

Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC



Carrying Concealed “Appendix Inside the Waistband” (AIWB)

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Learning to legally carry a firearm concealed is an important mindset and skill. Its importance is magnified in non-gun friendly states like Maryland that require concealment when legally carrying. This article provides tips on how to carry concealed “appendix inside the waistband” (AIWB).

WHY KEEP YOUR HANDGUN CONCEALED

There are three main reasons for concealing your handgun. The first is you do not want others to know you are carrying. It makes you a target. If a potential criminal sees a handgun carried openly, he or she may be tempted

to take that gun away. We tell a related story in class where a gun owner is standing in line at a fast-food restaurant with his handgun in open display. As he was ordering food, a man approached from behind and removed the gun from the man’s pocket and ran out of the store. Not a good situation. Here is a

video link showing what happened:

<https://youtu.be/fjoF8b5XVow>

The second reason is that you don’t want others to know what you have. It helps if you can surprise the aggressor when facing a potentially dangerous

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situation. Don't broadcast your abilities or intentions.

The third reason, especially in Maryland, is that it is against the law to openly carry a handgun. Breaking that law carries significant penalties. Here is the exact legal language from Maryland's gun law:

"As amended MD Code Public Safety 5-307(b) provides: (b)(1) Subject to subsection (c) of this section, a permit issued under this subtitle shall restrict the wearing, carrying, and transporting of a handgun by the person to whom the permit is issued to wearing, carrying, or transporting a handgun concealed from view:

(i) under or within an article of the person's clothing; or

(ii) within an enclosed case.

(2) The requirement in paragraph (1) of this subsection to keep a handgun concealed is not violated by:

(i) the momentary and inadvertent exposure of a handgun; or

(ii) the momentary and inadvertent exposure of the imprint or outline of a handgun."[emphasis added] (What this law is telling us is that imprinting is illegal if it is not inadvertent or momentary).

The point is that keeping your handgun well-concealed to the extent of reducing or eliminating the imprint of the handgun is important. It's not that hard. Dress for success and dress around the gun.

THREE IMPORTANT CRITERIA

There are three important criteria for carrying concealed, especially for appendix carry. Your appendix carry rig should provide comfort, concealment, and access. The foundation for satisfying those criteria is your gun belt and holster.

Carrying AIWB also has benefits and limitations. One key benefit is rapid ac-

cess to your handgun because the gun is positioned under the waistband just to the right of your centerline (or left for left-handed people).

Other benefits include quick access and control in a fight. The faster you deploy your handgun in self-defense, the more likely you are to prevail. The key limitation is for those men or women who are very rotund. Their physique works against AIWB carry, although it is possible with the right holster and handgun.

Comfort

Your Gun Belt. There are many options for selecting a gun belt. An option that some shooters like is an adjustable 1.5-inch nylon belt that cannot be folded upon itself. One example of that kind of belt is the Wolf Tactical* ([Wolf Tactical site](#)) heavy duty everyday carry belt (see photo, below). Another example of a gun belt is one sold by Kore Essentials ([Kore Gun Belts](#)).

*Products mentioned in the article are offered as examples, not as endorsements. It is important to do your research to find products that fit your needs.

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These kinds of gun belts will sturdily hold your holster and magazine carrier.



Your Holster. The AIWB holster you select should be designed to fit your handgun and it should be constructed using quality materials. One example is the Deep Carry DC-5 Appendix Holster made by Tucker Gun Leather (see photo below) ([Tucker Gun Leather](#)). The Tucker holsters can be designed to accommodate red dot optics.



Holsters like the Tucker Leather holster should

have an attached “claw.” In the photo, the claw is seen just to the left of the holster’s belt loop. As the belt is tightened it presses the claw inward toward the waistline thereby increasing concealability.

The holster is constructed of Boltaron (similar to Kydex) with leather lining inside and available in three colors: Black, Black Cherry, and Coyote. The one shown is Coyote.

Some shooters prefer more comfort and choose “belly band” holsters like the “Brave Response” holster shown below.



Belly band holsters are constructed of elasticized material that comfortably fits your waist. One advantage of belly bands is they can be wrapped below your waistline to help

better conceal the handgun. Of course, you still need to be able to get a good purchase (grip) on your gun to draw it from concealment; so, don’t position the belly band too deep under the waistline.

