



RULE OF 3'S

Basic Gun Suggestions from Med City FFL

If you could only own three, what would they be? This is the answer we give across the counter every week. It is not the only right answer - it is the one that covers the most ground for the most people, with guns you can actually find, feed, and fix in southern Minnesota.

RULE 1	RULE 2	RULE 3	RULE 4
			
PISTOLS	LONG GUNS	SUPPRESSORS	ON EVERY RIFLE
3	3	3	3

THE RULE BEHIND THE RULES

Three guns you have actually shot beat nine you have not. Every category in here assumes you will put rounds through it, keep it clean, and know where it hits. **An unfamiliar gun is a paperweight with a warranty.**

Nothing on this sheet is exotic, and nothing on it is a safe queen. These are guns you can find, feed, and get fixed without mailing anything to another state.

The three that cover it: a full-size duty gun with light and optic, a slim carry gun, and the .22 that pays for all your practice.



RULE 1

Three Pistols

A .22, a slim carry gun, and a full-size duty gun.
Different jobs, one manual of arms if you plan it right.



1 THE .22 - THE ONE THAT MAKES YOU GOOD

Our pick: Ruger Mark IV, threaded barrel. Buy the threaded version even if you never intend to suppress anything, because the day you change your mind the barrel is already done. The Mark IV takes down with one button, which is the entire reason it replaced the Mark III in everybody's safe.

A brick of .22 costs about what a box of defensive 9mm does. That ratio is the whole argument. Trigger control, sight tracking, and recoil management are learned by repetition, and repetition has a price per round. Shoot the .22 four times as often as everything else and your centerfire scores follow it up.

It also quietly does real work: squirrels and rabbits, pest control around the outbuildings, and teaching a new shooter without flinch-training them on day one.



2 THE SLIM CARRY GUN

Our pick: Glock 43X. Ten rounds standard, fifteen with the right aftermarket magazine, and a grip long enough that a full-size hand still gets all three fingers on it. This is the one that gets carried on a Tuesday when it's 90 degrees and you're wearing a t-shirt - which is the only test that matters, because the gun in the safe has a hit rate of zero.

- **Light: Streamlight TLR-7 (or TLR-7 Sub for the slim frames).**

Half of your life happens after dark. A weapon light is also an identification tool - you cannot make a good decision about a shape in a hallway.

- **Optic: optional, and genuinely optional.** Holosun 407K / 507K or a Trijicon RMRcc if you want one.

A dot is faster and far better for aging eyes, but it demands a zero, a battery discipline, and enough practice to find the window under stress. If you're not going to feed it that, good irons beat a dot you can't find.

- **A holster that fully covers the trigger guard and holds its shape.**

Kydex or a quality hybrid. Soft nylon that collapses when you draw is how people shoot themselves reholstering.

3 THE FULL-SIZE DUTY GUN

Our pick: Glock 45 (G19 slide on a G17 frame) or a straight G17. This is the nightstand gun, the truck gun, the range gun, and the class gun. More weight means less recoil, a longer sight radius, and more rounds. Nobody ever finished a bad night wishing their gun had been smaller.

- **Light: Streamlight TLR-1 HL.**

Enough output to matter across a yard, and it has survived everything we've done to it.

- **Optic: yes on this one.** Trijicon RMR or RMR HD if the budget allows; Holosun 507C / 508T if it doesn't.

The RMR earned its reputation the hard way. The Holosuns are the value pick and they hold zero.

- **Suppressor-height sights if you run an optic.**

They co-witness through the window and give you something to aim with when the battery dies at the worst possible moment.



THE PISTOL VERSION OF THE RULE OF THREE

LIGHT - SIGHTS - HOLSTER. A light so you can identify. Sights or an optic you can actually see. A holster that covers the trigger and stays open when the gun comes out. Everything else on a pistol is preference; those three are equipment.



ONE MORE THING WORTH THE MONEY

Pick **one** manual of arms and stay in it. Same trigger, same grip angle, same magazine release, same holster orientation across all three centerfire guns if you can manage it. Under stress you do not rise to the occasion - you fall back to whatever you have repeated most.

RULE 2

Three Long Guns

A 12 gauge pump, a fighting rifle, and a .22.
Between them they cover food, fur, threats, and practice.



A pump shotgun, a fighting rifle, and a .22 rifle. Three actions, three jobs, and about as much capability as three guns can hold.

