



# NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM<sup>®</sup>

Home to the World's Finest 1911 Pistols<sup>™</sup>

**Handgun Safety & Reference  
Owner's Manual**

# **WARNING**

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS  
AND WARNINGS CAREFULLY. BE  
SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THESE  
INSTRUCTIONS AND WARNINGS  
BEFORE USING THIS FIREARM.**

**FAILURE TO READ THESE  
INSTRUCTIONS AND TO FOLLOW  
THESE WARNINGS MAY RESULT IN  
SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH  
TO YOU AND OTHERS AND  
DAMAGE TO PROPERTY.**

**WARNING:** NEVER MANIPULATE, ADJUST OR CHANGE ANY OF THE INTERNAL COMPONENTS OF YOUR FIREARM UNLESS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED TO DO SO IN THIS MANUAL. IMPROPER MANIPULATION OF ANY INTERNAL COMPONENT MAY AFFECT THE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY OF YOUR FIREARM AND MAY CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.

**WARNING:** ANY MAINTENANCE OR SERVICE NOT SPECIFIED IN THIS MANUAL MUST BE PERFORMED BY NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM. ANY SERVICE NOT PERFORMED BY NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM (OTHER THAN ROUTINE PRESCRIBED MAINTENANCE AS DISCLOSED IN THIS MANUAL) WILL VOID THE WARRANTY OF YOUR FIREARM.

Use GUN BUTTER® on working mechanisms when operating your 1911. If your firearm will be used in a cold climate, be sure to use an oil of an appropriate weight so that it will not congeal in cold temperatures causing the interaction of important parts to be slowed or halted. We recommend **Gibbs® Brand Lubricant and Cleaner** and have started including one 2 oz. spray bottle with each new pistol shipped, starting July 1, 2012. If you need additional **Gibbs® Brand Lubricant and Cleaner** you can purchase it by contacting us directly at 877-268-4867 or by contacting your local firearms dealer.

**NEVER MANIPULATE, ADJUST OR CHANGE ANY OF THE INTERNAL COMPONENTS OF YOUR FIREARM UNLESS SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED TO DO SO IN THIS MANUAL.**

**WARNING:** ALWAYS POINT THE MUZZLE IN A SAFE DIRECTION.

**WARNING:** FIREARMS ARE DANGEROUS WHEN USED AND STORED IMPROPERLY. THEY POSE A RISK OF SERIOUS OR FATAL INJURIES. FIREARMS CAN BE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS TO CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE STORED IN AN IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNSAFE MANNER. FOR YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF OTHERS, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU KEEP YOUR FIREARM UNLOADED AND LOCKED IN A SECURE PLACE. THE AMMUNITION SHOULD BE STORED IN A SEPARATE, SECURE LOCATION WHEN IT IS NOT IN USE. SAFE AND SECURE STORAGE OF YOUR FIREARM IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RULES OF FIREARM SAFETY. YOUR FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE RULES MAY RESULT IN SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH TO YOU OR OTHERS.

**ALWAYS SECURE YOUR FIREARM IN A MANNER THAT WILL PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS.**

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## SAFE OWNERSHIP- THE NEED FOR INSTRUCTION

### Warning!

Firearms have been determined by the United States government to be dangerous and potentially lethal weapons "subject to federal and state restrictions."

- Possession of this or any firearm indicates your acceptance of responsibility to comply with the law and prevent consequences of danger which can result from improper handling.
- Nighthawk Custom strongly recommends that every person receive complete and thorough instruction on the safe and proper use of firearms from a competent instructor before handling this or any other firearm.
- Those unfamiliar with firearms should not remove this Nighthawk Custom product from its packaging until successfully completing a full course of instruction. This instruction should be by a competent instructor and include training on the safe use and handling of firearms with an emphasis on semi-automatic type handgun safety.
- Information on qualified instructors in your area may be obtained by consulting your local law enforcement authorities, a firearms retailer or through local gun clubs.
- Additional sources on firearms safety and instruction can be obtained by writing to national organizations, such as the United States Practical Shooting Association (USPSA - 903-A Metcalf Street, Sedro Woolley, WA 98284, or the National Rifle Association (NRA- 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, (703) 267-1430).

## SAFE OWNERSHIP - GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

**Be prepared** - Firearm safety depends on proper preparation. Always have the right gear and accessories available for handling a firearm. The key to safe firearm handling is to protect yourself against distractions and adverse conditions. Proper planning and equipment will allow you to handle your firearm in a comfortable manner.

**Protect your hearing** - Firearms produce high noise levels when discharged. Protect your hearing from potentially harmful exposure with an adequate sound attenuation product, such as ear plugs and/or ear muffs. Unprotected exposure to loud noises can cause a loss of hearing known to have a cumulative effect and can cause permanent hearing loss.

**Protect your eyes** - Firearms as well as environmental conditions can affect your eyes if not properly protected. Always protect your eyes with impact-resistant glasses. Use corrective lenses if necessary to clearly see your firearm and your target. Tinted lenses should only be used under proper lighting conditions. Eye protection should provide adequate protection against airborne debris, hot gases, powder blowback, ejected shell cartridges, dust, wind, sun glare, low limbs or any other condition that could endanger you or others nearby.

**Protect your body** - Wear adequate clothing to help protect your body from injury. Your body should be protected from firearm discharge and ejected shell cartridges, which are hot and could cause burns. Be certain to wear comfortable, well-fitting clothing appropriate to the season. Do not wear clothing which causes discomfort or could impair the safe handling of a firearm.

**Be Responsible - FIREARM SAFETY DEPENDS ON YOU.** A responsible owner respects the right and privilege of gun ownership. A responsible firearms owner learns and obeys all firearm safety practices, and always considers every firearm to be loaded. Stay aware of the fact that you have a responsibility for your own safety and the safety of others around the firearm.

