

Choosing The Right Gun Safe For Your Needs

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As many gun enthusiasts amass collections worth thousands of dollars, gun safes are becoming ever more popular. Choosing the right gun safe to meet your needs, however, can be difficult; gun safes come in a variety of different sizes and styles, and all safes are not created equally. As you begin your search for a safe for your gun collection, you will find that many gun safes are little more than thin metal cabinets and offer no protection from fire, humidity or burglary.

Because guns used to be kept in wooden and glass cabinets designed to act as a showcase for a collection, many gun enthusiasts entering the gun safe market for the first time don't know exactly what features and protection levels that they should be looking for. **Generally, the most important features to review for when shopping for a safe are the quality of construction, the gauge of metal used, the type and quality of the locking mechanism and the fire rating.** Please read on to discover the most important considerations to keep in mind as you begin your search for a gun safe.

Where to Put Your Gun Safe

The ideal place to store your gun safe depends on a number of factors. As you consider where to place your gun safe within your home, **taking into consideration where it will be safest from fire damage, water, and humidity damage, and burglary risk will help you determine the best location for your safe.** To protect your gun safe from fire damage, keep it far from any possible fire source such as your kitchen, fireplaces or flammable chemicals; because roofs can collapse during fires, any room adjacent to or underneath any of these fire risks should be avoided. Water can damage guns, and it is important to keep in mind that the humidity within a gun safe will approximate the humidity in the room overall. Using a dehumidifier can help, and keep in mind that if you live within a flood zone, a basement will be a risky place to store your safe. Third, gun safes are potentially vulnerable to damage during burglaries. Statistics show that burglars often target living rooms, master bedrooms, and garages; particularly if you decide to keep your safe in your garage, consider bolting the safe to the floor. Lastly, always keep in mind that [children should not have access to wherever you store your guns](#).

What Size Gun Safe to Choose

While you may be tempted to choose the size of your gun safe based on your current collection, many gun owners who go this route come to regret their decision. Often the correct size gun safe to choose is one that is larger than you feel you will need. Because a gun safe is an investment designed to last for years, buying a safe that will continue to meet your needs in the future as you acquire new guns and expand your collection is a smart way to approach the purchase. Additionally, extra space in your gun safe can be used for accessories and other valuables.

Champion Safe Co. has found that our best-selling safe is our [Medalist Home & Fire Gun Safe](#), designed to hold up to 52 guns in 44 cubic feet of space.

The Factors that Determine Security

How secure a gun safe is from break-in attempts or curious children depends on a number of factors: the [thickness of the steel used in the safe's construction](#), the strength of the door's bolt works and the overall security features of the door.

The simple fact that a safe is made of steel does not mean that it is secure. Many lower-end gun safes are made from 14-, 16- or 20-gauge steel that cannot provide adequate protection; metal of this grade can be compromised by

an ordinary hammer or screwdriver. A proper quality gun safe will utilize at least 11-gauge steel for the safe's body.

The quality of a [gun safe's bolt works](#)—that is, the mechanism that locks and bolts the door shut to prevent attempts to pry the door open—can vary greatly from manufacturer to manufacturer. Many safes utilize three-way boltworks, while higher-quality *manufacturers such as Champion Safe Co. employ four-way boltworks to secure all sides of the safe's door.*

Lastly, gun safes generally employ a variety of [door defense systems](#) which are intended to discourage and hinder break-in attempts. These [security features](#) can include an extra layer of steel on the inside of the door; hard-plate lock protection to obstruct attempts to drill or punch out the lock; relockers, or devices that are triggered by break-in attempts to activate the boltworks; lock pressure relievers, which impedes attempts to damage the lock by applying pressure to the door's bolts; and clutch drive systems, which inhibit pressure applied to the handle from damaging the safe's locking mechanism. ***Not all safes will employ all safety features, and not all safety features are of the same quality, so it is important to do your research.***

Gun Safes and Fire Protection

While many consumers don't take fire protection into consideration when purchasing a gun safe, a [good fire rating is one of the most important features that your gun safe will have.](#) ***Champion Safe Co. recommends that your gun safe should be fire rated for a minimum of one hour; safes with fire ratings of less than an hour will not be able to sufficiently protect your gun collection in case of a typical home fire.*** In general, you should choose the safe with the longest fire protection rating that fits in your budget.

In determining exactly what fire rating you need for your gun safe, there are a few factors to take into consideration. First, how long will your local fire department take to get to your home in case of a fire? Second, what do you plan to keep in your safe? For example, paper will begin to discolor at 250 degrees, char at 405 degrees and burn at 451 degrees. Lastly, closely examine the rating of the safe you are considering, including the details of how it was tested.

The Importance of a Warranty on Your Gun Safe

Not all gun safes come with warranties, and not all warranties are created equal. Before you commit to a purchase, be certain to read the fine print. Some companies only provide warranty coverage for parts of their gun safes; many gun safe warranties will only apply for a limited time period. Of course, the strongest and most optimal warranties will come with lifetime coverage for either the entire safe or at least the safe's key components.

[Champion Safe Co. provides lifetime warranty coverage on all gun safes](#) that we sell. ***If your gun safe is ever damaged by water, fire or burglary, we will replace the entire safe and cover all costs including removal and shipping.***

Setting a Budget for Your Gun Safe Purchase

Many gun owners are tempted to scrimp on the budget for their gun safe. Keep in mind, however, that your gun safe will be protecting your prized possessions, and buying a cheap safe may end up costing you a lot more in the long run. When you consider that your gun collection can easily be worth tens of thousands of dollars, giving yourself a budget for your gun safe in the hundreds of dollars may seem like a less prudent choice. Determine what protection, features, and size you need in a gun safe and use these parameters to set your budget. If the price is still a concern, a used safe may be a suitable option. Remember that the consequences of a poor quality gun safe will linger for far longer than the benefits of any cost savings.