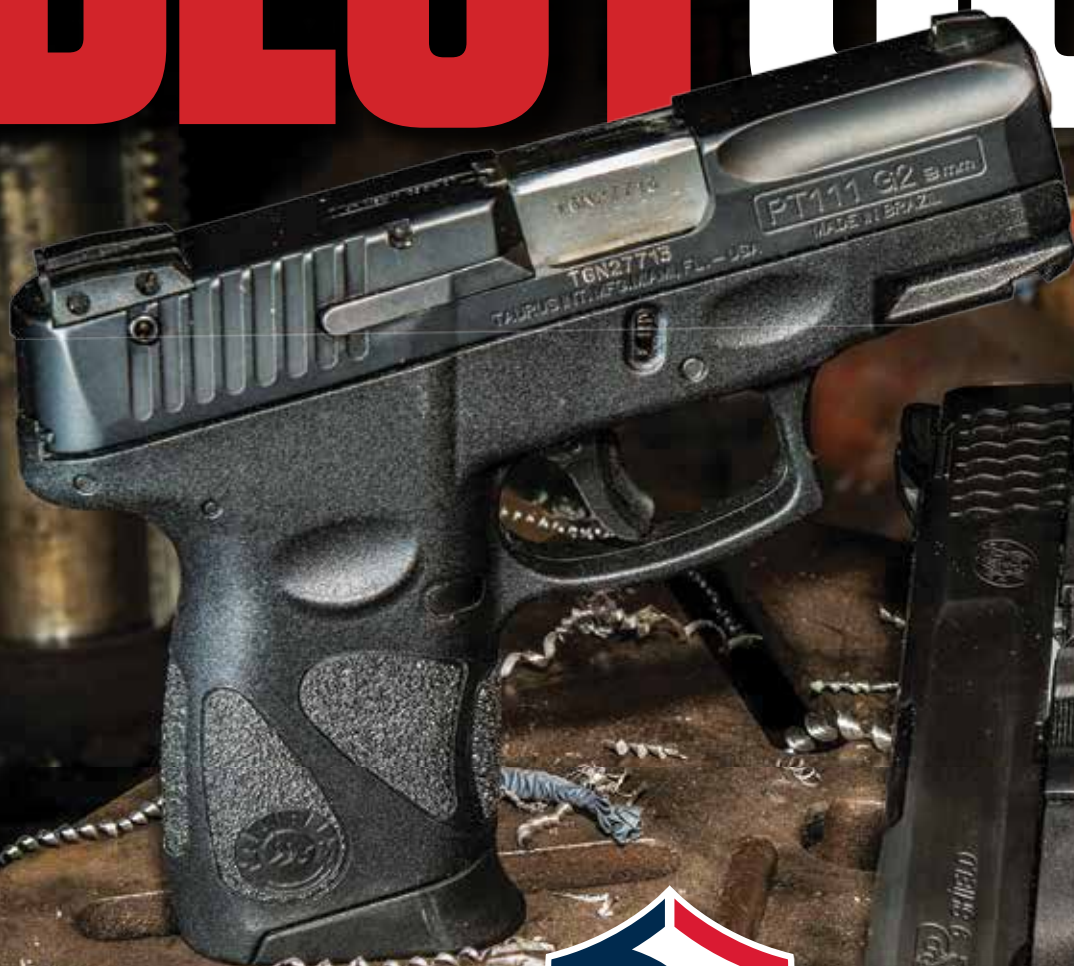


HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR

# BEST GUN



## 15 GREAT CONCEALED CARRY HANDGUNS



# 15 GREAT GUNS

## FOR CONCEALED CARRY

By Kevin Michalowski  
*Executive Editor, Concealed Carry Magazine*

**C**hoosing a pistol or revolver for concealed carry is a very personal decision. No self-respecting firearms instructor should ever tell you which gun you must carry. The choice is yours and yours alone, and it should only be made after much study and careful consideration of your needs and your lifestyle.

