



SAGA Snippets

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SAGA Snippets
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Evidence First: Why GFSA's Firearm Tracking Proposal Fails in Reality

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Issued by the SAGA Trustees

Over 3,400 South African Police Service (SAPS) firearms (pistols and rifles) have vanished from state custody over the past five years. Only 559 have been recovered.

These are not abstract figures; they are weapons now circulating in criminal hands, fuelling hijackings, robberies, murders and the daily insecurity South Africans endure. This is the reality that should anchor any serious public-safety discussion.

South Africa records approximately 27,000 murders per year, translating to a homicide rate of around 40 per 100,000 people – among the highest in the world.

By comparison, countries frequently cited in firearm policy debates – such as Canada, Germany and Australia – record rates below 1 to 2 per 100,000.

This is not a marginal difference. It reflects fundamentally different crime environments – and requires policy grounded in that reality.

A Proposal Without Proof

Gun Free South Africa (GFSA) has renewed its push for mandatory electronic tracking devices on firearms – proposals that could extend beyond police armouries to law-abiding civilian owners.

This is advocacy presented as a solution. It is not supported by tech-

nical evidence, operational feasibility, or international precedent.

No jurisdiction, including the United States, Germany, Australia or Canada, has implemented universal electronic firearm tracking at national scale with demonstrable reductions in violent crime.

At the same time, international data does not support the claim that civilian firearm ownership drives violent crime.

According to the Small Arms Survey, South Africa has an estimated **9-10 civilian firearms per 100 people**, compared to far higher levels in countries with dramatically lower homicide rates.

The relationship between lawful ownership and violent crime is therefore not causal – and policy built on that assumption is fundamentally mis-directed.

Technical Reality vs Policy Assumption

The proposal also fails on basic technical grounds:

- * Firearms are dense metal objects that degrade or block radio signals
- * Tracking systems require power, maintenance, and reliable network coverage
- * Devices can be removed or disabled with minimal effort
- * Criminals already alter serial numbers – embedded electronics would face the same fate

Special points of interest:

- *Evidence First: Why GFSA's Firearm Tracking Proposal Fails in Reality*
- *Wildland Magazine March 2026*
- *Advertise in SAGA Snippets*
- *Straight Talk: Know your Gun*
- *SAGA at HuntEx 2026*
- *SAGA Corporate Membership List*
- *But they Looked Harmless*
- *40 Year Insignia*
- *SAGA Personal Membership*

Continued...Evidence First: Why GFSA's Firearm Tracking Proposal Fails in Reality

Even in well-resourced environments, pilot programmes have reported high failure rates and prohibitive costs. More importantly, South African crime patterns render the proposal irrelevant.

Research from the Institute for Security Studies shows that violent crime is driven by repeat offenders, illegal firearms, organised networks, and systemic weaknesses in policing and prosecution – all operating outside the lawful regulatory framework.

The central problem is clear: this proposal attempts to solve a governance failure with a technological abstraction.

There is no evidence – locally or international – that tracking lawful firearms reduces violent crime in a context where offenders are already armed and operating outside the law.

Governance Failure – Not a Technology Gap

The disappearance of SAPS firearms did not occur because of a lack of tracking technology.

It resulted from systemic failures in:

- inventory control
- chain-of-custody management
- oversight and accountability

The failure was institutional, not technological.

Substituting governance failure with technological expansion is not a solution. It is policy displacement. No microchip can compensate for systems that fail to account for firearms already under state control.

Tested – and Found Wanting

These issues have already been tested.

During NEDLAC deliberations, technical feasibility, cost and scalability were scrutinised. **No credible, internationally validated model emerged.**

This reflects a broader policy problem. The Institute for Security Studies has repeatedly

noted that South Africa's crime strategy remains reactive rather than preventive, with insufficient focus on the drivers of violent crime. That is the real policy failure.

What This Means for Public Safety

The majority of violent crime in South Africa is committed with **illegally possessed firearms**, often originating from State loss, theft or diversion – not from licensed civilian owners.

Policies that ignore this reality do not reduce violence. They misdirect attention away from where intervention is required. Public safety is not improved by imposing unworkable systems on compliant citizens while the criminal supply chain remains intact.

Policy that targets the compliant while failing to control the criminal supply does not reduce risk. It redistributes it – away from the state and onto the public.

Conclusion: Evidence Before Policy

South Africa does not lack regulation. It lacks effective enforcement and governance.

What is required is:

- accountable systems
- proper chain-of-custody control
- functional oversight
- consequences for failure

Not speculative technological expansion. Evidence must come before policy – not after it. Without that discipline, proposals such as this do not enhance safety. They risk undermining it.

This is not evidence-based policy. It is policy in search of evidence.

Drafted by Shaun Lyle and Stef Grobler (SAGA Trustees)

Reference: WFSA International Firearms News | March 2026 *Gun violence: Tracking tech proposed as 3,400 SAPS firearms lost or stolen*

Wildland Magazine
March 2026

As part of SAGA's collaboration with Wildland here is the link to your free copy of Wildland magazine, March 2026.

