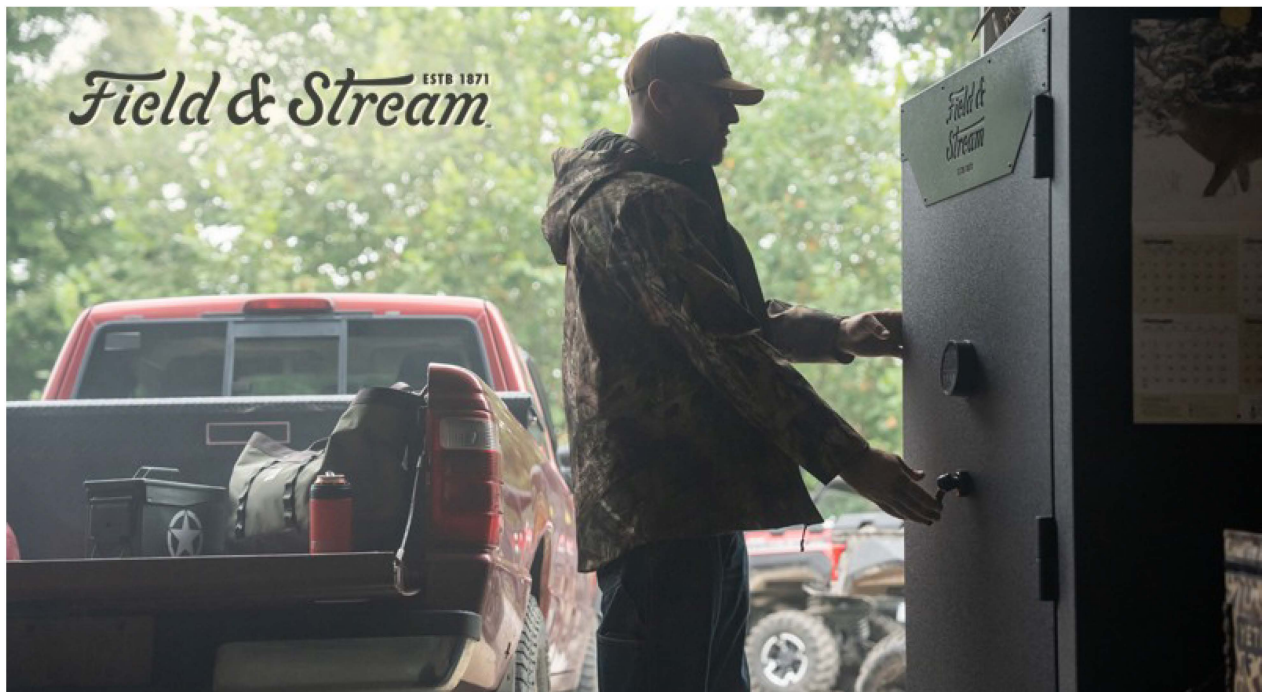


# Ammo Storage Options and Best Practices



Technically speaking, ammo doesn't really have a shelf life; sure, manufacturers often put a date - usually a decade or more in the future - on boxes, but that's really more for their benefit than yours. Even so, there are circumstances where ammo can and does go bad, but with proper ammo storage methods you can keep your ammo around for decades or more. Whether you need ammo for hunting, home defense or target shooting, follow our storage tips so you can feel confident your ammo is safe and ready when you need it.

### **Safety First: Essential Ammo Storage Tips**

Before we get into the meat of this piece, it cannot be stressed enough that even though following the recommendations below will help keep your ammo safe and secure for a very long time, it's important to not rely on this and this alone. Always inspect your ammo before loading it into your gun and shooting it. No matter how good your ammo storage setup is, you will still need to inspect your ammunition. Sure, you might get lucky and have no issues, but bad ammo can damage or destroy your gun - or worse. In the end, use your common sense and if something seems off, don't shoot it. Ammo can be replaced; you cannot.

### **General Best Practices for Ammo Storage**

Generally speaking, you want to keep your ammo someplace cool, dry, and with low humidity. For most people, just about any room in their house will suffice because of the basic climate control we implement for our own comfort. Your air conditioning or heating isn't going to make it too cold or too hot, and the humidity level is usually at a good percentage, too. If it isn't, there are multiple things you can do to make it more ideal outside of adding a humidifier or dehumidifier to your home.

You can add desiccant packets or canisters to your ammo cans or containers. These can be used to remove moisture from the limited spaces within. If you're looking to control the humidity in larger spaces - like a **safe** - then you can install **humidity rods** and even **monitors** to keep track of the levels in the area where you're storing your ammo.