## **SAFE OWNERSHIP - CHILDREN AND FIREARMS**

### **Warning!**

Keep firearms away from children. Avoid conditions which could allow a firearm to be unexpectedly discovered by a child. Keep firearms and ammunition under lock, out of sight of, and beyond the reach of children. Children should be made aware of the danger presented by improperly handled and stored firearms and must be given instructions to report any unexpected discovery of a firearm to a responsible adult.

Minors and adolescents **SHOULD NOT** have access to firearms without proper adult supervision. Keep firearms and ammunition locked away in a safe place, inaccessible to any minor or adolescent. The parent, guardian, or legal adult supervisor should be aware of the laws and restrictions regarding the use of a handgun by a minor or adolescent, and should use proper judgment regarding such use. The legal adult supervisor should realize the additional responsibility of a minor with a firearm and be certain to provide close, competent instruction prior to using this or any other firearm. Be sure to remind minors and adolescents that firearms differ from toys and are not to be used in play.

## **SAFE OWNERSHIP - THE BASIC RULES OF FIREARM SAFETY**

1. **DO NOT RELY ON YOUR FIREARM'S SAFETY MECHANISM. TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS IF IT WERE LOADED AND READY TO FIRE.**
2. **NEVER POINT YOUR FIREARM AT ANYTHING YOU DO NOT INTEND TO SHOOT.**
3. **ALWAYS KEEP THE MUZZLE POINTED IN A SAFE DIRECTION, (AWAY FROM OTHER PEOPLE.)**
4. **ALWAYS CHECK THE BARREL FOR OBSTRUCTIONS. USE ONLY AMMUNITION OF THE PROPER TYPE FOR THE FIREARM YOU ARE USING.**
5. **DO NOT SHOOT UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY SURE OF YOUR TARGET AND WHAT EXISTS BEYOND IT.**
6. **NEVER SHOOT AT A HARD SURFACE OR THE SURFACE OF THE WATER. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A SAFE BACKSTOP.**
7. **NEVER LEAVE YOUR FIREARM UNATTENDED UNTIL YOU HAVE UNLOADED IT AND SECURED IT FROM UNAUTHORIZED HANDLING AND USE.**
8. **STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SEPARATELY, OUT OF SIGHT AND BEYOND THE REACH OF CHILDREN, MINORS, AND ADOLESCENTS.**

## YOUR NEW NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM HANDGUN - BASIC COMPONENTS

(Nighthawk Custom Talon Shown)



- 1 Hammer
- 2 Rear Sight
- 3 Safety (Left Side)
- 4 Beavertail
- 5 Frame (Magazine Port Area)
- 6 Slide (Ejection Port on Opposite Side)
- 7 Slide Stop
- 8 Magazine Release
- 9 Trigger
- 10 Trigger Guard
- 11 Front Sight
- 12 Barrel (Muzzle End)

Nighthawk Custom produces a number of different models of semi-automatic handguns in various calibers. To identify a Nighthawk Custom handgun model, look at the engraving on the right side of the firearm. In most cases, it includes the model's name and, sometimes, a number, which represents the Barrel length. The caliber and type of ammunition to be used with a Nighthawk Custom handgun is engraved on the Barrel.

Do not attempt to load or fire a firearm until you have confirmed specific caliber. Safe and proper use of all handguns requires full knowledge and understanding of each component and mechanical feature.

## **Before Loading This Firearm -**

- Check Nighthawk Custom padded gun rug for your Gibbs® Brand Lubricant and Cleaner, Bushing Wrench, and two Magazines that ship with every new Nighthawk Custom 1911.
- NEVER DROP THE SLIDE ON AN EMPTY CHAMBER. DOING SO CAN CAUSE DAMAGE TO YOUR HIGHLY TUNED TRIGGER JOB.
- Learn to recognize and identify each of the functional components of this Nighthawk Custom firearm.
- Understand how to safely operate this firearm by carefully reading the instructions on the following pages.
- Follow each step for operating this Nighthawk Custom firearm as described in this manual with the Chamber empty, the Magazine removed, and the Muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Never drop the Slide on an empty Chamber as doing so can cause damage to your highly tuned Trigger job.
- Practice operating the firearm with it unloaded. Check to be sure the firearm is unloaded, then check again. Continue your practice until you have become familiar with the firearm functions and can comfortably handle the firearm in a safe manner.
- Repeat these steps frequently to assure safe shooting conditions.
- Review this manual of operation and safety instructions periodically. If you have not handled this or any other firearm recently, be certain to review this manual before you load this firearm with live ammunition.

## **YOUR NEW NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM HANDGUN - AMMUNITION**

### **Warning!**

Always keep firearms and ammunition out of sight and beyond the reach of children. Do not load this or any other firearm with live ammunition while learning the firearm's operation.

## **Before Loading Any Firearm With Ammunition -**

- Check your ammunition to be certain that the caliber matches the caliber of your firearm. Commercially manufactured ammunition has the caliber number clearly stamped around the rim at each end of the cartridge. Every Nighthawk Custom handgun has the firearm's caliber stamped on the Barrel Hood.
- Do not shoot this firearm if you question the compatibility of the ammunition you are using. Do not use unmarked or hand-loaded rounds of unknown origin. Use only clean, dry, original high-quality commercially manufactured ammunition in good condition.
- Do not use ammunition with split, crushed, or dented casings or bullets which show signs of damage.



- Remove unfired ammunition from firearms immediately after use and return to proper storage containers.
- Always keep ammunition away from heat and flame.
- Do not use ammunition of varying casing lengths and projectile configurations, other than what Nighthawk Custom has test fired with each pistol leaving our shop.