Click on the link in the covering email, or copy and paste the link below into your web browser:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/71003998/wildland-maart-2026/1>



Advertise in SAGA Snippets

ADVERTISE HERE!

Advertising space in SAGA Snippets is now available to **SAGA Corporate Members**.

Until July 2026 the price per advert will be R900.

All prices exclude design costs. If you need help with advert design, for an additional R400, we have an experienced graphic artist who supports this initiative and will assist.

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Take advantage of this great opportunity to advertise your business, club or association to a huge audience of like-minded firearm owners.

Snippets is sent out in the last week of each month, apart from December when it gets sent out earlier.

All prices exclude VAT. Space is limited to four adverts per Snippets.

To book please contact Gaye at the office on 031-562-9951 or saga@saga.org.za

Straight Talk: Know Your Gun



by Sheriff Jim Wilson
27 January 2026

We know that when we are faced with the threat of serious bodily injury or death, our focus will be on the threat. This is not so much a conscious effort as a fact that our natural survival system has taken over.

For that reason, our manipulation of our defensive equipment must be practiced until its operation and deployment almost become subconscious functions. This is the main reason so many of us caution against the continual switching back and forth of that equipment – especially our daily-carry guns.

While firing the defensive shot should certainly be a conscious decision, getting the gun into play should be a task that can be accomplished without thinking. To accomplish this, one really needs to know their defensive handgun.

The only negligent discharge with injuries I ever witnessed in a training class involved an older fellow who had carried a revolver in his law-enforcement career. Now, retired and working security, he had decided to carry a striker-fired pistol. The only trouble was that he had not taken the time to actually learn his new gun, and had real trouble keeping his finger off the trigger when the sights weren't on the target.

The double-action revolver trigger requires a significant amount of pressure, so this gross

violation of the safety rules probably never resulted in a negative outcome for him, but that's pure luck. With the lighter trigger of a striker-fired pistol, luck is less available. As you might guess, he shot himself in the leg while improperly reholstering his new gun.

So, it is critical for the armed citizen to totally familiarize themselves with their chosen defense gun. This means knowing how to safely load and unload the gun. It involves knowing the proper manipulation of all the various safety controls the gun might have. And, it involves knowing what the most common malfunctions might be and how to deal with them.

All of these things are not going to be learned in a day, but take time and training. Once these things are learned, they must be practiced.

While the semi-automatic pistol is certainly the most popular defensive handgun, revolver shooters don't get a free pass. Do you know how to keep your ejector rod from backing out? Do you know how to avoid having a spent cartridge get stuck under the ejector star? Finally, in the midst of a gunfight where you can only get a partial reload into your revolver, which way does the cylinder rotate? We know that Colts rotate clockwise whereas Smith & Wesson rotate counter-clockwise, but what about the double-action Taurus or your Ruger SP101? You'd better find out.

Knowing the gun one carries is probably the main reason why many of the old-timers have stayed with guns of older design. It's not that the new guns aren't as good, it's just that the older models are what these folks grew up with. They know them, know how they operate, know their shortcomings and know how to deal with any types of problems that might arise. That's what knowing your gun is all about – the ability to effectively bring it into play without a lot of conscious thought.

By contrast, an old-timer of my acquaintance – a double-action revolver guy of long standing – advises that he is going to switch to a 9 mm for everyday carry. He has spent a good deal of range time and is satisfied with the function and accuracy of his new choice. Nonetheless, his next step is to attend a class at Gunsite with his new

Continued...Straight Talk: Know Your Gun

gun. All of which is part of the process of knowing your gun.

Finally, to end this piece on a lighter note, I would share this humorous – and probably apocryphal – story of a young man who just had to have a 1911. Obviously, he had never even fired one prior to his purchase. Within days, he was back in the gun store complaining that his new gun jammed. The in-house gunsmith checked it, cleaned and oiled it and reported that he hadn't found any problem.

Sometime later, the young shooter returned, still complaining about his gun jamming. This time the gunsmith, after checking the gun, took the customer back to the shooting trap so he could witness the gun being fired. The gunsmith fired an entire magazine into the test trap and the slide locked back. "Look! It jammed again," said the customer.

Know your defense gun. I mean really know your chosen defense gun. It is important.

Shortened version of:
<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/straight-talk-know-your-gun/>

SAGA at HuntEx 2026



The National Hunting and Shooting Association (Natshoot) have kindly offered SAGA a space on their stand in Hall 2 at HuntEx 2026.

SAGA representatives will be on hand with leaflets, to chat, and to promote SAGA membership.

HuntEx 2026 is taking place on 25-27 April 2026 at Gallagher Estate in Midrand.
Opening times 09:00-16:00.

For more information see www.huntex.net



SAGA Corporate Membership 2026

30 March 2026

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Continued...SAGA Corporate Membership 2026



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But They Looked Harmless

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/but-they-looked-harmless/>

by Shelley Hill
22 December 2025

I can't tell you how many times I have heard people say this about a stranger, "they looked so nice" or "I bet they don't have a mean bone in their body." When I hear things like that, I ask them, "how can you tell?" They usually answer with "they are handsome, nice smile, dressed to the "T", have a child with them, well groomed" and the like. I simply nod and ask the same question again "but, how can you say that they mean you no harm just by looking at them (but with a bit more umph on HOW)." That really gets them thinking.