To that end, we at *Concealed Carry Magazine* continually offer up facts and insight into handguns currently on the market. We can tell you what works and how it works, but we can't tell you if it will fit your hand, be comfortable on your hip, or how you will react to the recoil. All of that is up to you.

What follows are 15 sidearms that we have found to be effective and capable for use as everyday defensive guns. This is not a complete list of appropriate options, but merely a representative sample. We have included technical specifications from the manufacturers and a short paragraph or two about the features and benefits we and others find interesting about these handguns.

The firearms listed here are presented in no particular order. All will work for you when your life

is on the line. The gun is simply a tool; your willingness to seek out training and hone the skills needed to defend yourself will have a far greater impact in your personal defense plan than will the selection of a firearm. But the firearm is important.

The reason the firearm is so important is that in order for your training to be of any value, you must have with you when you need them the tools to implement that training. That means you need to pick out a firearm you will carry with you every day. Your firearm must be one that is comfortable to fire so that you will not find an excuse to avoid training. It must be of a type and style that encourages you to become familiar with its operation and maintenance. Above all, you must feel completely comfortable with your defensive firearm. This means, as I said at the beginning, selecting a firearm is a very personal choice. I encourage you to try as many pistols as you possibly can before making your decision.

What we give you with this list is a good place to start. You can see the technical data and read a little bit about each gun. The rest is up to you.





## KAHR P380

**E**xtrremely thin, lightweight, and almost miniscule, the P380 pistol from Kahr, chambered for the .380 ACP cartridge, is a high-quality, striker-fired gun that's easy to carry and shoot, comfortably fitting even the smallest hands and frames. Holding six rounds in its magazine plus one round chambered, this pocket pistol is safe to carry with a chambered round, especially when you consider its long, 5.25-pound trigger pull. The easy-to-use sights are an added bonus to this ideal concealed carry pistol that's perfect for individuals who want to defend themselves but still remain discreet.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .380 ACP