Nighthawk Custom handguns can be safely fired using factory specification standard velocity ammunition. Nighthawk Custom accepts no responsibility for claims brought against the company due to any other loads or any loads which do not meet the safety tolerances endorsed by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI).

#### **Ammunition That Will Be Reliable -**

Almost any type of factory ammunition will be reliable in your new Nighthawk Custom handgun. By the time you take your new gun home, it will have already passed a wide variety of tests. There are a few exceptions that we do not guarantee. Those exceptions are listed below. This is not meant to imply that the following types should not be used. It is just that we do not guarantee them to be reliable in our handguns.

- Hand loaded ammunition
- Ammunition made with aluminum or steel cases

### **PREPARING TO FIRE - GUN HANDLING & PREPARATION**

#### **Warning!**

**Do not rely on your firearm's safety mechanism. Treat every firearm as if it were loaded and ready to fire at all times.**

#### **When Reaching For Any Firearm -**

- Do not reach for any firearm by the Muzzle end.
- Never accept anyone's word that a firearm is unloaded when receiving it from them. Always check for an empty Chamber by opening a firearm's action.

**Note:** Nighthawk Custom model handguns must be checked by first removing the ammunition Magazine from the firearm to prevent a round from entering the Chamber.

#### **Before Shooting Any Firearm -**

- Check the condition of the firearm. Check the firearm for cleanliness and smooth operation. Do not use a dirty or wet firearm or one that has been excessively oiled or greased. An unclean firearm can become a dangerous hazard when fired.
- Check your backstop and what is beyond your backstop.

## PREPARING TO FIRE - LOADING THE MAGAZINE

Preparing the handgun for firing is composed of three basic steps: loading the Magazine, inserting the Magazine, and loading the handgun Chamber by releasing the Slide.

### Warning!

Load Magazines carefully. Avoid dropping the Magazine or the ammunition as this can cause damage or an accidental discharge to occur. Load Magazines in a work area where accidentally dropped rounds can be found easily, such as above a work surface that is of a comfortable height and located in an area free from distractions.

1. Hold the Magazine with the feed lips up and the load opening pointed outward as shown below.
2. With your shooting hand carefully insert a round through the loading relief, pressing down and to the rear of the Magazine until the round is properly positioned. The primer end of the case should be in contact with the rear wall of the Magazine. Repeat until the Magazine is full.



### Warning!

Nighthawk Custom recommends using only Magazines we sell for your specific caliber and type of gun.

Different brands of Magazines **ARE** different lengths and may have proprietary base pads. This can cause a condition where the Magazine can be over-inserted causing feed lips to strike the Ejector.

Use only the correct Magazine designed for your Frame size. Do not use a full size Magazine in a compact Frame. This will over-insert into the gun.

Using incorrect Magazines will damage or break the Ejector causing the gun to malfunction, lock up, or wedge the Magazine in the gun.

**Warning!**

Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. Do not use Magazines that show signs of damage, cracking or excessive wear. Consult a qualified Pistolsmith if the Magazine binds, fails to seat fully and securely, fails to release smoothly, or loads ammunition into the Chamber of the handgun erratically.

1. Check for dirt and debris in the Magazine Port and clean or clear as needed.
2. Securely hold the handgun with your shooting hand, with the Magazine Port pointing down as shown.



3. Insert the tip of the Magazine into the Magazine Port of the handgun with the Ammunition Feed Opening pointing to the front of the handgun and the body of the Magazine angled to match the angle of the Grip as shown above.
4. Push the Magazine into the Magazine Port until it is firmly seated and the Magazine Retainer locks into place.

## PREPARING TO FIRE - LOADING THE CHAMBER

### Warning!

Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. For this operation, the Thumb Safety must be in the READY or FIRE position and the handgun will be capable of firing a round. Your finger must be off the Trigger and outside of the Trigger Guard unless directed to do so otherwise by these instructions.

1. Before shooting your weapon, remove the Slide to insure proper lubrication. If the Rails are dry, add lubricant until Slide and Frame move freely over each other.
2. Pull the Slide fully back and inspect the Chamber for dirt or debris. If the Chamber needs cleaning or clearing, push the Slide Lock UP to hold the Slide open.
3. Insert a loaded Magazine.
4. Load the Chamber by releasing the Slide Lock and allowing the Slide to snap back into position on its own. Do not interfere with its forward movement.
5. Attention: "Sling-shooting" Slide by hand to Chamber a round may result in a decrease in energy needed to fully Chamber the cartridge for proper firing of the pistol.



6. Set the Thumb Safety to the SAFE position until you have chosen a target and are prepared to fire the handgun.



## **FIRING THE HANDGUN - GENERAL PRECAUTIONS**

### **Warning!**

Do not shoot unless you are absolutely sure of your target and what lies beyond it. Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. Until you have chosen a target and are prepared to fire the handgun, keep the Thumb Safety in the SAFE position.

### **To assure safe firing conditions:**

- Always handle a loaded firearm responsibly.
- Follow all safety precautions and customs of firearm safety at all times.
- Always keep the Muzzle pointed away from anyone and in a safe direction.
- Always have the Thumb Safety set to SAFE when the handgun is cocked and ready to fire.
- Never release the Thumb Safety until you have aimed your handgun at your intended target and are ready to fire.
- Always position yourself sufficiently away from other people to assure everyone's safety when firing.
- Always squeeze the Trigger slowly and deliberately towards you with your index finger when firing.
- Do not pull the Trigger abruptly, in a jerking motion, or use another finger, under any circumstances.
- Whenever possible, refrain from discharging a firearm from an unstable stance or position.
- Never shoot at a hard surface or at the surface of water. Make sure you have a safe backstop.

