

The Ubiquitous Chamber Safety Device



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Ubiquitous? Maybe not quite yet, but soon I predict. Before you grab your dictionaries to find the meaning of ubiquitous, it simply means 'is present everywhere, often encountered, in several places simultaneously', which would be nice for the Chamber Safety Device (CSD) because I think this little plastic thing is a fantastic little firearms safety tool.

The CSD is a small and portable device that, when inserted into the chamber of a rifle or gun, will demonstrate clearly that there is no live ammunition in the chamber. It fits almost all action and calibre firearms, with the exception of the 17-calibre and black powder rifles. By bending the shaft over itself the device can be inserted and will stay

firm in a 12-gauge shotgun.

It can be easily inserted into the chamber of bolt, lever, pump and semi automatic action firearms.

This device is not a new invention. It has been around for a while. I have seen similar models of the CSD brought in from overseas. The one pictured in this article was designed by New Zealand Police who use the device when they encounter firearms during their work to demonstrate that the firearm is unloaded and safe.

Recently the Mountain Safety Council and NZ Police have joined together to produce a slightly modified version of the CSD. The new version shows embossed logos of the two organisations.



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For the past two years I have personally used the device while travelling with firearms, during storage in the home and on the range where they are particularly helpful. At home my family and I are reassured that all our stored firearms have no live ammunition in the chamber.

Our local NZDA branch has made the use of the CSD on their range mandatory and this is written into the range standing orders. All firearms that are bought to the firing line must have a CSD inserted. When a shooter has finished his shots he or she must re-insert the device. This demonstrates very quickly to the Range Officer that the shooter's rifle chamber is empty. The CSD does not replace the need for the Range Officer to check that each firearm is clear, but it does indicate at a glance that each firearm is safe and is a welcome addition to the safety precautions they take.

I know of other shooting clubs that have made the use of CSD mandatory and I am receiving a lot of interest from them.

I received a comment from a member of the NZ Defence Force about how reassuring it would be at range shoots where shooters step over the firing line to walk up to the targets, and a quick glance down the line of firearms will let them see the little red device protruding conspicuously from the actions. This would reconfirm that all the firearms are safe.

Yes, it sure is a good idea.

I went to a gun shop in the South Island last year and noticed that each firearm displayed had a CSD inserted. Well done to the shop owner.

If you would like to get hold of a few of these CSDs for your shooting club or for your personal use you can email me at mike.spray@mountainsafety.org.nz. I will let you know about availability and cost.

Although I think the Chamber Safety Device is a little beauty and we would love to see its use everywhere and make it as ubiquitous as possible, it will never replace the need to physically check and ensure that a chamber is clear. Physically check by looking down into the chamber when you take your rifle out of storage, when you remove your firearm from a vehicle, when you return your firearm to storage, or any other time when you feel the need to reconfirm. Get your hunting mate to check yours and you check theirs. Call that peer chamber checking.

Safe shooting.



Mike Spray has been a National Park Ranger and has spent a number of years based in Te Urewera National Park where this work provided opportunity to have the bush and hunting just out the back door. Since those days, Mike has spent time managing an outdoor education centre, possum monitoring, and is now working as the firearms and hunter training programme manager employed by New Zealand Mountain Safety Council National Office in Wellington.