The shotgun feeds you and defends the house. The rifle reaches out and does the work no handgun can. The .22 is what keeps you sharp enough to use either one.

Buy them in that order if money is the constraint - and if you can only have one for a while, the pump is the one that covers the most ground.



1

THE 12 GAUGE PUMP - THE MOST VERSATILE GUN YOU CAN OWN

Our picks: Mossberg 500 / 590 or Remington 870. Those two are the top of the pump list and have been for fifty years. The Mossberg puts the safety on the tang, which is faster and works the same for a left-handed shooter. The 870 is heavier, the action smooths out with use, and the aftermarket is bottomless. Either one will outlive you.

What makes a shotgun special is that you change what it *is* by changing what you feed it. No other gun in the safe does that.

- **Birdshot** - pheasant, grouse, turkey, clays.
- **Buckshot** - the most effective close-range fight-stopper most people will ever own.

- **Slugs** - deer inside 100 yards, and the answer to a bear or a hog.
- **Less-lethal** - it exists, and it belongs in a very short conversation. See the warning below.
- **Fit beats features.** Length of pull and comb height decide whether you shoot it well or flinch.

A shotgun that doesn't fit hurts, and a gun that hurts doesn't get practiced with. Come in and shoulder a few before you buy.

STRAIGHT TALK ON LESS-LETHAL SHOTGUN ROUNDS

Bean bags and rubber buck are not a safe middle option, and they are not a legal one either. They have killed people at close range, they are wildly inconsistent past a few yards, and in most courtrooms pointing a shotgun at a human being is deadly force regardless of what is in the tube. **Never mix less-lethal and lethal shells in the same magazine.** If you carry them, carry them in a dedicated, marked gun - and talk to an attorney first.

2 THE FIGHTING RIFLE - AR-15 OR AK

Both work. The question is not which is better in the abstract, it is which one you will set up, zero, and actually run.

WHY MOST PEOPLE SHOULD BUY THE AR

- **It adjusts to the shooter, not the other way around.**
Adjustable length of pull matters more than anybody admits - the same rifle has to work for a 5'2" shooter in a t-shirt and a 6'4" shooter in a Carhartt.
- **Optics mount directly and repeatably.**
A flat-top receiver puts glass on the centerline with no adapter drama. This is the AK's genuine weak point.
- **Parts and magazines are everywhere and cheap.**
- **Low recoil means faster follow-ups and easier teaching.**
- **One rifle, many calibers.** Swap the upper for .300 Blackout, .22 LR, or 6.5 Grendel and keep the same trigger and controls underneath.

WHEN THE AK IS THE RIGHT CALL

- **You want more bullet.** 7.62x39 hits harder through brush and is a legitimate short-range hunting round where your zone allows it.
Check the current Minnesota regulations for legal calibers and zones before you plan a hunt around any rifle. They change.
- **You want a rifle that shrugs off neglect.** Loose tolerances, cold weather, and dirt bother an AK less than they bother an AR.
- **You already like it.** Enthusiasm is a real factor - the rifle you enjoy shooting is the rifle that gets shot.

WHAT TO SPEND

PSA, Aero, Daniel Defense - whatever your budget is. A Palmetto will run. An Aero splits the difference on fit and finish. A Daniel Defense is a lifetime rifle. All three will do the job.

CUT YOUR RIFLE BUDGET IN HALF

This is the single most useful thing in this document. **Whatever you were going to spend on the rifle, spend half of it on the rifle and half of it on ammunition and a class.** A \$1,600 rifle with 40 rounds through it loses to an \$800 rifle with 1,500. You cannot buy competence, and the rifle is the cheapest part of being good with a rifle.

3 THE .22 RIFLE

Our pick: Ruger 10/22, because it is proven. Sixty years in production, magazines and parts in every hardware store in the state, and an aftermarket so deep you can build a completely different rifle around the same receiver. Any decent .22 works - a Marlin 60, a Savage, a CZ 457 if you want a bolt gun that shoots better than you do. But the 10/22 is the one we keep recommending.

- **Small game and pest control.** The gun that actually gets used on a farm.
- **Cheap trigger time.** Same argument as the .22 pistol, times a hundred.
- **Quiet.** With a can and subsonic ammo it is genuinely neighbor-friendly.
- **Teaching.** Nobody's first rifle should kick.