## **FIRING THE HANDGUN - IN CASE OF MALFUNCTION**

- Malfunctions occur from improper firearm handling, defective ammunition, or from damaged parts. A malfunction can be recognized by the improper feeding or ejection of a round of ammunition - a condition otherwise known as a "jam".
- The remedy of malfunctions requires specialized training and should not be attempted without first completing a full course of instruction by a person qualified in the safe use of semi-automatic handguns.
- Nighthawk Custom assumes no responsibility for malfunctions which occur from user abuse, neglect, or failure to follow the warnings and instructions in this manual.
- Never attempt to remove an ammunition round or casing from the Chamber or Ejection Port with your finger.
- Never use excessive force to remedy a jam or attempt to remove a stuck round with a tool or object which can damage the firearm or set off a live round of ammunition.

## **FIRING THE HANDGUN - IN CASE OF MISFIRE**

### **Warning!**

Never point your firearm at anything you do not intend to shoot. Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction.

### **Should a firearm fail to fire:**

- Always keep the Muzzle pointed in the direction of your target. An ammunition round can have delayed ignition, called a "hang fire", and can fire unexpectedly for up to one minute after being struck by the Firing Pin.
- Always remove the ammunition Magazine first, before attempting to determine the cause of misfire. Check the ammunition for proper type. Inspect the primer for firing indentation, to determine whether or not the Firing Pin engaged the primer, or if the Firing Pin hit the primer firmly.
- Never re-Chamber damaged or misfired ammunition. Keep them separate from other rounds.
- Never shoot any firearm if it continually misfires or malfunctions. A firearm that consistently misfires or malfunctions should be examined by a Nighthawk Custom Pistolsmith.

### **Warning!**

Always check the Barrel for obstructions. Use only ammunition of the proper type for the firearm you are using.

## **CLEARING THE HANDGUN - REMOVING THE MAGAZINE**

Clearing the handgun is composed of two basic steps: Removing the Magazine and unloading the Chamber.

### **Warning!**

Until you pull the Slide back and check for a remaining round in the Chamber, the handgun is still **LOADED** and capable of firing a round. Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. Your finger must be off the Trigger and outside the Trigger Guard. **NEVER RELEASE THE Slide AND LET IT FALL ON AN EMPTY Chamber!** This can cause the Hammer to inadvertently follow the Slide down when it closes. The Slide should drop only on a loaded Magazine.

1. Make sure that the Thumb Safety is in the **SAFE** position.
2. Hold the handgun in your shooting hand, and place your other hand underneath the Grip area to receive the Magazine as shown below.
3. Fully depress the Magazine Release. The Magazine should Slide out of the handgun freely.



## **CLEARING THE HANDGUN - UNLOADING THE CHAMBER**

### **Warning!**

Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. The Thumb Safety must be in the **READY** or **FIRE** position and the handgun is capable of firing a round. Your finger must be off the Trigger and outside of the Trigger Guard until you confirm the ammunition Magazine is removed and the Chamber is empty.

1. With the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction, release and remove the ammunition Magazine, pull the Slide back and move the Slide Stop **UP** to keep the Chamber open. If there was a round in the Chamber it should eject with the opening of the Slide.
2. Inspect the Chamber. If there is a round in the Chamber, carefully remove it and place it in an appropriate storage container.
3. Release the Slide Stop and slowly close the Slide only after confirming the ammunition Magazine is removed and the Chamber is empty.

4. With the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction, depress the Trigger to release the Hammer.
5. If you are finished shooting, confirm the ammunition Magazine is removed. Make sure the Chamber is empty, and remove any remaining ammunition from the Magazine.
6. Store the ammunition, the handgun, and the Magazine in appropriate storage containers.



### **Warning!**

Until the Magazine is removed and the Chamber is empty, the handgun is still **LOADED** and capable of firing a round. Keep the Muzzle pointed away from yourself and others and in a safe direction. Keep your finger outside the Trigger Guard and **OFF** the Trigger.

## **CARRY AND TRANSPORT**

### **Warning!**

Carry only empty firearms when traveling between destinations.

#### **Carrying or transporting any firearm:**

- Always remove the Magazine and check the firearm for an empty Chamber before carrying or transporting. Note: Nighthawk Custom model handguns must be checked by first removing the ammunition Magazine from the firearm to prevent a round from entering the Chamber. Following that, you should pull back the Slide to make sure the Chamber is empty.
- Never carry any firearm with the Hammer in the cocked or half-cocked position. Keep the Hammer forward with the Chamber empty until you are ready to shoot.
- Always carry firearms in a case or holster specifically made for the type of firearm you are using until you are ready to fire.
- Never carry any firearm with your finger on the Trigger or inside the Trigger Guard.



- Never carry any firearm by the Muzzle end.
- Always keep firearm's Muzzle pointing in a safe direction when carrying it or preparing to shoot. Remain alert at all times. Be aware of how you could prevent an accident in the event of a stumble or fall by keeping the Muzzle pointing away from any person or object that could be endangered.
- Avoid dropping your firearm under any circumstances.

### **Warning!**

Never carry a loaded firearm when you climb a tree, cross a fence, jump over an obstacle, or go across areas where you are likely to trip, slip, stumble or fall.

## **STORAGE**

### **Before storing or leaving this firearm unattended:**

- Immediately remove the ammunition Magazine from the firearm and check for an empty Chamber. Note: All Nighthawk Custom handguns must be checked by first removing the ammunition Magazine from the firearm to prevent a round from entering the Chamber, then pulling back Slide.
- Remove all unfired ammunition from the firearm, the Magazine, clothing, and from around the shooting area. Place unfired ammunition in a safe and separate location from the firearms.
- Place the unloaded firearm in an appropriate storage case or holster.
- Keep this and all firearms securely locked up and out of sight, away from any possibility of unauthorized access or unexpected discovery, until ready to use.
- Always remain aware of the danger of firearms, even when stored.
- Check firearm storage frequently, to be certain the location remains secure and has not been violated in any way. Periodic inspection during storage of firearm is recommended. Applying a maintenance coat of Gibbs® Brand Lubricant, especially in humid locations and extended storage durations, will assist in properly caring for your firearm.

