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REVIEW: HORNADY NIGHT GUARD SAFE

While having a self-defense handgun available is an important part of any home defense plan, so is safe storage of it.



PHOTO: HORNADY MFG.

Using RFID technology like this included wristband, you can quickly open the Hornady safe.

WE ALL FACE THE ISSUE of how to store a gun for home defense. You want to be able to quickly access a defensive firearm, but we also bear the responsibility of making sure it is totally secure when not in use. In this piece, we're going to take a look at this challenge, and test out the Hornady Night Guard safe to see how it performs in this role.

Frankly, secure storage with ready access is one of those evergreen challenges for the defensive handgunner. Hornady — of reloading component and ammunition fame — recently charged into this market space in a big way with their RAPiD Safe line that leverages radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to quickly unlock their safes and storage containers. The Hornady RAPiD Safe Night Guard is one of the company's newer offerings, and I recently had a chance to try it out for myself.

about like a cable TV set top receiver at 3" tall by 12" wide and roughly 10" deep. The internal capacity is plenty large for a full-sized service handgun in the 5" 1911 range, with space left over for some "whatever else" the home or shop owner might like to keep under lock and key.

The 18-lb. unit is AC powered with a battery backup and can be opened by any of three modes; traditional key (two included), RFID tags/bracelet (one of each), RFID adhesive decals (two included), or keypad number combination. When the unit is unlocked, the spring-assisted tray slides out and the handgun is ready for access.

A nice feature is the addition of

two USB-A ports located on the back of the unit. This gives you a handy spot to charge your devices.

The Night Guard is large enough to perhaps draw attention in some contexts, but sleek and "technological" enough in appearance that in many settings it hides well in plain sight — much as a cable box, router or DVR would. The digital clock face assists in this.

RANGE TEST
I was curious just how rapidly a handgun could be retrieved from the Night Guard and how that might compare to other modes of readiness such as holstered carry. I've seen other secure storage products that struck me as looking very attractive in theory, but being too complex or slow to negate any true "ready access" capability at the moment of urgent need.

I messed with the Night Guard for a day or two around the house,

YOUR NIGHTSTAND SENTINEL

**MAXIMUM SECURITY,
ULTRA-FAST ACCESS:
HORNADY'S NIGHT GUARD.**

JUSTIN DYAL

THE DETAILS
The Night Guard, priced at an MSRP of \$323.99, is a dresser- or nightstand-sized unit that looks

familiarizing myself with the provided little RFID stickers and key fobs as well as the adjustable bracelet and keypad activation. Initial impressions were positive, so I loaded the safe into the truck and headed to the range. The video linked with a QR code in this article walks through a live-fire test I did to see how fast I could access it, so be sure to check it out. Also, here are the highlights of that test.

With the RFID tag in hand, I was able to swipe it against the sensor, open the safe, retrieve a loaded Hellcat and hit a silhouette for time. Times ranged from 1.92 to 2.3 seconds for the first shot to strike the target at 7 yards. One could undoubtedly work those times down with additional practice. This is not terribly slower than the time one would burn retrieving a handgun stored in its CCW holster on the dresser or nightstand — but with a dramatic increase in security.

Switching to the RFID bracelet, I repeated the drill. The time with

The Night Guard can be opened with an included traditional key. Note the USB-A ports located on the back of the unit.




You can also access the safe using a programmable combination and the keypad on the front.

the bracelet was slightly slower at 2.6 seconds, which may seem surprising at first blush. However, getting the bracelet aligned with the sensor was a little less efficient than with the RFID fob for me. On the other hand, one could easily wear the bracelet and always have access to the safe regardless of

where the fobs may be.

By way of comparison, the time to draw the Hellcat from a concealed holster inside the waistband and hit the steel target was 1.36 seconds to the first shot. A pistol on the body remains the A+ answer to immediate access and keeping a loaded handgun out of the wrong hands, but we all have to go to sleep at some point. Also, there are times and places where on-body carry is less practical.

CONCLUSION

The Hornady RAPID Safe Night Guard looks like a strong contender for those in the market for a safe means of storage for their defensive handgun, but one that is still quickly accessible. The Night Guard's numerous access options, solid build and reliable function make it a very good option for this role. You should take your home defense equipment seriously, and this Hornady lockbox is a no-nonsense tool that can enhance your ability to protect yourself. 

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
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PHOTOS: HORNADY MFG.