

# ARMED SENIOR CITIZEN

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## A CLEAR VIEW OF YOUR DEFENSIVE AND SECURITY NEEDS

Photography by Bruce N. Eimer, Ph.D



Spitfire OC Pepper Spray is always at the ready to meet your immediate defensive and security needs. [www.spitfire.us](http://www.spitfire.us)

Do you have a clear view of your defensive and security needs? Your personal safety depends on it. If you are too paranoid, you may become overly focused on perceived threats to the exclusion of all else. If you are not paranoid enough, you may walk into an ambush. The world is a dangerous place, and you don't want to become some scum bag's lunch, but you do want to be able to enjoy your own lunch. What is the solution?

The solution is to develop a realistic and clear view of your defensive and security needs. Begin by becoming intimately familiar with your surroundings and the environment within which you travel. Don't permit yourself to develop "gun muscles" or "armed courage." This is a false and misleading view of things. Carrying a concealed handgun is no reason to venture into areas that you wouldn't venture into if you were not armed. The first rule of thumb in your personal security hierarchy is to avoid trouble. Carrying concealed weapons does not make you a police officer!

Going legally armed does not somehow make you responsible for protecting the public or becoming involved in altercations that are none of your business. Your most socially responsible "tools" are the numbers "911" on your cell phone!

It is not all that complex. Use common sense. The reason for a civilian to carry a gun is personal defense. Thus, you must understand your personal risk profile and the threat levels to which you are exposed. This entails developing knowledge about yourself, and the mental and physical preparation to deploy that knowledge. Let's break it down.

### How Vulnerable Are You?

As a senior citizen, ask yourself whether you look vulnerable. If the answer is "yes," there are some things you can do to look less vulnerable, and there are some things you cannot do. Through appropriate physical exercise and good diet, you can probably improve your health and build physical strength. You can take a self defense class geared to your level of physical fitness. You can train with your carry firearm and develop skill in its deployment. When you improve your physical conditioning and increase your skill level with your personal defense weapon, you will also develop greater self-confidence, which will be reflected in your outward appearance. You don't have to look like food.

### It's A Dog Eat Dog World

Keep in mind, the harsh reality that anyone whose personal possessions could be an object of desire for those who would act to take them, if they believed they could get away with it, are at risk of a violent assault. They need to be prepared to defend what they have. For that matter, anyone whose hard work has allowed them to accumulate any degree of visible personal success, must be prepared to sacrifice what they have or defend it should the need arise. But remember, there is no guarantee that sacrifice is any more effective than defense. In fact, giving in or surrendering to a violent criminal is no option because it will lead to a greater escalation of the imbalance of power. Criminality is all about power.

Ask yourself: **"Do I have the training and resolve to effectively use my personal defense firearm to assure my survival if the need arises?"**

If the answer is "yes", keep training, because self defense and shooting skills are perishable if not practiced. If the answer is "no," get trained and keep training! We must all learn to trust the hairs on the back of our neck. If something tells you on an intuitive, feeling level, or on a precognitive preview of a situation, to do something you normally wouldn't do, TRUST THAT FEELING! It has saved numerous people's skins. Listen to your inner feelings or "vibes." They are a biologically programmed, inner defense response mechanism.

### Appropriate Restraint

*Appropriate restraint* means the ability to exercise good judgment about the threat level you are exposed to and the appropriate level of response to the situation. Your major influences should be: time of day, distance from your assailant, ability to get help and your ability to prevail. Remember that no matter what criminal activity takes place, under law, *an overt action must be taken by the assailant before you can legally react with lethal force.*

There is a level of force continuum. In most jurisdictions, a prosecutor or grand jury will not condone the use of a much greater level of force than what you were confronted with. You can't pull a gun on someone for rude behavior, verbal abuse or verbal threats. If you are threatened, the laws in most jurisdictions, state that you have the duty to retreat *if possible*, except in your own home (Most jurisdictions call this the "Castle Doctrine").