### **Warning!**

Store firearms and ammunition separately, out of sight of and beyond the reach of children, minors and adolescents.

## HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - DISASSEMBLY

### **Warning!**

Always remove the Magazine and any ammunition in the firearm's Chamber before disassembly. Always wear safety goggles during disassembly and reassembly to protect your eyes while handling spring-loaded parts.

### **GENERAL PREPARATIONS:**

- Choose a clean, stable surface to comfortably disassemble the firearm. Allow sufficient room to place the removed parts without interfering with the disassembly process. To prevent damage to the firearm, disassemble the firearm on a clean, lint-free cloth.
- Read through the entire disassembly procedure before attempting to disassemble any Nighthawk Custom handgun.
- The following disassembly procedure requires manual dexterity and specific tools. Seek the service of a qualified Pistolsmith for assistance if you are uncertain of your ability to perform the following disassembly process.
- Contact Nighthawk Custom for further clarification or instructions should any of the parts or assemblies shown in the disassembly process of this manual appear different from those found on your Nighthawk Custom model. We are here to help you Monday thru Friday, 8 to 5 CDT.
- Gibbs® Brand Lubricant and Cleaner, GUN BUTTER®, and all other Nighthawk Custom accessories are readily available via [www.nighthawkcustom.com](http://www.nighthawkcustom.com) or via our toll-free customer service line at 877-268-4867.

## HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - DISASSEMBLY

### MODELS WITH STANDARD GUIDE ROD AND PLUG ASSEMBLY

This will be every model with Standard Barrel / Bushing and Standard Short Guide Rod. Models can include, but not be limited to, Talon and GRP Series.

**WEAR SAFETY GLASSES AT ALL TIMES. Some parts are under spring tension.**



Picture indicates a 1911 with Standard Guide Rod and Plug. Standard Recoil Plug is closed on the end.

Guide Rod Plug is below Bushing. Plug is under spring tension. **PUT ON SAFETY GLASSES** before going any further.

When you begin to disassemble (field strip) your gun, the first order of business is to remove the Plug that holds down the Recoil Spring. It is not uncommon for shooters to accidentally let the Plug go flying across the room once it is free of the Bushing, so **WEAR SAFETY GLASSES**.

1. Push down Guide Rod Plug. Plug will be under spring tension. Rotate the Bushing until the Plug can clear the Bushing and come out. Nighthawk Barrel Bushings are fit tight for accuracy. Nighthawk Custom recommends using the Barrel Bushing Wrench that is supplied in the outside pocket of your original pistol bag.

**2. WARNING: PLUG IS UNDER TENSION AND WILL SPRING OUT. AS YOU TURN THE BUSHING, KEEP THE PLUG DOWN. IF YOU ARE USING A BUSHING WRENCH, MAKE SURE YOU COVER THE PLUG ONCE THE BUSHING WRENCH CLEARS THE PLUG TO BE REMOVED.**



Use Nighthawk supplied Barrel Bushing Wrench to rotate the Bushing

Pull out Plug



3. Move Slide backward until the rear of the Slide Stop is exposed through the Slide Stop Notch on the Slide.



4. Pull out Slide Stop and set aside.



5. Since the Slide Stop has been removed, the Slide and Barrel assembly will Slide right off of the Frame. Push gently forward on Slide.

6. Remove Barrel and Bushing from Slide.



You have just completed what is commonly known as “FIELD STRIPPING”. This is normally as far down as you need to take your weapon in order to give it a good thorough cleaning. We suggest that, should the need arise, you will send it back to us for further stripping except to change grips.

The Extractor needs to be removed between 1000-2000 rounds. Clean carbon build-up from Extractor Hole and Extractor. The Extractor Tip can break if not cleaned. See instructions on Page 22, replacing Firing Pin. Extractor can be removed after Firing Pin Stop has been removed.

## REASSEMBLY

Reassembly can be accomplished by reversing the previous instructions. Take care to make sure that the Slide Stop passes through the Barrel Link when it is reinserted into the Frame.

The Slide Stop has a notch cut into the side which, once everything is in place as described in the manual, will allow you to push the Slide Stop straight into place during reassembly. This notch forces back the Plunger Tube Pin progressively rather than the owner trying to push either up on the Slide, or down on the Frame.

## HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - DISASSEMBLY PREDATOR FAMILY / MODELS WITHOUT BUSHINGS

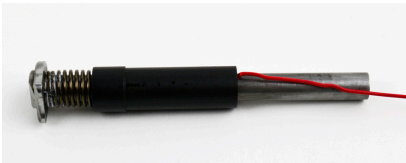
When a Barrel that does not require a Bushing is used, it is necessary to use a full length Guide Rod and Reverse Plug. The Recoil Spring must be captured in order to remove the Guide Rod successfully. A Pin to capture the Spring was included with your new Nighthawk Custom handgun.



- Lock the Slide back using the Slide Lock.
- Aim the weapon downward and put the Pin into the hole that has been drilled through the Guide Rod. See above.
- SLOWLY release the Slide until the Pin captures the Recoil Spring. After performing this, there will be no more tension on the Slide.
- Pull the Slide rearward and align the Slide Stop with the Slide Stop Notch. Remove the Slide Stop.
- Push the Slide forward and completely off the Frame.
- Turn the Slide over to remove the Guide Rod and Reverse Plug.



