. Technically, I think everyone should own a full-fledged battle rifle- a thirty caliber, semi-automatic rifle such as an M1 Garand, M14/M1A, or FN/FAL. But, any military pattern rifle will do- an AR15, an AK47, or similar. As long as you are deadly with it, and it’s a military pattern rifle- it will work.

M14: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M14_rifle


For your combat rifle, iron sights, for the fact that they are 100% reliable, are preferred over
telescoping optics. Some people like red-dot sights, and I am not suggesting against them- but I would always be sure to have at least some back-up iron sights on your weapon if you chose to go that route. Here is a link to where you can find some of the best Red-Dot sights made-
http://www.aimpoint.com/. Also, make sure to get a military sling for your rifle (there's more / better info on slings inside that Appleseed link as well):

Ammunition. Ideally, you would be able to use a more effective round than straight up full metal jackets- green tip military stuff, or Hornady TAP. But, military surplus FMJ will do in a pinch. I wouldn’t want to get hit with any of it. See the chapter on ‘Ammunition’ for places to buy this stuff, how much to get, and everything else related to ammo.

A Tactical Vest. A tactical vest is useful, as it puts gear at your immediate fingertips. Extra magazines, a flash light, first aid- even your pistol can be stored on a vest. I like stuff from BlackHawk, but there are many, many more options out there.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Vests,14.htm

Did I mention they look cool? Back to reality- the most useful vests (in my opinion) are MOLLE type. This stands for Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment. Basically, they have a system of webbing that allows for you to move and position MOLLE compatible components as you prefer. You can get things from magazine pouches to holsters- it’s very handy.

One last ‘vest’ component that you might want to consider beefing up is the Bullet Resistant Vest that we added to our pile in the Open Carry Level of this chapter.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Armor,3.htm

A Bullet-Proof Helmet. Not much needs to be said about the importance of a combat helmet. The current generation of military helmets can be very expensive:

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Helmets,92.htm

If you have the money, I would say go for it- but if money is a concern, try to find a last-generation PASGT Kevlar military helmet on eBay.com, and save a few bucks. I’ve heard of people find them anywhere from $25 to $300. It all depends on when and where. Scratches and scuffs are to be expected, but make sure they are not cracked. The point is not so much to stop a bullet as it is to protect your head from impact and shrapnel.

Bandoliers. Ammunition is no good if you can’t get it to the fight. There are a lot of options here. I like the simple one you drape over your neck and a shoulder. For an AR, you can get bandoliers that hold up to eight magazines, and for M14s, you get them that hold six.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Bandoleers,1388.htm

Footwear. You can’t beat a good pair of boots. In combat, they would be necessary. You can’t afford to lose your footing.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Footwear,20.htm

Gloves. Just like losing your footing, you have to be able to maintain your grip. Hands get sweaty, and it would be easy for this to become a big problem in a fight. Gloves solve that.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Gloves,15.htm
Knee and elbow pads. Something that is easy to forget about, is knee and elbow pads. You can do serious damage (or at very least, causing a lot of pain) by hitting the dirt on your bare elbows and knees. No sense in that- just get a good pair of elbow and knee pads. If official combat pads are too expensive, just check at your local home improvement store. Just make sure they have two straps- the kind that just have one strap are cheap and are not meant for serious use (they are designed for non-running applications, like roofing a house).

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Knee-Elbow-Pads,9.htm

Packs. You never know when you might have to break camp when on the move, or live out of your pack for a few days. It’s better to have more supplies than fewer.

http://blackhawk.com/catalog/Packs,28.htm

Eye Protection. Dust, dirt, and debris can be a serious problem in these kinds of situations, and an eye injury can be debilitating. The sad thing is, eye injuries are one of the easiest kinds of injuries to prevent. You would never regret investing in some serious eye protection. I personally really like Revision Eyewear, for the simple fact that it has saved a lot of lives and eyes in Iraq. I can personally vouch for the Sawflys and Hellflys.

http://www.revisioneyewear.com/

But any sort of protective eyewear is better than no eyewear at all.

By now, you have some solid starting points for stocking up on accessories and supplies, depending on how deep into this whole thing you want to go. Before anything else though, make sure you get plenty of ammunition, and the SKILL to use it properly.
Beat the Ban

The Victory Volley
By Patrick Kilchermann, of the Delta Media team

It is my sincere wish that the information within this report will help you become more prepared in the very immediate future.

As you already know, learning what you need to do in order to beat the ban is only half the battle. Now, you must shoulder the burden of getting into gear and actually getting the stuff into your hands. If uncertainty was the only thing holding you back, well, now you’re ready to go.

If financial reasons are holding you back, I strongly encourage you to do whatever you have to do in order to at least get the bare-minimum supplies, weapons, and ammunition listed in this report. You might have to borrow the money, either from a friend, family member, or financial institution, or take on some over-time, or dip into your savings.

Whatever you have to do- it is worth it. Outside of becoming obsolete, a weapon is a very good investment if properly maintained. Think about it like this: The M1 Garand service rifle was introduced almost seventy years ago, and it is still the primary choice battle-rifle of many Americans. The 1911 service pistol has an even longer history.

Ammunition from the cold war is worth MUCH more now than its manufacturers could have ever predicted. If you don’t equip yourself properly now, do not let it be because doing so would be a bad investment. You can always sell whatever you buy- and you’ll probably come out ahead in doing so.

But other than a financial investment, small arms and tactical gear is an investment into a much great cause- Freedom.

Friend, I forget who said it, but there’s a brilliant quote out there that goes something like this: Any nation is only as good as the men and women willing to take up arms and fight in its defense.

This is one of the truest things I have ever heard, and it’s proven on a daily basis. Think of Desert Storm, when one of the largest armies in the world toppled like dominoes. The Iraqi soldier was forced to fight on behalf of leaders that he feared, and they went up against an army of men and women who volunteered to fight for leaders and for a country that they loved.

They were patriots.

That is what America needs right now. She doesn’t need change- she needs patriots standing guard around the clock, ready to take up arms if necessary in the name of preserving our most basic rights and liberties.

Not everybody is cut out to be a patriot. Not everybody has the guts to take on the responsibility of becoming well trained and disciplined. Not everyone has the guts to decide to become prepared and to just make it happen.

But you do.

I know you do. Your country depends on you.