

# Double-Action or Semi-Auto...



By Frank W. James

## JPFO's Loaded Chamber Indicator

**A**s someone who has been involved with teaching new shooters, both young and old, firearms safety, I can say it is easier for most beginning handgun shooters to work with double-action revolvers over other designs because it is so much easier to understand when the gun is loaded or empty. To verify whatever condition the double-action revolver is in all the beginner has to do is open the cylinder and check the individual chambers.

For some reason, many beginning shooters have trouble understanding the difference between the detachable box magazine and the chamber. It's easy for them to understand removing the magazine from the semi-auto pistol removes the ammunition supply, but they still have trouble understanding the pistol is still capable of firing if the chamber isn't empty. Teaching this to a group of new shooters can be both exasperating and exciting on the firing line if a few ground rules aren't first established quickly and firmly.

However, even with training the problem doesn't go away. The problem of determining whether or not the chamber is loaded is always there, and there are no easy solutions for those new to handguns. Probably one of the more controversial methods used to verify if a semi-auto pistol has a loaded chamber is the infamous "Press-Check" that is discredited in many quarters.



**When the chamber is empty on a 1911 pistol equipped with the JPFO Loaded Chamber Indicator, the LCI lays flat within the contours of the slide profile and is virtually unnoticeable in terms of its machined profile.**

For the uninitiated, the "Press-Check" places the thumb of the support hand inside the triggerguard while the index finger of the same hand is placed just below the muzzle to compress or retract the slide slightly.

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Obviously, the possibility of the thumb engaging the trigger is a real danger and the index finger is extremely close to the muzzle of the often loaded gun. The idea is when the slide is slightly retracted the extractor pulls the loaded round sufficiently from the chamber so that a visual inspection will reveal its presence. It even works in the dark because the trigger finger can be used to "feel" if the extractor is empty or occupied, but it is a practice full of potential for disaster.

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I still use the "Press-Check" when I'm not teaching, but I have to admit its safe use requires a heightened sense of awareness, and many beginners simply don't have the skills necessary to use it safely, so I can see where its use is universally condemned.

There is now a solution from JPFO, an organization dedicated to maintaining our Second Amendment Rights. Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership is headed by Aaron Zelman, and he is offering a Loaded Chamber Indicator (LCI) that really works. It requires the services of a gunsmith for proper installation, but it is so simple and so reliable it is easy to recommend this genuine safety device. Although I had the sample device installed on a personal Springfield Armory 1911A1 pistol, this device can also be installed on those Sig 226 and 229 pistols that are made with the machined steel slides. (Sorry, there isn't enough material for those equipped with the stamped steel slides for proper installation.) It can also be installed on some Smith & Wesson semi-auto pistols, but it requires a slide with sufficient material for the installation.



**Once the chamber is loaded on a pistol equipped with the JPFO LCI, the device stands quite proudly and is in some reminiscent of the extractor/loaded chamber indicator first seen on the German Luger.**

The device is incredibly simple, and in many ways it reminded me of the combination extractor/loaded chamber indicator first seen on the German Luger. Although to be fair and accurate, the JPFO LCI does not work in any way like an extractor, nor does it inhibit or interfere with an extractor's function. But once the chamber on the pistol is loaded, the JPFO LCI does stand up quite proudly just like the Luger extractor. As opposed to the Luger extractor/LCI, the JPFO unit stands at its rear and slopes toward the chamber end of the barrel.

It is easy to use and understand. If the chamber is empty, the JPFO LCI lies flat within the contours of the slide profile and is virtually unnoticeable in terms of machined profile. You can see it, but that has more to do with the difference in surface finish than anything else.

Two positions are offered. The first, and the one installed on my personally owned Springfield Armory 1911A1 pistol, is mounted exactly at the top of the slide behind the barrel hood. I suppose some may be concerned over the LCI rubbing against the leather inside an expensive holster when extended, but it's been my experience the sharp edges on a well-defined front sight cause far more damage than that seen with this unit.