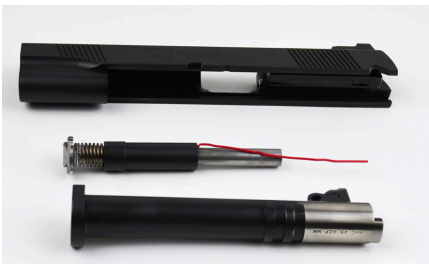
Roll the Barrel Link up out of the way and pull the Guide Rod and Reverse Plug assembly rearward.



Push Barrel length forward toward Muzzle.



Barrel can be pushed forward and out of the Slide. See video on [www.nighthawkcustom.com](http://www.nighthawkcustom.com)



Your weapon is now apart and ready for cleaning.

## HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - DISASSEMBLY

### FIRING PIN SPRING REMOVAL

#### CAUTION:

Wear eye protection! This step requires the removal of a spring under compression. Before removing the Firing Pin and Stop, position the Slide with the Firing Pin pointing in a safe direction. The Firing Pin can eject from the Slide unexpectedly and cause injury.

1. Firmly grasp the rear end of the Slide and depress the end of the Firing Pin with a 1/8" punch tool. Push down on the Firing Pin sufficiently to release it from the hole in the Firing Pin Stop. Place a finger of the same hand holding the Slide over the Firing Pin to retain the Firing Pin while removing the Firing Pin Stop. This will prevent the Firing Pin from ejecting from the Slide.
2. Remove the Firing Pin Stop by sliding the Stop off the Slide rails which retain it.
3. Slowly release pressure on the Firing Pin. The Firing Pin can be removed, once all the pressure has been released.
4. Remove the Firing Pin Spring from the Firing Pin by turning the Firing Pin clockwise and pulling off the Spring.
5. If you are not comfortable taking your 1911 down to this level, you can also choose to send your unloaded pistol to Nighthawk Custom Pistolsmiths for an inspection and replacement of any worn maintenance parts.





PARTS ID - LOWER





- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Mainspring                      | 13. Thumb Safety Plunger    |
| 2. Mainspring Cap                  | 14. Trigger                 |
| 3. Mainspring Cap Pin              | 15. Grip Screws             |
| 4. Mainspring Housing              | 16. Magazine Release        |
| 5. Mainspring Housing Pin          | 17. Magazine Release Lock   |
| 6. Mainspring Housing Pin Retainer | 18. Magazine Release Spring |
| 7. Plunger Spring                  | 19. Hammer                  |
| 8. Receiver (Frame)                | 20. Hammer Pin              |
| 9. Sear                            | 21. Hammer Strut            |
| 10. Sear Pin                       | 22. Disconnecter            |
| 11. Sear Spring                    | 23. Grip Safety             |
| 12. Thumb Safety                   |                             |