**Weight:** 9.97 ounces

**Height:** 3.9 inches

**Slide Width:** .75 inches

**Overall Length:** 4.9 inches

**Barrel Length:** 2.53 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 6

**Grips:** Textured polymer

**Finish:** Black polymer frame;

matte stainless-steel slide

**Sights:** Drift adjustable;  
white bar-dot combat sights



## S&W SHIELD

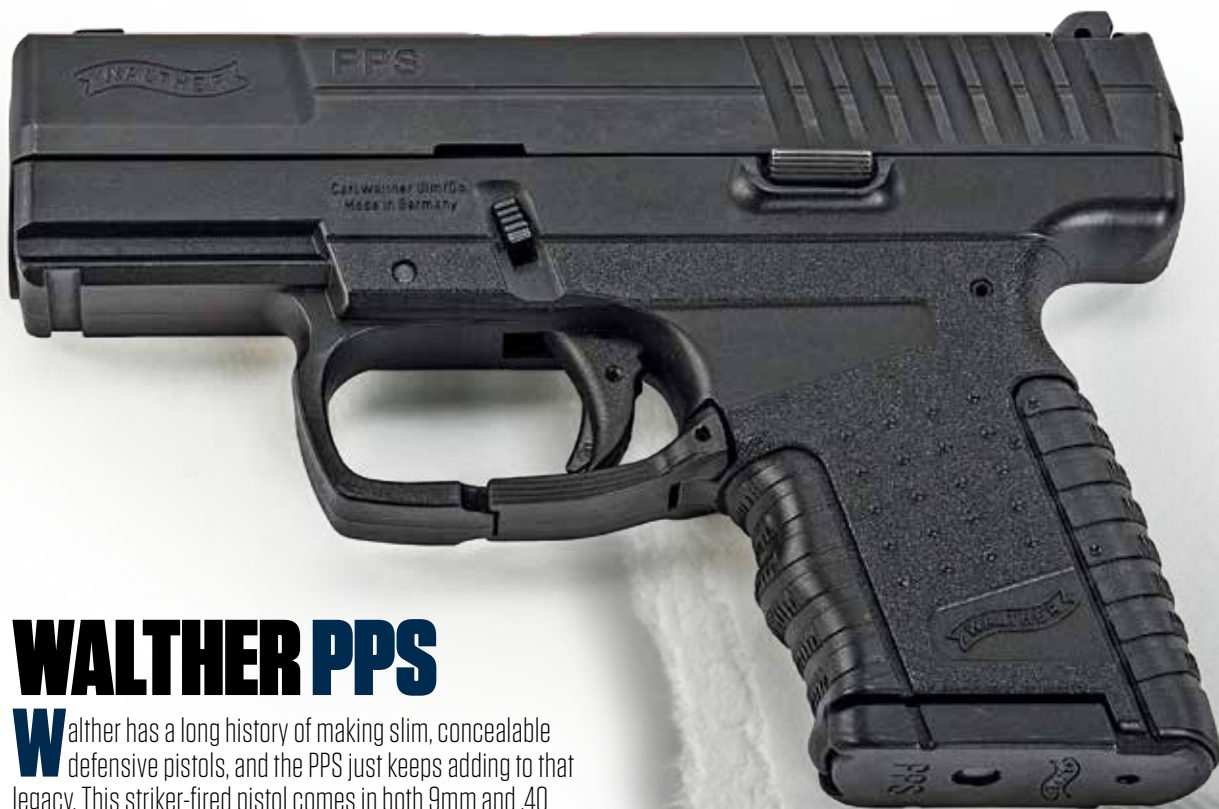
**T**he Shield is the single-stack addition to the M&P line from Smith & Wesson. The pistol was released to great fanfare with a large marketing campaign and by all accounts has lived up to the hype. With a polymer frame and striker-fired action, it has all the earmarks of a modern fighting pistol. Unlike other members of the M&P line, the Shield does not offer interchangeable grips, but can be had with an extended magazine to give an additional round.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm  
**Weight:** 19 ounces  
**Height:** 4.6 inches  
**Width:** .95 inches  
**Overall Length:** 6.1 inches  
**Barrel Length:** 3.1 inches  
**Magazine Capacity:** 7 or 8  
**Action:** Striker-fired  
**Trigger Pull:** ~6.5 pounds  
**Frame Material:** Polymer  
**Barrel/Slide Finish:** Black 68 HRC  
**Front Sight:** White dot  
**Rear Sight:** White 2-dot  
**Sight Radius:** 5.3 inches





## WALTHER PPS

**W**alther has a long history of making slim, concealable defensive pistols, and the PPS just keeps adding to that legacy. This striker-fired pistol comes in both 9mm and .40 S&W and offers a variety of magazine lengths, moving the 9mm capacity from 6 to 8 rounds. At less than an inch wide, this is a true carry pistol built for concealment.