RULE 3

Three Suppressors



Want to cover every gun you own with three cans?
This is how the math works out.

1 A .30 CALIBER RIFLE CAN

One .30 cal covers almost every serious rifle in the safe. Rated for .308 and .300 Winchester Magnum on the top end, it happily runs 6.5 Creedmoor, .300 Blackout, and .223 / 5.56 underneath it. You give up a few decibels compared to a dedicated 5.56 can, and you gain the ability to move one suppressor across four rifles.

- **Buy for the hardest thing you will ever run through it** - shortest barrel, fastest round, most rounds per string.
- **Match the weight to the rifle.** A heavy steel can on a light hunting rifle ruins the balance and stresses the threads.
- **Check your thread pitch before you order anything.**

2 A .22 RIMFIRE CAN

Rimfire is filthy - lead, wax, and unburnt powder build up fast - so buy one that comes apart for cleaning. A user-serviceable rimfire can is the most fun per dollar in the entire NFA world, and it covers .22 LR, .22 Magnum, and .17 across both the Mark IV and the 10/22.

3 A PISTOL CAN RATED TO .45

Buy the piston-equipped model rated for the biggest bore you own. A .45 can with the right piston and end cap will run .45 ACP, .40 S&W, 9mm, and .380 - one can, every handgun. Buy it the other way around and a 9mm can will never see the .45.

- **The piston (booster) is what lets a tilting-barrel pistol cycle with a can hanging off the muzzle.** Fixed-barrel guns don't need it.
- **Suppressed does not mean silent.** Most centerfire combinations still want ear protection. Subsonic ammunition is what gets you to movie quiet.



SUPPRESSOR RULES CHANGED TWICE THIS YEAR - ASK US WHERE IT STANDS TODAY

Two things moved in 2026, and anything you read from 2024 is now wrong.

1. The \$200 tax stamp is gone. Effective January 1, 2026, the federal making and transfer tax on suppressors, SBRs, and SBSs was reduced to \$0 under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

2. A federal court struck down NFA registration for suppressors - but only for some people. On August 5, 2026 a judge in the Northern District of Texas ruled in *Silencer Shop Foundation v. ATF* that once Congress zeroed the tax, the registration requirement lost its constitutional footing. That order took effect August 13, 2026. It is **not** a nationwide repeal: the injunction protects the named plaintiffs, members of the plaintiff organizations, and customers of certain plaintiff businesses. Whether it covers *you* depends on who you are and who you buy from. The government is expected to appeal, and an appeals court could freeze the whole thing.

Minnesota: suppressors are legal to own and legal to hunt with, and there is no separate state permit. The old "Minnesota requires a local sheriff's permit" line is out of date.

This is a moving target and this sheet is not legal advice. **Call the shop before you plan a purchase around any of it.**

RULE 4

Light. Optic. Sling.



Three things that belong on every long gun you own.
In that order of importance, with one honest exception.



All three on one rifle: Trijicon MRO up top, Streamlight out front, and a two-point sling doing the boring, essential work.

1 LIGHT

Surefire is a great, proven brand and it is expensive. Streamlight is just as proven at a fraction of the price. The newer ProTac WML series is what we run at Med City FFL, and we beat them up. They keep

working. That is the whole review.

- **You cannot shoot what you cannot identify.** A light is not an accessory, it is the difference between a decision and a guess.
- **500 to 1,000 lumens is plenty indoors.** More than that bounces off white walls and blinds you as much as anyone else.
Outdoors, candela (throw) matters more than raw lumens. Ask us the difference if it's new to you - it takes about a minute to explain.
- **Mount it where you can run it without changing your grip.** Tail cap or pressure pad, your call - just make sure you can turn it on and off deliberately.
- **Know what battery it eats and keep spares.** Don't store lithium cells in a hot truck for three years and expect them to be there when it counts.

2 OPTIC

This is not where cheap matters. Slings and even lights have budget options that genuinely work. Glass does not. Buy the optic that works for *your* eye, and shoot with both eyes open.

- **Trijicon MRO.** Our preference, and plenty of people hate them - big window, generous eye box, and it just runs.
- **EOTech.** Excellent, fast, huge field of view. Unless you have an astigmatism, in which case the reticle turns into a smear.
- **Have an astigmatism? A dot will look like a starburst.** That's your eye, not the optic - and it's not fixable by spending more.