Clothing Choices. It is important to wear clothing that will help conceal the holstered handgun and spare magazine. If you usually wear a size XL button-up shirt, then you might select a size XXL shirt. Commonsense suggests that wearing tight-fitting clothing will not conceal your carry rig, some of which will print through clothing. Plaid shirts tend to conceal better than solid-color shirts because the pattern breaks up any imprinting that might be visible.

Female shooters have to make important decisions about carrying concealed. Their business or business-casual wardrobe often doesn’t provide a required level of concealment. Dene Adams is a dealer specializing in women’s carry clothing options.

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Here is a link to their website: [Dene Adams Site](#). Here's a video from that site illustrating concealed carry options for women: [Dene Adams](#)

Their corset designs can be used to achieve AIWB concealment. When women wear jeans or slacks, they can conceal AIWB like men.

It is important to avoid looking like a “guy or a gal with a gun.” Tactical pants and other clothing accessories featuring gun images or gun-maker logos can help people tag you as a person who may have a concealed firearm. It is helpful for shooters to blend in with their environment—to become the “gray man” or “gray woman.”

It is helpful to stand in front of a full-length mirror when dressing to carry concealed. Carefully study your reflection to ensure that your clothing styles and concealed carry rigs are properly masked.

AIWB While Seated. Comfort while seated and carrying concealed is not guaranteed, but shooters can make adjustments to their rig to increase comfort.

The first adjustment is to make sure the holster and handgun are off the centerline and not sitting at the apex of the genital area.

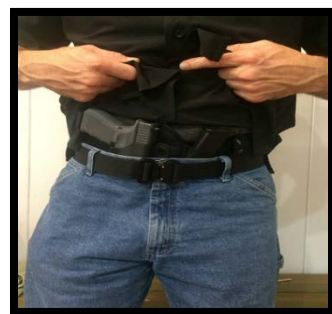
The second adjustment happens just before sitting. The holster and gun are adjusted slightly upward as the shooter takes a seat. This positioning reduces the chance of the holster and gun pushing deep into area where the top of the leg bends when seated.

Your posture while seated can also affect comfort and accessibility. The AIWB rig can press into your groin area. If you slump while driving. Leaning too far to one side of the vehicle can also limit accessibility.

CONCEALMENT

If any part of the handgun is visible, including printing consistently through your clothing, it is not concealed. In Maryland, if it is not concealed you are breaking the law and will face legal consequences.

Positioning your AIWB Holster. Appendix carry for shooters requires positioning the AIWB holster inside the waistband to the right of the body's centerline depending on handedness. (See the photo below showing AIWB for a right-handed shooter).



There are also many options for carrying a concealed second magazine, which should be done. One option is to use a holster with an attached magazine carrier.

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Another option is to have a detached magazine pouch that is positioned off the body's center line.

Other positioning options are available to shooters based on their personal preferences.

Access

Drawing From AIWB Concealment. Carrying a concealed handgun provides people with a good level of personal protection if the firearm is used effectively and efficiently. A skill is effective if it produces a desired outcome. It is efficient if it is used quickly and smoothly.

If a person cannot draw his or her firearm from concealment quickly and smoothly when needed, chances are that the outcome will be undesirable. Concealed carry permit holders must practice drawing their firearm from concealment.

There are obstacles to drawing a concealed handgun from a holster quickly and smoothly. The first is

your clothing. You have to get your clothing out of the way to provide access to the firearm.

There are several different techniques for moving clothing out of the way. Do some research on-line to find a technique you think will work for you and then practice using it, especially wearing cold weather clothing.

Another obstacle to a quick and smooth draw is when the handgun is too deep inside the waistband. You have to get a good purchase on the handgun's grip if you want to draw it from the holster quickly and smoothly. If the grip is too deep under the waistline you won't be able to get your hand on the grip quickly.

A holster retention system is another obstacle. If your AIWB holster is designed with any kind of retention system; for example, a strap across the back of the slide (some bellyband holsters have these straps). Defeating the re-

tention system is very important when you need to draw your handgun from concealment.

