

Open Carry VS. Concealed Carry

by Daniel Cahill

A time and a place

It can be daunting when you first make the decision to carry a firearm, from finding the proper holster to getting the right ammunition for you gun. One question that we seem to get repeatedly is whether to carry open or concealed. This question is not as simple to answer as you may think because it really depends on the situation, clothing, and the company you keep. So in this article we will delve into the theory of the open vs. concealed debate.

Open Carry

Lets kick this off with open carry. Open carry generally means you will have the gun outside the waistband (OWB), or where it is clearly visible. This is generally favored among law enforcement, military, hunters, and competition shooters. This method of carry is more comfortable and faster when it comes to the draw because you do not have to contend with clothing in the way. This may sound like the perfect mode of carry but you have to consider the cons as well.

Retention

Because your firearm is out in the open everyone else is aware of it. You must be even more vigilant when you carry open because of the threat having someone attempt to take the gun from you. Many of the major holster manufacturers have OWB holsters that have some type of retention. While this makes it much harder for someone to remove your firearm from the holster, it is not a fool proof answer to the problem.

Attention

Even though a major portion of my life is consumed by the firearms industry, I understand that not everyone is a gun enthusiast. Many people are downright afraid of guns and while I don't agree with their opinion, I am not the the type who thrives on making people uncomfortable. When you carry open you will have all eyes on you, people will notice and in my experience they will treat you differently, and that's not always a good thing. Now there is also a security risk to consider. If someone comes into the room with the intention of committing a crime, and you are blatantly advertising you are packing heat, you will be the first one shot.

Concealed Carry

Concealed carry is the act of carrying where it is not visible. The most common way is inside the waistband (IWB). This is my personal choice when it comes to carry on a daily basis. Concealed carry is a favorite among people who are avid shooters who don't want to make a big deal about carrying.

Retention

Concealed carry is like the old saying, "out of sight out of mind". While most IWB holsters will not have any active retention like the outside holsters do, they generally don't need it due to the fact that no one knows you have it. People can't grab it if they don't know you have it. Unfortunately IWB carry is generally not as comfortable as OWB. Putting any 2 pound object between you and your belt line can be cumbersome. This is why the proper holster is crucial. We will discuss holsters in a future article.

Attention

The beauty of this method of carry is no one knows you have it. You don't run the risk of alarming people in public, it doesn't raise suspicion, and it puts you at less risk than open carry. Out of sight, out of mind.

Summary

When it comes to carry a firearm, think about what situation you will be in, think about the places you will go that day, and who you surround yourself with. Open carry and concealed carry both have many benefits worth discussing, but keep in mind that there is a time and a place for everything. Going to the range, carry open. Going to the grocery store, carry concealed. But the most important tip, carry smart.