The most important part here is to keep an eye on things. Replace desiccants and check your levels frequently for long-term ammo storage. Don't adopt a set-it-and-forget-it mindset.

### **How to Store Ammo**

Ammo can be stored in a wide variety of ways. Some people keep it in the cardboard boxes that it comes in from the factory. Others prefer to put them in hard plastic boxes. There are even people who store rounds loose in ammo cans or prepped and ready to go in loaded magazines. You can even keep the loaded magazines in ammo cans. None of these are the wrong way to do it, but you need to know the benefits and drawbacks of each and how different factors can impact the effectiveness.



## Cardboard Boxes

People have been storing ammo in the factory cardboard boxes for more than 150 years. It's a tried and true way to keep your ammo contained, but it isn't necessarily the best way to do it for the long-term. Cardboard is a paper product and it can be adversely impacted by moisture. Obviously, if the box gets soaking wet in the rain, that can be a problem, but it doesn't have to be that dramatic of an exposure. Even long-term storage in an environment with high humidity levels can cause issues. The cardboard will absorb the humidity and eventually pass it along to the ammo contained within.

## Ammo cans

One of the most popular ways to store ammo is in an **ammo can**. This is especially true for long-term ammo storage. It used to be that the best way to get one was by going to a surplus store and buying old ones used by the military. Today, there are a ton of great options for brand new cans. You can get them in both plastic and metal, but the metal ones will hold up better over time as they can more easily stand the often excessive weight of ammo better than plastic.

Another big benefit of metal ammo cans is that they have gaskets in the lid that make for a nice and secure seal to keep out dust, debris, and moisture. You can also choose to store your ammo loose, in boxes, or in magazines inside of the ammo can. Plus, many ammo cans are designed to stack neatly on top of one another for better space-saving storage.

## Gun Magazines

No, not the ones that you find on the rack or near the register with the eye-catching images on the cover. I'm referring to the magazines that fit into your guns. It's not uncommon for people to keep magazines loaded and ready to go at a moment's notice. For some, it's all about the prepper bug-out scenario. For others, it's about the convenience and time savings of doing it ahead of time and not having to load mags on the range.

Some people will say that you shouldn't store ammo in magazines because of wear and tear on the springs. After all, a magazine with a bad spring is worthless. However, plenty of other people swear by storing loaded mags and have done so for years before using them. The fact of the matter is that most people won't ever leave their mags stored long enough for this to be an issue. Additionally, most people won't ever use their mags enough to wear out the springs through normal use.

## In Ammo Cases

Just like there are purpose-built gun cases, there are also **ammo cases**. From the outside, they look like the average hard-sided handgun case, but on the inside, they're all about the ammo.

These cases have pre-made holes for you to place individual rounds of ammo into foam inserts. The hole sizes are semi-universal, in that they will accommodate most of the common handgun and rifle cartridges on the market today. They provide safe storage in a case that is waterproof, crush-proof, impact-resistant, and humidity controlled. There are even options that combine pre-cut storage for both a gun and ammo so that you can just grab one case and you're ready to go.

## In a Safe or Cabinet

### In a Gun Safe

One of the most popular places to store ammo is right alongside your guns in a **safe** or **cabinet**. That keeps everything neat, organized, secured, and in one place. Think of it as your one-stop-shop for all things guns and ammo. Storage capacity and other options abound from popular brands like **Cannon**, **Liberty**, **Winchester**, and **Field & Stream**.

## **Fire Protection**

In addition to providing physical security, many gun safes and cabinets offer different levels of fire protection. This can be very important when it comes to your ammo storage. The high temperatures caused by house fires can lead to ammo cooking off, which is a potentially dangerous situation. Depending on the level of fire protection, the gun safe or cabinet can help keep the ammo at a lower temperature and prevent cooking off, or at the very least provide some safe containment of the ammo in the event that it does cook off.

### **In an Ammo Cabinet**

If you've got a lot of guns and ammo - so much that they won't all both fit in the same place - you can opt for a separate ammo cabinet to securely store your ammo. They come in all different sizes to accommodate your specific ammo needs.

These cabinets are similar to gun safes except that they're designed specifically for ammo. To accommodate the weight of hundreds or even thousands of rounds of ammo that you may be storing, the shelves within these purpose-built ammo cabinets are built of stronger materials than what you find in most gun safes. Average ratings range anywhere from 75 to 125 pounds per shelf - that's a lot of ammo!

It is important to note, however, that while ammo cabinet storage offers secure locking like a gun safe, they do not offer fire protection like a gun safe.