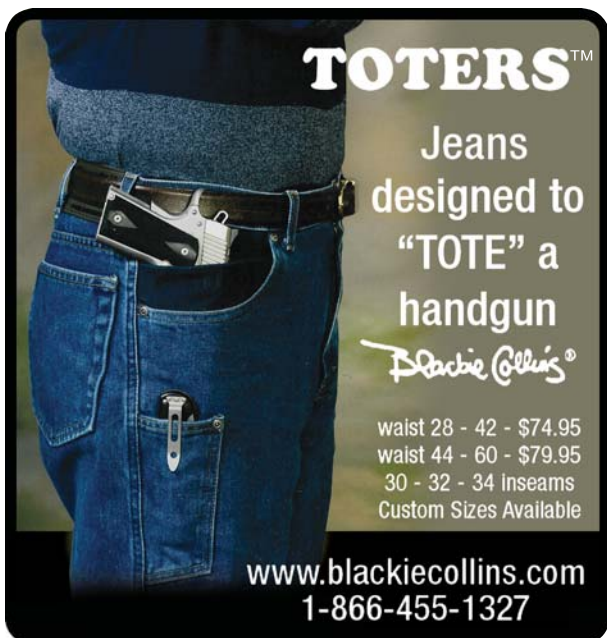
A less than lethal force option that can give you the opportunity to retreat is the skillful use of OC Pepper Spray. Spraying an attacker in the face with two million Scoville Heat Units of Spitfire Oleoresin

Capsicum, will temporarily take down most attackers' aggression and gives you the opportunity to get away so that you don't have to use your gun.

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However, as a senior citizen, you do have an advantage in terms of the doctrine of "disparity of force." This means that if you are physically attacked by a much younger and fitter fellow, you may be justified in using lethal force (i.e., your handgun) if, at the time of the attack, you believed that you were in immediate danger of being killed or suffering serious bodily harm. Because you are older and presumably physically weaker than the young hoodlum, you might have had to resort to lethal force. However, remember that in all likelihood, you will later have to convince a prosecutor or a grand jury that this was so.

You must be psychologically capable of exercising appropriate judgment and restraint, or else, you shouldn't own a gun. As I mentioned earlier, don't develop "gun muscles" where, through pure ownership of a firearm, you start to feel invulnerable. Nothing can be further from the truth! Just like "canned courage," "gun muscles" only lead to disaster. If you come upon a situation, don't assume you know what is going on unless you are the attacker. Many naive "do gooders" with a heavy set of "gun muscles" have gotten into serious trouble by ASSUMING something was something that it was not, only to discover,



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too late, that their initial impressions were inaccurate. **DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!**

Owning or carrying a firearm is not a panacea, nor is it a license to use it by becoming judge, jury and executioner. If you cannot convince 12 people (a jury of your "peers") looking at the same critical situation with which you were confronted, that lethal force was your only viable defensive option, then you do not pass go, and you go straight to jail.

With firearm ownership comes the responsibility of doing everything you can to avoid confrontations if at all possible. Carrying a firearm gives you a life and death power that should not be unleashed during normal day to day activities. Carrying a firearm constitutes no license or excuse to provoke confrontations that could escalate, or those that you would have normally walked or driven away from. For example, "road rage" demonstrates that the largest weapon that a driver can have is not a firearm—it is a three to four thousand pound projectile!

**Good Self-Control and Judgment**

These qualities are developed and refined from good training and confidence in one's self. Having had a painful childhood is not a viable excuse for exercising poor self-control or judgment in confrontational

situations. Self-control and judgment refer to using what you know is right and your ability to remain in charge of your own behavior to control your actions when under stress.

In a confrontational situation, it is imperative that you take control and command. Command presence is an absolute. Police departments base their direction and authority upon it. They give orders to people on a daily basis on how to get out of the line of fire. Command presence is a necessity to remove you and others from danger.