Another skill that must be mastered is disengaging the safety if your handgun has one. The safety must be disengaged at step 4 in a five-step draw.

Step 1 is to secure a strong purchase on the grip; step 2 is to draw the gun from the holster; step 3 is to drop the elbow down to position the handgun in a horizontal orientation toward the target; step 4 is to bring the support hand to the gun while disengaging the safety; and step 5 is to press the firearm toward the target along a horizontal trajectory. It is very important to practice the draw so you can do it quickly. Start by drawing and presenting the handgun slowly and gradually increase your speed. Slow is smooth, and smooth becomes fast.

Accessing your handgun from concealment while seated in a vehicle creates

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a significant challenge: releasing the seatbelt.

One technique for managing the seatbelt is to slip the thumb of your right hand under the belt at chest level and slide your hand down to the buckle while keeping the thumb under the belt. Press and release the buckle and move the belt out of the way. This will be a bit more challenging for left-handed shooters because they have more distance to travel to get to the handgun after the belt is released.

The "thumb under the belt" technique is also useful if you have to exit your vehicle or position yourself differently within the vehicle. If you have to move, you don't want to be buckled.

Some people have physical limitations that restrict their ability to draw from concealment quickly and smoothly. Missing fingers, arthritis, mild Parkinson's disease, and general hand weakness are three examples. You will need to find

work-arounds if you have a physical limitation that hinders your ability to draw from concealment (as we tell our customers, find a way to adapt).

A final obstacle to drawing quickly and smoothly is a lack of practice. Drawing from concealment requires practice. You must practice regularly. You must practice using correct technique. You must practice that technique correctly.

As you practice correct techniques correctly your brain creates neural pathways for those skills. As you practice, the neural pathways are coated with a substance called myelin. The thicker the myelin becomes, the more efficient that skill becomes (which means quicker and smoother).

Practice using a technique called "dry practice" or "dry fire." Dry practice means practicing with an unloaded handgun with no ammunition in the room. Most modern semi-automatic handguns can be

used for dry practice without damaging the gun. Read your owner's manual or go on-line to find out if it is safe to dry fire your handgun. Practice drawing from concealment frequently for as long as you carry concealed.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Appendix carry is not universally preferred. Some people love it. Some people hate it. Loving it or hating it depends on whether a person finds it comfortable and if the handgun is easily accessible.

Some who dislike AIWB are people who carry extra weight around their waistline and their belly rests on top of the gun; or those who carry a pistol with a long barrel that presses into their leg where it bends at the hip.

Discomfort can be lessened by the size of the handgun. Mid-size and small handguns tend to fit better into the AIWB position.

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Some people, including the author, find the AIWB position the most comfortable while allowing for quick access to the gun, especially when seated.

The AIWB creates the shortest path from point A to point B, so appendix carry can, with practice, speed-up the deployment of your handgun. Efficiency!

WRAPPING UP

Concealed carry in Maryland is a legal requirement. One option to carry concealed is called “appendix carry”). Appendix carry inside the waistband has benefits and limitations. There are three criteria that must be satisfied to carry concealed: comfort, concealment, and access. The article provided tips for satisfying the criteria so you can carry AIWB with success.

Here is a link to a reciprocity map from United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) that highlights states that recognize Maryland’s carry permit: [Reciprocity Map](#)). This is useful if traveling with a legally concealed handgun

AUTHOR’S BIO

Francis (Frank) Duffy is the co-founder and vice president of the Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC, in Maryland. He is a veteran of the Army’s 5th Special Forces Group (the Legion), a graduate of the Army’s Ranger School, and a graduate of the Special Forces Combat Diver School. He is also a certified executive protection specialist.

He has instructor certifications from the Maryland State Police, the National Rifle Association and the United States Concealed Carry Association. He also has concealed carry permits from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Utah.

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ABOUT SPARTAN FIREARMS TRAINING GROUP, LLC

The Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC (SFTG) was founded in 2016 with the mission of providing Maryland citizens with opportunities to exercise their Second Amendment rights safely and legally. We have been true to that mission. We take pride in the training we deliver. We offer certified Maryland firearms training for:

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- Maryland, Utah, and Washington, DC wear and carry permits
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- Private and customized pistol and carbine training for groups
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