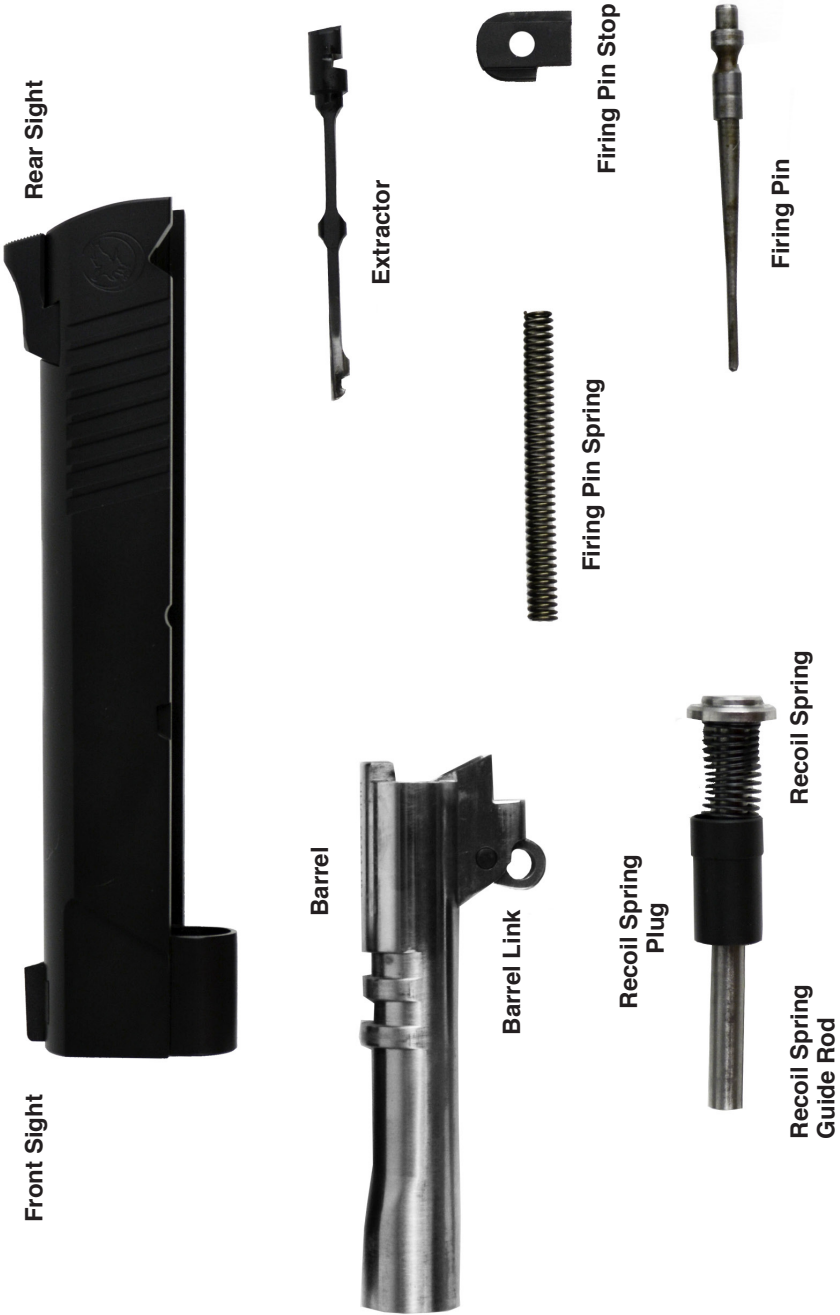
PARTS ID - TRADITIONAL Bushing UPPER



PARTS ID - PREDATOR UPPER



**PARTS ID - BULL Barrel UPPER**



## **HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE**

**WARNING: ENSURE THAT YOUR FIREARM IS UNLOADED BEFORE BEGINNING TO CLEAN IT. (SEE "CLEARING THE HANDGUN" SECTION ON PAGE 13). ALWAYS FOLLOW THE RULES OF SAFE GUN HANDLING AS OUTLINED ON PAGE 4.**

**WARNING: WEAR SAFETY GLASSES EVERY TIME YOU ASSEMBLE OR DISASSEMBLE YOUR FIREARM AND ATTEMPT CLEANING OR MAINTENANCE.**

**CAUTION: NEVER DISASSEMBLE YOUR FIREARM BEYOND THE INSTRUCTIONS IN THE HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - DISASSEMBLY SECTION OF THIS MANUAL**

**WARNING: ALWAYS HAVE ADEQUATE VENTILATION. CLEANING FIREARMS IN POORLY VENTILATED AREAS, DISCHARGING FIREARMS OR HANDLING AMMUNITION MAY RESULT IN EXPOSURE TO LEAD AND OTHER SUBSTANCES KNOWN TO CAUSE BIRTH DEFECTS, REPRODUCTIVE HARM, AND OTHER SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY. WASH HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER EXPOSURE.**

**CAUTION: Always follow the instructions provided with your gun cleaner and gun lubricant.**

Nighthawk Custom uses Nitride/Melonite Finish (Cerakote) on all of our pistols that are black in color. Pistols that are colors other than black are finished in a ceramic based finish. The Black Nitride finish that we are using is a superior finish and wears very well. You should avoid solvent immersion and prolonged ultrasonic cleaning of your firearm. Never use cleaning products with Trichloroethylene, ammoniated solvents, or strong alkaline solvents. Discoloration of the finish can occur on firearms with a nitride finish if these cautions are ignored. Damage to your firearms finish may occur if these cautions are ignored.

We recommend Gibbs® lubricant and cleaner and have started including a 2 ounce spray bottle with each new pistol shipped. If you need additional Gibbs® lubricant cleaner you may purchase it by contacting us directly at 877-268-4867.

- Remove excessive firing residue from the Bore and Chamber using a properly fitted brush.
- Be sure to clean your Extractor Hook approximately every 1000-2000 rounds. Failure to do so can cause a carbon build-up which can cause the gun to not extract properly, leading to malfunctions and/or breaking of Extractor, voiding the warranty on that specific part.
- Clean the exterior of the firearm using a non-abrasive cleaning cloth.
- After cleaning, lightly coat the metal parts, internal and external with a high-quality gun oil. We suggest Gibbs® Brand Lubricant and Cleaner. It is available here at Nighthawk Custom.
- Whenever your firearm has been exposed to sand, dust, extreme humidity, water or other adverse conditions, it must be cleaned and lubricated.

Cleaning is essential to ensure the proper functioning of your firearm.

Your firearm is a precision instrument. To ensure reliable functionality it is necessary to follow a routine maintenance procedure. After firing your firearm, be sure to unload it following the procedure outlined in the section entitled "CLEARING THE HANDGUN" section on page 13 of this manual.

Remove any gun cleaning solution, oil and fingerprints from the outside surfaces of the firearm. (Finger moisture, if left, could start a corrosion process)

**WARNING: NEVER MANIPULATE, ADJUST OR CHANGE ANY OF THE INTERNAL COMPONENTS OF YOUR FIREARM UNLESS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED TO DO SO IN THIS MANUAL. IMPROPER MANIPULATION OF ANY INTERNAL COMPONENT MAY AFFECT THE SAFETY AND RELIABILITY OF YOUR FIREARM AND MAY CAUSE SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH.**

**WARNING: ANY MAINTENANCE OR SERVICE NOT SPECIFIED IN THIS MANUAL MUST BE PERFORMED BY NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM. IF YOU DO OTHERWISE, IMPROPER FUNCTIONING OF YOUR FIREARM MAY OCCUR AND SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH MAY RESULT.**

If your firearm will be used in a cold climate, be sure to use an oil of an appropriate weight so that it will not congeal in cold temperatures, causing the interaction of important parts to be slowed or halted.

## **HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - FACTORY SERVICE**

### **Warning!**

Always unload any firearm before packaging the firearm for repairs or service. Note: Nighthawk Custom handguns must be checked by first removing the ammunition Magazine from the firearm to prevent a round from entering the Chamber...never ship ammunition with any firearm.

## **HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - MAGAZINE COMPATABILITY**

Because of issues in Magazine tolerance and design we can only be sure that your Nighthawk Custom Firearm will function reliably with the Magazine(s) we provide and sell.

Many companies make fine Magazines for the 1911 platform. However, we have observed that several manufacturers make running changes to their product line that may impact the performance and reliability in your pistol without any formal notification. This can result in a brand of Magazine working one time and not the next.

We pay special attention to the following details: Feed lip dimensions, baseplate design relating to overall length (prevents over-insertion), follower and front of Magazine design (keeps ammunition from tilting). In addition to these specifications, the spring rate is critical to maintain feeding during dwell time of the gun.

As the model of 1911 you have chosen gets further away from the original design (.45 ACP steel government model) Magazine tolerance becomes increasingly critical to successful operation.

