

Absolutely, Positively Safe Dry-Fire Training By Jeff Randall

Every once in a while, a product comes along so simple and effective that it leaves you scratching your head and saying, "Now, why didn't I think of that?" Such is the case with Blade-Tech Industries' new Training Barrel. This new lightweight training device is injection molded from Acetal and is currently available for many of the popular handguns available on the market, with new models being added this year. To use the device (and



thus render the handgun safe), one simply breaks down the handgun, removes the factory barrel, inserts Blade-Tech's barrel and reassembles the handgun. The result is a 100% safe handgun that functions in all respects except that it is incapable of firing a round since the plastic barrel, including the chamber portion, is solid, not allowing a round to be chambered. The weapon's slide, slide lock, trigger, magazine release, etc. can all be

manipulated normally with no fear of a negligent discharge. An additional benefit is no adjustment of the operator's holster is needed; the safe weapon can be inserted and drawn from the holster normally used with the weapon.

While there are a number of whiz-bang gun safety devices on the market today, one often has to compromise realism for safety. For example, the solid molded, plastic replica guns are totally safe and built to scale but they lack any moving parts so the owner can't practice those all-important weapon manipulation skills. At the other end of the spectrum, you have cables, locks and plastic inserts that go inside the factory barrel. These are less than desirable since they often alter the shape of the weapon to the point where it cannot successfully be used in its respective holster. Some even prevent vital



weapon functions. Blade-Tech's barrel seems to solve these problems in a reliable and effective product that's very cost effective.

Having spent a considerable time overseas training with foreign military and police, it was not surprising when the company informed me that the training barrel was born out of the experience of some law enforcement trainers operating overseas. Due to the lack of weapon handling experience of the students, there were many safety violations as well as poor tactical skills. After using various safety products, such as one-piece molded guns,

the trainers became frustrated with the limitations of the existing devices and eventually patented this training barrel now in production with Blade-Tech. I guess the old adage about necessity being the mother of invention is still ringing true these days.

The firearms trainers I've spoken with that currently use the barrel are thrilled with it. The barrel is brightly-colored and extends out past the end of the slide. With one glance down the firing line, or one quick inspection of every officer's weapon in the shoothouse, they can instantly be assured no one could possibly have a live-round in their weapon. Students appreciate the fact that they can safely train with their *own* weapon and current carry gear.

Incidentally, other uses of the barrel have been discovered. Sporting good stores are now able to safely display their semi-automatic handguns in the cases, allowing customers to handle and fully operate the handgun with no fear of the weapon discharging. Take the tragic event that occurred in a Midwest sporting goods store inside a mall a few years ago. A man walked into the store and requested to see a weapon. As he accepted the weapon from the salesman, he took a single round out of his pocket that he had brought with him, inserted it into the barrel and promptly took his life right there at the counter. While one can only protect a person from himself for so long, this new product from Blade-Tech would certainly prove its worth in sporting goods stores and gun shows around the country. Users have also told us that TSA loves the training barrel since they can readily see the gun is non-functional when a passenger checks their weapon at the airport.

The training barrel is currently in use by government and private training schools and as of this writing, is available for most Glocks, Smith and Wesson's new M&P pistol, several Sig Sauer models and many 1911 models to include Kimber and Para-Ordnance. Blade-Tech says that they are currently designing new models that will be in production soon. All in all, I think Blade-Tech has come up with an exciting new product that will hopefully encourage safe handgun training habits while maintaining a sense of realism.

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