The fix is a prism optic or a low-power variable scope, because both use etched glass instead of a projected dot. Come in and look through a few. Five minutes at the counter saves a \$500 mistake.

- **LPVOs (1-6x) are having a moment, deservedly.** One power for close, six for a coyote across a field.
- **On a budget: Vortex Strike Eagle.** Reasonable glass at a reasonable price, and they're fine.
Will it survive the zombie apocalypse or the invasion of the North Atlantic crabs? Maybe. But Vortex's lifetime warranty is unconditional, transferable, and we have personally used it. They rock.
- **A \$700 optic in a \$20 mount is a \$20 optic.** Buy a real mount, torque it to spec, and write your zero down somewhere that isn't your memory.

3 SLING

This one raises eyebrows, and we'll say it anyway: **an expensive sling is only slightly better than a cheap one.** Hate it or love it, it's true. If you carry a rifle daily, buy a reasonable Magpul two-point and be done. If you're an occasional shooter, the eleven-dollar Amazon special will hold your rifle just fine.

- **A sling is a holster for a rifle.** It's how you keep the gun while your hands do something else - open a gate, carry a kid, climb a stand.
- **Two-point. Please. No single-point slings.**
On a single point the rifle hangs muzzle-down and swings free the moment you let go - into your knees on stairs, and into somewhere considerably less forgiving when you bend over. Ask anyone who has run one for a full day. Your future self will thank you.
- **Set it up wearing what you actually wear.** A sling adjusted in a t-shirt is too short over a winter coat, which in Minnesota is half the year.



THE HONEST EXCEPTION

Take all of this with a grain of salt on the .22. It probably doesn't need a light - though maybe yours does, if it's the gun that goes out to the barn at night. **The 12 gauge absolutely wants a light and a sling; the optic is genuinely optional** - a bead and a proper mount work fine, and a red dot on a shotgun is a nice-to-have, not a need. On the fighting rifle, all three are mandatory. No exceptions there.

The Whole Thing On One Page

Tear this page off and bring it to the counter.

	WHAT	WE LIKE	HANG ON IT
PISTOLS	.22 trainer	Ruger Mark IV, threaded	Optional can
	Slim carry	Glock 43X	TLR-7 / Sub - optic optional
	Full-size duty	Glock 45 or 17	TLR-1 HL - RMR / Holosun
LONG GUNS	12 ga pump	Mossberg 500/590, Rem 870	Light + sling
	Fighting rifle	AR-15 (PSA / Aero / DD) or AK	Light + optic + sling
	.22 rifle	Ruger 10/22	Sling; light if you need it
CANS	Rifle	.30 cal, multi-caliber	Covers .308 down to 5.56
	Rimfire	.22, user-serviceable	Mark IV + 10/22
	Pistol	Piston can rated to .45	.45 / .40 / 9mm / .380



IF YOU ARE STARTING FROM ZERO, BUY IN THIS ORDER

- **The .22 rifle or pistol.** Cheapest to own, cheapest to feed, and it is what makes you competent with everything else.
- **The 12 gauge pump.** The most jobs covered per dollar of any gun on this sheet.
- **The full-size duty pistol, with a light.**
- **The fighting rifle - half your budget on the rifle, half on ammo and a class.**
- **The carry gun, once you know you'll actually carry it.**
- **Cans, last.** They're the luxury tier, and the rules are in motion right now anyway.



WHAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO TELL YOU

We are not going to tell you a gun makes you safe. Training does, and so does a locked door, a light on a timer, and a phone that works. Every gun on this sheet is a tool with a very narrow job, and every one of them is more dangerous to your household than to anyone else if it is stored carelessly or shot rarely. Lock them up. Shoot them often. Take a class you didn't think you needed.



NOTES - MODELS, PRICES, AND WHAT WE SAID AT THE COUNTER



MED CITY FFL - Rochester, Minnesota

Come in, handle a few, and ask the dumb question. That's what the counter is for.

This document is general information from a firearms retailer. It is not legal advice, and it is not a substitute for training. Federal, state, and local firearm and suppressor law changes - sometimes quickly - and the NFA situation described on page 5 was accurate as of August 21, 2026 and is under active appeal. Verify current law with a qualified attorney before acting on anything here. Product preferences are our own opinions and we are not paid to state them.