We also recommend that you number your Magazines. By doing this you do not confuse a bad Magazine with a pistol or ammunition malfunction. Removing a malfunctioning Magazine from service, will solve the problem most of the time. Magazines need to be cleaned and inspected on regular intervals.

Magazines for the 1911 need to be considered an expendable asset. You can expect an average service cycle of 12-24 months. Do not hesitate to replace them the moment one fails to feed or drop free.

Each of our Magazine manufacturers have their own warranty. We are happy to honor this warranty for the Magazine(s) we provided with your pistol or those that you have purchased from us. We cannot replace or service any products not covered by the original manufacturers' warranty.

Should your Nighthawk Custom handgun require service by our Pistolsmiths, please contact a customer service representative at Nighthawk Custom and discuss the problem you're having. In the event you must return your handgun to our factory for service, follow these shipping instructions.

1. Provide a written statement in as much detail as possible, describing the apparent problem or need for which you wish to have service rendered.
2. Carefully package your Nighthawk Custom handgun, the written statement, and empty ammunition Magazine inside your Nighthawk pistol bag in a sturdy, plain cardboard carton.
3. Use quality protective packing as required to prevent damage to the handgun and Magazine from movement during shipping.
4. Tape the carton shut securely, using quality shipping tape or use another acceptable method of sealing the carton, to prevent accidental opening during shipment.
5. Be certain to address the package clearly and include a return address that can receive packages.
7. Nighthawk Custom cannot be held responsible for damage or loss incurred during shipment.
8. Ship the package via a reputable carrier with package tracking. DO NOT SHIP ANY FIREARM via US MAIL. It is unlawful.
9. All handguns must return to the address from which it has been shipped in order to comply with federal law.
10. A copy of our warranty/return policy is found on page 30 of this manual.

## HANDGUN MAINTENANCE - GENERAL CARE

Nighthawk Custom semi-automatic model handguns must be cleaned and properly lubricated to function reliably and maintain optimum performance and accuracy. Proper maintenance can provide smooth operation, minimize the wear of parts, and prevent malfunctions.

Periodic maintenance of Nighthawk Custom handguns involves cleaning, lubrication and CHANGING RECOIL SPRINGS at certain intervals.

Recoil Springs should be changed in order to keep your custom firearm running at peak performance and functioning flawlessly with factory ammunition. We suggest you change the Springs following the prescribed intervals below. You can go online or call to order them from Nighthawk Custom.

- 5" Models - every **2,000** rounds
- 4.25" (Talon II, T3 and Predator II and III) every **1,500** rounds

**TIP:** When replacing either the Recoil Springs or the Firing Pin Springs, the flat end should go facing the Guide Rod or Firing Pin. Put the open end forward.

- The only other spring that needs to be replaced on your custom handgun is the Firing Pin Spring. A good Firing Pin Spring should last you 10,000 rounds. When you feel that you need to replace your spring, simply follow the instructions below. We offer replacement springs when you're ready.

## **NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM WARRANTY RETURN POLICY**

1. Contact a representative from Nighthawk Custom and they will try to help you figure out the issue over the phone to see if there are any underlying causes that can be easily remedied without having to return your firearm for repair. For example: proper lubrication, cleaning and maintenance, Recoil Spring, or ammo issues. Please verify the issue using three types of ammo and make sure it happens with all the Magazines.
2. Unless a representative advises otherwise, always include the complete firearm, all parts and also all Magazines involved in the firing of this weapon. Take the Slide off of the Frame, wrap the Slide and Frame separately, but wrap them very well. Put them back in the gun rug and ship it in the box. Make sure you put a note describing the issue and all details, including ammo used, Magazine details, etc. We need your Magazines to make sure we can take every step possible to duplicate the issue you are experiencing.
3. Once we receive the pistol we will inspect it, test fire it to verify the issue. The test fire will include a combination of 50 rounds of hollow points, full metal jackets, and semi-wad cutters. If you are using special ammo and that is the only ammo you are having the issue with, please send the ammo separately.
4. If we cannot verify the issue, then you are responsible for the range time cost, ammo, and the shipping cost back to you. This usually runs from \$120.00 to \$200.00 depending on if you are located outside the continental U.S.
5. If we cannot verify the issue when we inspect and test fire, we will contact you and offer to go back to the range if you choose and test fire again at a charge of \$50.00 per 50 rounds fired. This includes the cost of ammo, labor and time for the next trip to the range. The second trip to the range session will be videotaped and a copy sent back with the firearm. If we have any malfunctions during test fire you will not be responsible for any charges at all.
6. A common issue is improper lubrication. The 1911 should be lubed after each trip to the range. Make sure the Recoil Spring is fresh, call if you have any questions. Government length springs need to be changed every 2000 rounds, Commander length every 1500 rounds, and Officer length every 500 rounds. Verify the issue with all of your Magazines and three different brands of ammo; also have at least two people shoot the weapon to verify the issue.

### **Notice of Written Warranty**

Nighthawk Custom stands behind each of our firearms with pride and honor.

If you ever feel your Nighthawk Custom 1911 is not functioning to your standards or ours, please contact us for immediate assistance.



### **DISCLAIMER**

- **Nighthawk Custom expressly disclaims any liability for incidental or consequential damages.**
- **Nighthawk Custom firearms are intended for use exclusively with factory standard velocity ammunition.**
- **Nighthawk Custom guarantees reliability of your weapon using only factory ammunition. We will not guarantee reliability using hand loaded ammunition or any factory ammunition manufactured with aluminum or steel cases.**







# **NIGHTHAWK CUSTOM®**

**Home to the World's Finest 1911 Pistols™**

**1306 W. Trimble Ave., Berryville, AR, USA 72616**

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