On a smaller scale, if you are in your residence or in a vehicle on the road and you are accosted aggressively and being threatened with imminent bodily harm, you must give commands to your children, or to your spouse, or to your friend or companion(s), should the emergent need arise. In order to survive another day, and protect your loved ones, you must be prepared to take action while giving confident direction to others who may otherwise be zombies or panic stricken. Panic will get you killed. Someone must take the responsibility. There are no other choices at this point. A weak kneed person is probably a dead person. Without command and control, the situation will end badly.

**"What If" Questions and Mental Rehearsal**

Prior to anything ever taking place, there are several questions you should want to ask yourself and rehearse in your mind. You should ask yourself these questions about how you are going to respond to a wide variety of "what if" scenarios.

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For example, “what if this happens?” and “what if this happens?” You should write your answers down for each “what if” scenario, and review them. You can prepare well before an incident takes place by mentally rehearsing your options. Employ relaxation, mental visualization and mental imagery, along with self-affirmations. Then, if an incident occurs that is similar to what you have mentally prepared for, you will instinctively run through your checklist of responses as the incident unfolds and you will be prepared.

For each “what if” scenario, ask yourself these seven basic, universally applicable questions. By doing so, you will be preparing yourself to handle most possible scenarios:

1. What options can I choose to avoid being in such a situation?
2. If I can’t avoid it, who will I be facing, and what will they be armed with?
3. What are my responsibilities, and what actions must I take to survive and prevail?
4. From where is my best defensive posture taken?
5. How can I prepare myself well ahead of such an incident? What training and what defensive tools will I need?
6. How can I best defend myself in the particular setting in which I’m involved, unfamiliar and uncomfortable as I am, at the worst possible moment?
7. Last but not least. How can I prepare myself to deal with the aftermath once I’ve survived? And, how can I avoid, or be better prepared for, such an incident should it happen again?

### Ability to De-escalate

The ability to de-escalate refers to ceasing your lethal response *once you are sure that the threat and aggression have been contained and/or have ceased*. This is an important part of your total defense plan. We’re not the aggressors. We’re the defenders. Our right is to survive and not to punish. The latter job is for a judge and jury. We must do whatever it is that we have to do to stop an attacker from doing whatever it is that he is doing that threatens us with imminent death or serious bodily harm. We’re not legally justified in shooting someone to punish. So, for example, we can’t shoot someone who is running away, once they are no longer an immediate or continuing threat!

### You Have the Right to Defend Yourself and Survive

You do have the right to resort to using lethal force (e.g., your firearm), if you are attacked by someone AND the following conditions are met:

1. Your attacker has the *ability* and the *means* (e.g., much greater physical strength, a deadly weapon such as a baseball bat, a knife, karate hands and feet, a gun, etc.) to cause you, and/or a loved one, and/or a companion, death or serious bodily harm.
2. He has the *opportunity* and *intention* to cause you death or serious bodily harm, such that . . .
3. You are in *immediate jeopardy*.
4. And finally, you cannot *preclude* or *prevent* the attack from happening by retreating. Remember you have a duty to retreat if this option is available. If you cannot retreat safely, you have the right to defend yourself and survive.

### The Aftermath

Anyone who carries a gun for self-protection should have a lawyer whom they trust and can call for representation, should they be in a lethal encounter.

Keep in mind that, after a lethal force encounter, you will have to justify all of your actions to the authorities. So, you are advised against making any statements to the police at the scene. You must call your lawyer and follow his or her advice. In the aftermath of a deadly force encounter, you will be acutely traumatized and unable to accurately explain what happened. Everything you say can and will be used against you, so you need to say nothing other than something to the effect of: *“He attacked me, and I thought my life was in danger, and I had to defend myself. I would like to call my lawyer.”*

It has truthfully been said that the reason to take defensive handgun training is to learn how to avoid ever having to use your gun. This is because the last thing you ever want to have to do is to shoot someone. However, if you have to employ deadly force to stop someone from killing you, you either will or will not be prepared to do so. If you carry, you should be prepared to do so, as your very last resort. That means you must maintain a clear and realistic view of your defensive and security needs, and train to satisfy those needs. Watch your 360 and stay safe.

### REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

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