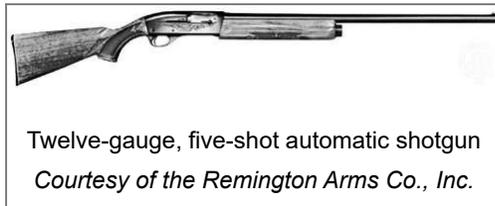


# Shotgun

**Shotgun**, smoothbore shoulder weapon designed to fire a number of pellets, or shot, that spread in a diverging pattern after they leave the muzzle. It is used primarily against small moving targets, especially birds.



The earliest smoothbore firearms loaded with shot were the “fowling pieces” that appeared in 16th-century Europe. In the early 17th century, the barrels were made as long as 6 feet (1.8 m) in an attempt to gain maximum accuracy.

The modern shotgun evolved principally from a series of 19th-century improvements in gunpowder, cartridges, and guns. The barrel was shortened and lightened, making possible the double-barreled gun, in which two barrels shoot to the same point of aim at normal ranges. The choke bore was introduced to limit the spread of the shot and increase range and accuracy. Repeating shotguns, in which several cartridges could be loaded at once and successively positioned in the firing chamber by a cocking action, became available in the 1880s. In semiautomatic shotguns, firing a shot automatically positions the next round.

Effective range of a modern weapon is about 50 yards (45 m). The gauge of a shotgun, a measure of its bore, originally represented the number of lead pellets of the diameter of the barrel that would weigh one pound (0.45 kg); thus a 12-gauge shotgun has a larger bore than a 20-gauge. Single balls of barrel-filling size are rare today, but cylindrical slugs are sometimes used for deer hunting.

The shotgun is also used in trap and skeet shooting and is used as a police weapon in many countries. The sawed-off shotgun, with truncated barrels, is easily concealed and is notorious as a criminal weapon.

**EXHIBIT E**

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