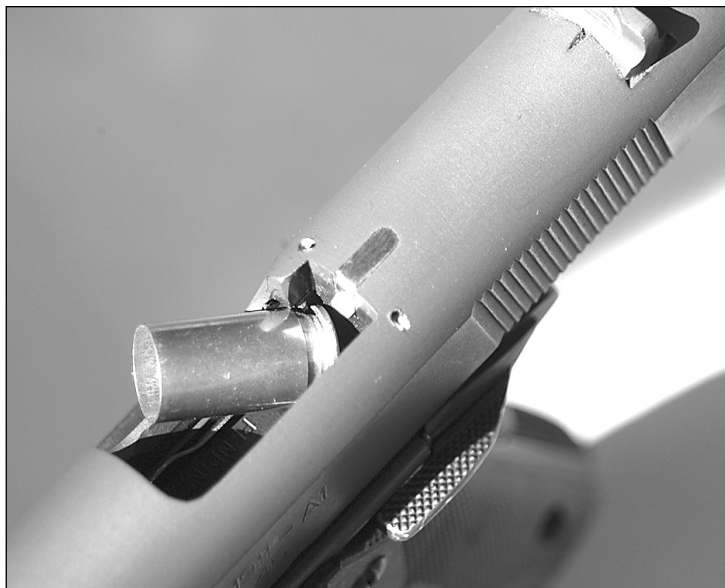
The second position cants the installation 22 degrees to the right off the top dead center of the slide. Zelman likes this position more than the top position, but in my testing I couldn't really determine which position had the advantage.



**As opposed to the Luger extractor/lci setup, the JPFO Loaded Chamber Indicator unit signifies a loaded status by rising at its rear and sloping toward the chamber end of the barrel.**

The biggest advantage to the JPFO LCI, besides that seen for beginning shooters, is the fact it is now easy for the shooter to determine if the pistol is loaded in a low light environment without manipulation of the slide or firearm. This eliminates a process that produces noise to one degree or another and is far faster in terms of execution.

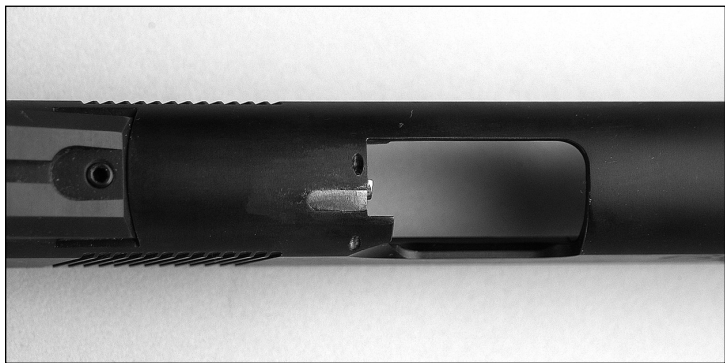
The height of the JPFO Loaded Chamber Indicator does not interfere with the line of sight; my personal Springfield Armory 1911A1 used for the sample installation has the standard military-style rear sight, and never once did I see or even notice the LCI during shooting. When raised and indicating a loaded chamber, the LCI sticks up less than 1/16 inch.



**The JPFO LCI does not work in any way like an extractor, nor does it inhibit or interfere with an extractor's function as shown here. It merely indicates when the chamber of the pistol is loaded.**

It should be emphasized the presence of the JPFO LCI does not replace any existing safety practice or common sense safe firearms handling practice, but it certainly eliminates the need for those practices fraught full of risk like the "Press-Check," and it receives my one-hundred-percent endorsement for shooters of any experience level.

The installation of the JPFO Loaded Chamber Indicator requires the services of a gunsmith, but the cost using their gunsmith is \$99.95 and requires a two- to three-week delivery time. Kits for gunsmith installation are \$59.95, but kits are also available for qualified gunsmiths at wholesale prices.



**The JPFO LC I unit can be positioned in two places. The first position is at the top of the slide. The second cants the installation of the unit 22 degrees to the right off the top dead center of the slide.**

The proceeds from the sale of these devices are used to fight gun control and also to promote safe gun ownership. It is not an imported item, but one made in America for Americans as well as others. The best thing I can say about it is...it works!

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