Fit and finish are what you would expect from Walther and the ergonomics are outstanding. One thing to consider with this pistol is the location on the magazine release. Instead of the traditional button behind the trigger, the Walther PPS release is a small lever integral with the bottom of the trigger guard. It's not an issue unless you don't know where to look for it.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm

**Weight:** 20.8 ounces

**Height w/Magazine:**

S/M/L — 4.4 inches/

4.9 inches/5.3 inches

**Width:** .9 inches

**Overall Length:** 6.3 inches

**Barrel Length:** 3.2 inches

**Magazine Capacity:**

S/M/L — 6/7/8

**Trigger Pull:** 6.1 pounds

**Finish:** Black

**Sight Radius:** 5.4 inches



## BERETTA NANO

**T**his is the polymer “pocket nine” from Beretta. Solid and well-built, the Nano is made for concealment and close-range work, yet it still sports decent 3-dot sights. It is a bit heavier than some small pocket pistols, but the weight is not intolerable during all-day carry. With a sight radius of almost 5 inches, this pistol is still capable of excellent accuracy.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm  
**Weight:** 19.97 ounces  
**Height:** 4.17 inches  
**Width:** .9 inches  
**Overall Length:** 5.63 inches  
**Barrel Length:** 3.07 inches  
**Magazine Capacity:** 6  
**Frame:** Polymer  
**Slide Material:** 4140  
**Slide Finish:** Pronox  
**Sights:** 3-dot low-profile  
**Sight Radius:** 4.92 inches





## KIMBER SOLO

This little striker-fired Kimber comes in four different models to meet the demands of every shooter. This is a slim-line pocket pistol with all the great features and craftsmanship common to Kimber products. Well-built and ready for action, it is a small gun that nearly disappears when concealed. The Kimpro finish makes it nearly impervious to the elements.

### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm

**Weight:** 17 ounces

**Height:** 3.9 inches

**Width:** .995 inches

**Overall Length:** 5.5 inches

**Barrel Length:** 2.7 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 6

**Trigger Pull:** 7 pounds

**Frame Material:** Aluminum

**Finish:** Kimpro II

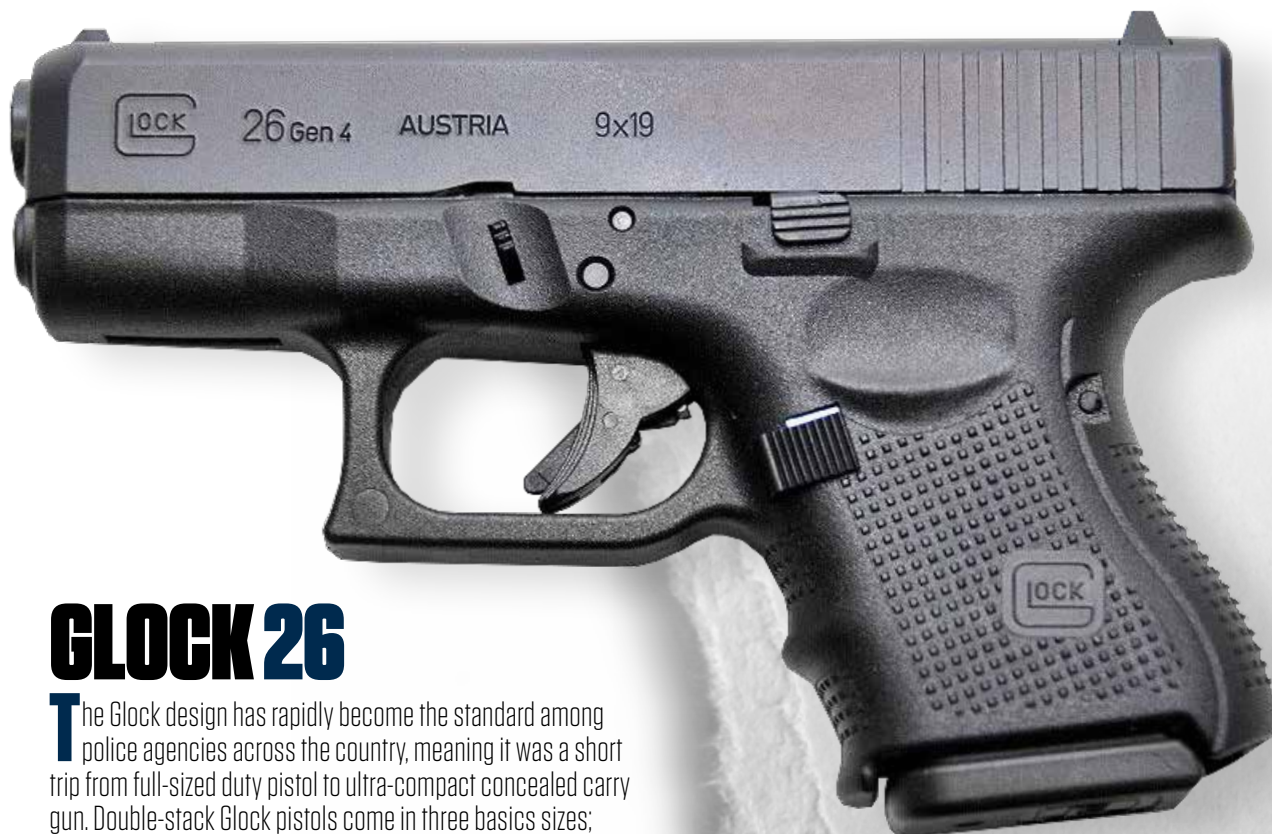
**Slide Material:** Stainless steel

**Finish:** Satin silver

**Grips:** Black synthetic checkered/smooth

**Sights:** Fixed low-profile

**Sight Radius:** 4.4 inches



## GLOCK 26

The Glock design has rapidly become the standard among police agencies across the country, meaning it was a short trip from full-sized duty pistol to ultra-compact concealed carry gun. Double-stack Glock pistols come in three basic sizes; the smallest of these is commonly called the “Baby Glock” and comes in all the standard calibers. Specifications shown here are for the 9mm. Other calibers will vary slightly.

The Glock is a simple, robust and supremely reliable design. The polymer frame makes the pistol lightweight and durable, while the patented Tenifer coating on the steel components makes the pistol nearly maintenance-free. With its record of proven reliability, the Glock pistol, regardless of size or caliber, remains a favorite among those who carry concealed.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm

**Weight:** 21.71 ounces

**Overall Height:** 4.17 inches

**Barrel Height:** 1.26 inches

**Width:** 1.18 inches

**Overall Length:** 6.41 inches

**Barrel Length:** 3.42 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 10

(15, 17 or 33 available)

**Safety:** Glock Safe-Action

**Trigger Pull:** ~5.5 pounds

**Sight Radius:** 5.39 inches





## TAURUS MILLENNIUM PT 111

The Millennium is often overlooked but sports a host of features not found on other pistols this size (and especially not in this price range). This little double-stack gun holds 12 rounds in the magazine and includes a great double-/single-action trigger system that allows for second strike capability. It also sports a frame-mounted manual safety and its ergonomics are excellent for a small carry pistol.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm

**Weight:** 18.75 ounces

**Overall Length:** 6.12 inches

**Barrel Length:** 3.25 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 12

**Frame:** Polymer

**Finish:** Blue

**Front Sight:** Fixed

**Rear Sight:** Adjustable 2-dot



## SIG P238

**S**ig's P238 is a solid entry into the pocket pistol market. At less than a pound, it is a lightweight pistol that conceals easily and carries well. The frame is hard-anodized black and the slide is natural stainless, making for a striking combination. The Siglite night sights (optional) are supremely useful in low-light situations. Magazine capacity is six, but autos are easier to reload than revolvers, so a spare magazine will provide extra insurance.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .380 ACP