Did you know that bad guys can dress nicely or poorly? They can appear charming or aggressive. They can surround themselves with children to appear approachable. They can smile at you with beautiful white teeth or have poor hygiene. To make a blanket statement like "they looked harmless" can get you in trouble.

Remember the saying "actions speak louder than words?" Well, since appearances can be deceiving, let's focus on a few characteristics of a threat.

I think that the definition of the word "threat" is very hostile. It means "a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other evil action on someone in retribution for

something done or not done. A threat is an impending danger that has the potential to cause serious harm—it just hasn't done so yet."

There are four types of threats: direct, indirect, veiled and conditional.

1. A direct threat is straightforward, has a focused target and is obvious in intent. It can mean considerable harm to our health and safety and cannot be swayed by reasonable means.
2. An indirect threat is more vague, confusing and more difficult to see the motivation. It is unclear words and gestures.
3. A veiled threat is implying consequences without specifics. It hides meaning and intent. A veiled threat is verbal.
4. A conditional threat is also verbal. This threat is dependent on the victims' actions or inactions. Basically, if their demands are not met then harm may come to you.

Scenario:

You have been shopping at the mall for the last two hours and you are feeling pretty darn proud of yourself because the last few people on your gift list have been completed. You are walking to your car, and you see a nice-looking man in an arm sling struggling to put some packages in the trunk of his car.

You are just about to pass him when he looks up and smiles. You notice that he has beautiful teeth and is wearing a red sweater vest to match the festive season.



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Continued...But They Looked Harmless

He asks if you could help him, points to his arm sling and smiles again. He jokes about "buying gifts that are too big to get in his car one-handed" and points to the sling again.

Your intuition is screaming at you, "this is a threat and to avoid". You make some distance, tell him that you can't help him, and quickly move to your car.

What "threats" could happen next?

1. Conditional Threat: He stops what he is doing and yells "if you keep walking away, I will only chase you down"
2. Veiled Threat: He stops what he is doing and yells "it would be a shame if something happened to that nice face of yours."
3. Indirect Threat: He stops what he is doing, makes two fists, waves his arms aggressively and says, "you better run".
4. Direct Threat: He stops what he is doing, brandishes a knife and starts running toward you.

When it comes to threats, 1 and 2 are the winners. Have POM pepper spray in your hand, move quickly and efficiently to your car or back into the mall (whichever is closer) and get to safety. Call 911.

Make note that in 3 he makes fists and moves his arms aggressively. What happened to that injured arm in the sling?

When it comes to 4, if you don't have a plan already in place, you may end up a victim. Is there a way to avoid 1, 2, 3 and 4? Maybe.

Try this:

* Walk through the mall doors looking near to far, walk with confidence and with purpose. Your pepper spray is in your pocket.

* You see the guy putting packages in his car and you notice the sling. He is attractive, healthy-looking and seems like no threat, but you still avoid him by walking on the other side of the lane.

* He stops what he is doing and asks for help. You pre-deploy your POM pepper spray, make eye contact, continue past him and say that you are unable to help. You do not stop or even slow down.

* When he asks again, you ignore and quickly keep moving while keeping an eye on him.

I can't say for sure that he won't follow you but the steps above certainly do not make you look like a vulnerable target.



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SAGA's 40 Year Insignia Still in Stock

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PVC Patch with Velcro Backing



PVC patches are the modern equivalent to embroidered patches. Made of durable plastic they are flexible, lightweight, and weatherproof. The new SAGA PVC patch measures 6x4.2cm (length x width), and will attach to anything with Velcro like jackets, caps, backpacks and shooting bags.

Price: R90

Double Lock Folding Knife

This folder by Coast has an extremely comfortable nylon-handled grip, a 9.2cm long stainless steel blade with an ambidextrous opener, a lanyard hole and a 3-position clip. The Double Lock is a patented safety switch mechanism that works in conjunction with a primary liner lock to prevent disengagement.



Lazer engraved with the simplified SAGA 40 Year logo, this strong folding knife is robust and will give years of good service.

Price: R380

Softshell Jacket

This quality softshell jacket is a Barron brand and is available in black with the simplified SAGA 40 Year logo embroidered on the front left chest.

The jacket has elasticated binding on the sleeve opening, front shaped panels with welt pockets, bar-tacks at pockets for added durability, inverted nylon full zip opening and an inner storm flap.

Comfortable and easy-to-wear, these jackets not only look good, but will wash well too. Available in sizes from small to 5XL.

These jackets need to be ordered - contact the office for more information.





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SAGA fights for the rights of legal gun owners to own and use firearms for self-defence, sport, collecting and hunting.

Challenges to the firearm legislation remain a serious concern!

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Adult R310 **Pensioner/Junior** R180
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By being a member you keep us in 'business' and we are able to continue working for fair and just firearm rights for responsible firearm owners in South Africa.

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