**Weight:** 15.2 ounces

**Height:** 3.9 inches

**Width:** 1.1 inches

**Overall Length:** 5.5 inches

**Barrel Length:** 2.7 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 6

**Trigger Pull:** 7.5 to 8.5 pounds

**Frame Finish:** Black hard-anodized

**Slide Finish:** Natural stainless

**Grips:** Fluted polymer

**Sights:** Contrast or available  
Siglite night sights

**Sight Radius:** 3.8 inches





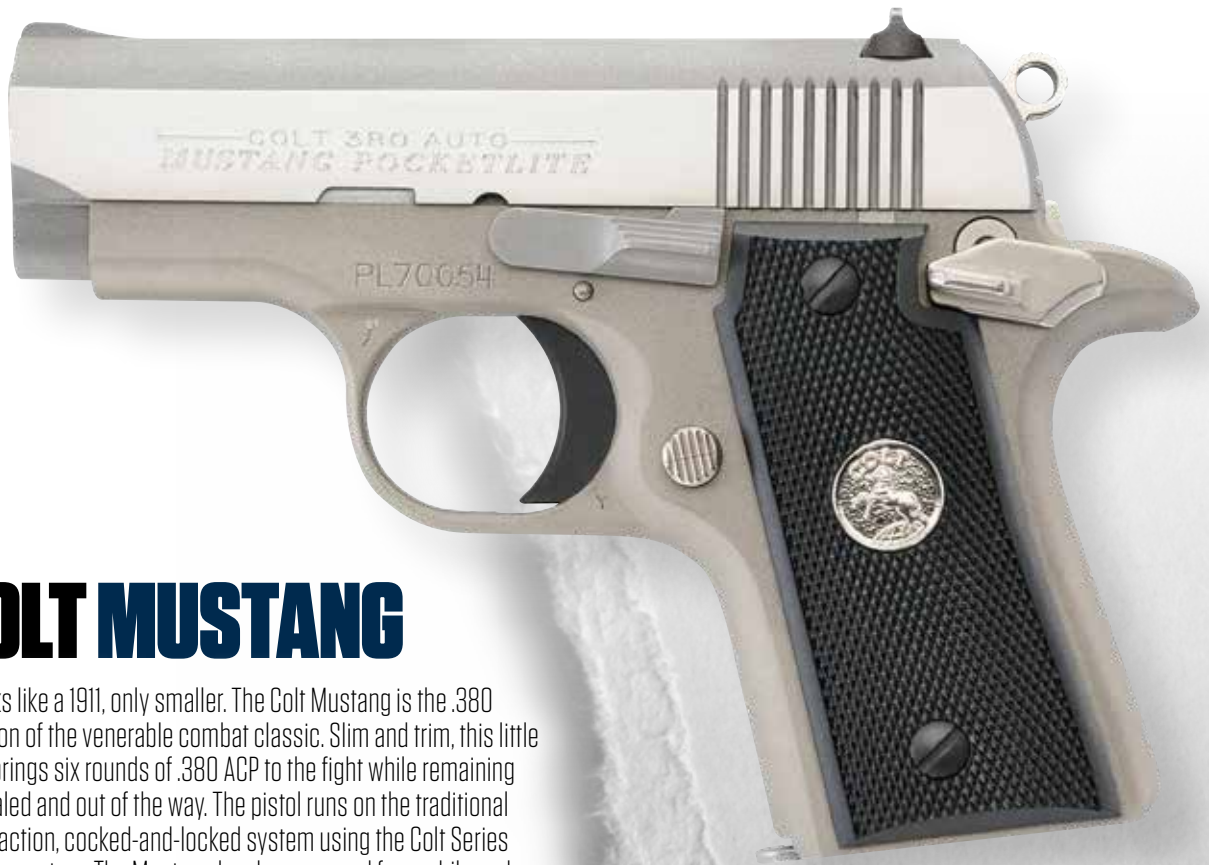
## CHARTER ARMS UNDERCOVER

There is nothing fancy about Charter Arms. Their revolvers are solid, classically styled handguns built to work. You won't see lots of brightly polished surfaces on a Charter revolver, but what you will see are American-built elements of a value-priced gun that will save your life when called upon to do so. Offered in a wide variety of calibers and styles, the Charter Arms revolver is the type of handgun that will do what you need when you need it done.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .38 Special +P  
**Weight:** 16 ounces  
**Barrel Length:** 2 inches  
**Cylinder Capacity:** 5  
**Hammer:** DAO  
**Frame:** Stainless steel  
**Finish:** Blue  
**Grip:** Compact



## COLT MUSTANG

It looks like a 1911, only smaller. The Colt Mustang is the .380 version of the venerable combat classic. Slim and trim, this little pistol brings six rounds of .380 ACP to the fight while remaining concealed and out of the way. The pistol runs on the traditional single-action, cocked-and-locked system using the Colt Series 80 firing system. The Mustang has been around for a while and Colt has made many changes over the years, making the latest versions of this pistol reliable and effective defensive weapons.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .380 ACP

**Weight:** ~12.5 ounces

**Overall Length:** 5.5 inches

**Barrel Length:** 2.75 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 6

**Firing System:** Series 80

**Hammer:** Commander-style

**Trigger:** Solid aluminum

**Receiver Material:** Aluminum

**Receiver Finish:** Electroless nickel

**Slide Material:** Stainless

**Slide Finish:** Brushed

**Stocks:** Composite

**Sights:** High-profile





## RUGER LCP

Ruger's auto-loading pistols used to be thought of as bulky, clunky and difficult to carry. Not any longer. The LCP is built around the .380 ACP and features a glass-filled nylon frame for lightweight strength. The shrouded hammer offers easy draw from a pocket or purse and, with a width of just .82 inches, the LCP nearly disappears in a pocket holster or IWB carry rig. Stainless steel and black nylon may not be the most elegant combination, but this little pistol is a great value for a defensive handgun.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .380 ACP

**Height:** 3.6 inches

**Width:** .82 inches

**Overall Length:** 5.16 inches

**Barrel Length:** 2.75 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 6

**Barrel Material:** Alloy steel

**Barrel Finish:** Blue

**Grip Frame:** Black, high-performance, glass-filled nylon



## RUGER LCRx

**W**hat the LCP is to the small auto pistol, the LCRx is to revolvers. The "x" designation means this revolver carries an external hammer, as opposed to the concealed hammer of the "plain-jane" LCR. The LCRx is rated for +P ammo yet still sports Ruger's modern lightweight cylinder design. The LCRx weighs in at 13.5 ounces, perfect for all-day carry. Shooters who want the option of cocking the hammer for single-action fire have it with this little revolver.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .38 Special+P

**Weight:** 13.5 ounces

**Height:** 4.5 inches

**Overall Length:** 6.5 inches

**Barrel Length:** 1.875 inches

**Cylinder Capacity:** 5

**Cylinder Finish:** Ionbond

Diamondblack

**Rear Sight:** U-notch integral

**Front Sight:** Replaceable,  
pinned ramp





## KEL-TEC P-11

**T**he Kel-Tec P-11 is an amazing value in a defensive firearm. It is one of the most affordable double-stack 9mm pistols on the market and its reliability is legendary. What you don't get with the Kel-Tec is a lot of high polish. Still, the matte finish and the polymer frame do not impact reliability or service. This is a hard-working gun for someone who expects great value. The pistol shown here has been stippled by the owner for increased purchase on the grip frame.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm  
**Weight Unloaded:** 14 ounces  
**Loaded Magazine:** 6 ounces  
**Height:** 4.3 inches  
**Width:** 1 inch  
**Overall Length:** 5.6 inches  
**Barrel Length:** 3.1 inches  
**Magazine Capacity:** 10  
**Trigger Pull:** 9 pounds



## S&W J-FRAME MODEL 442

**A**t just 15 ounces, the Model 442 is your classic J-frame S&W revolver, something generations of self-defense advocates have counted on. The 442 offers +P power and double-action-only simplicity. This is truly one of the original point-and-shoot tools. With a long history in the personal defense market, J-frame revolvers have accessories and holsters available at every major firearms retailer. For those who like the simplicity of a revolver and seek one of the most trusted names in the industry, the S&W 442 is an outstanding option for personal defense.

### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** .38 Special +P

**Weight Empty:** 15 ounces

**Overall Length:** 6.31 inches

**Barrel Length:** 1.875 inches

**Cylinder Capacity:** 5

**Frame Size:** Small, internal hammer

**Material:** Aluminum alloy frame

**Finish:** Matte black

**Cylinder:** Carbon steel

**Grip:** Synthetic

**Front Sight:** Black blade

**Rear Sight:** Fixed





## SPRINGFIELD ARMORY EMP

The Springfield EMP is a pint-sized 1911 design that carries nine rounds and, better than that, is shipped with three magazines. It is a heavy gun, weighing in at 26 ounces, but that speaks to its robust construction. The cocobolo hardwood grips are a classy touch to an outstanding concealed carry piece.



### TECHNICAL SPECS:

**Caliber:** 9mm

**Weight:** 26 ounces

**Height:** 5 inches

**Length:** 6.5 inches

**Magazine Capacity:** 9

**Trigger:** Long aluminum

match-grade, 5 to 6 pounds

**Frame:** Forged aluminum alloy,  
black hardcut anodized

**Slide:** Forged stainless-steel,  
satin finish

**Recoil System:** Dual spring,  
full-length guide rod

**Barrel:** 3-inch stainless-steel  
match-grade, fully supported ramp

**Grips:** Thinline cocobolo hardwood

**Sights:** Fixed low-profile combat  
tritium 3-dot rear; dovetail front

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