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VISUALOCK

By R. Ted Jeo

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No, it is not some sort of “military-ese” word that deals with target identification. Rather it is a different way of making sure your firearms are nearly 100% safe from prying little fingers and big drunken bumbling “friends” that want to play James Bond.

Two words come to mind in describing this innovative way of firearm security... evolutionary improvement. Think of the Visualock as being the next best thing in firearm locks. If you need to make sure that a firearm is secure, whether it be by law or by home necessity, the Visualock system allows you to not only VERIFY from a distance the weapon is secure, but also store the weapon without bulky trigger locks or damaging cable locks.



Figure 1

The Visualock kit

The Visualock system incorporates a specially machined security cartridge (i.e., “dummy” round) that fits into the chamber of the weapon. Because of this, there are particular locks for unique calibers. That may be its one downfall really. But I think the benefits outweigh this. The lock consists of a length adaptable rod that is inserted into the barrel of the weapon which connects to the dummy round. The end of the rod (marked in bright red) that sticks out of the barrel is spring loaded to keep the lock in place.

The “hardest” thing I found about the lock was configuring the length of rod to use in a particular pistol. I was trying out the 9mm Model-P which adjusts for barrels 2 to 12 inches long. It is adaptable by adding or removing different lengths of sections of rods, all of which come in the kit. Being you set up a lock for a particular firearm (in a sense customized), you shouldn’t have to fiddle with changing rod length again. To start out, your best bet is to actually measure the barrel length of the weapon with a ruler and then use the table on the instructions to construct the correct combination of extension rods. By the way, there are two diameters of rods in use with the Visualock system. They are caliber dependent, the models marked with a “-P” are 0.1875” and “-V” models are 0.1250” in diameter. The -P models would be used for 9mm and larger and -V models would be used for 380 Auto and smaller calibers.



Figure 2

The Visuallock kit comes with key, lock, security cartridge, unions and various lengths of rods.

My test weapon was a Browning High Power (BHP) in 9mm. I had trigger locks on this pistol in the past, and the one thing I really hated with trigger locks is the sheer bulk of them. With the locks in place, the pistol no longer fit nicely into a case. Also, the trigger lock would keep the trigger from being pulled, but it would not stop someone from cycling the action and, indeed, taking this pistol apart. I would not even consider a cable lock for this pistol.

To start out make sure the weapon is UNLOADED! MAKE SURE you are pointing it in a safe direction and MAKE SURE you keep your finger away from the trigger. If possible, activate the SAFETY of the weapon as well. All of this because, like all locks, this lock is designed to ASSIST you in safety efforts and is NOT a substitute for safe firearm handling and storage.



Figure 3

The security cartridge has an O-ring to make it fit snug and stop from rotating. Note the slot where the front of the rod fits like a key.

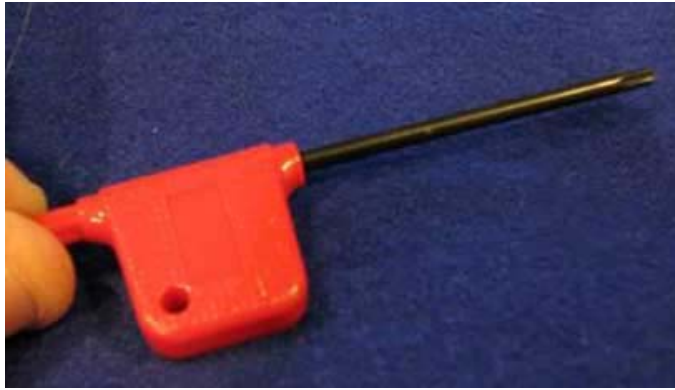


Figure 4

The "key" is similar to a hex or star head wrench.

In my case with the BHP, I took the weapon apart to get a truly accurate barrel measurement. Turns out it was 4.5". Looking at the chart in the instructions, 4.5" uses either one of two combinations of extension rods. Looking at one of the rods, you will notice that both ends are threaded in a unique half round way. You will also notice that there is a taper at one end of the rod. The thing to remember is that the taper points toward the chamber.



Figure 5

Close up of the thread design employed by the rods.
Each section has $\frac{1}{2}$ of the thread cut out and mate together to create a flush threaded section.



Figure 6

When first setting up the extension rods, note that the tapered end points toward the chamber.

The red end, or lock end, contains a permanently attached rod piece. So starting out with this base piece, take your first required extension rod, couple the NON-tapered ends together and lock them by rolling the coupler (or union) over the threads until they are not exposed. Do this with each extension rod to get the required length. The extension rods end in the brass lug that locks into the security cartridge.



Figure 7

To attach rods, simply line up the flats and thread on the union. Finger tight is enough. No threads should be showing once the union is in place.



Figure 8

The final section of the rods will have the brass locking

mechanism on it.

To test to see if you have the correct combination of extension rods, insert the security cartridge into the chamber of the weapon making sure that the breach closes as normal (in a semi auto). Insert the rods into the barrel. Insert the "key" into the red lock and push in and turn clockwise. You will feel the rod go in about another ¼" or so, that is when you know the locking lugs are engaging the security cartridge. Remove the key. MAKE sure that there is NO slack between the red lock and the muzzle. If there is, you will need to use a shorter combination of rods. Of course, if the rods do not REACH the security cartridge, you will need to lengthen the rod combination. After you have the lock installed, verify the fit of the device by pulling on the red lock. Pull it out at least 3 times, you should not be able to remove it from the barrel. The extension rods may look thin and can be bent fairly easily, but their strength lies in the fact that they cannot bend when installed in the barrel. They have been tested to hold over 400 pounds of pull.

[View the demonstration VIDEO](#) (Windows Media Video 1.44 meg)



Figure 9

A close up of the end of the rods and the security cartridge.



Figure 10

The rod end has been inserted into the security cartridge and then rotated to lock into place.



Figure 11

After making sure the firearm is unloaded, insert the security cartridge into the weapon as if it were a bullet and then close the action, making sure it closes all the way.

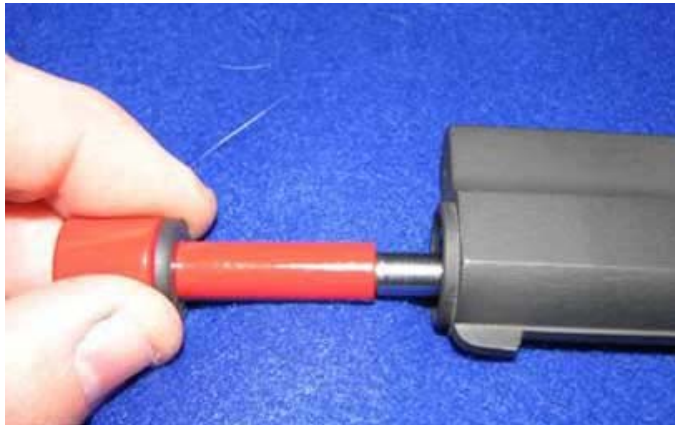


Figure 12

Next, insert the extension rods down the barrel.



Figure 13

Insert the key, push downward, and rotate it clockwise until you feel the lugs on the end of the rods lock into place. Remove the key and test the fit of the lock.

With the Visualock installed, the weapon is quite secure. Unlike trigger locks, one cannot pull the slide off of the frame and you cannot chamber a round. You can cock the hammer manually (in the case of the BHP) and you can actually pull the trigger and release the hammer. The brass security cartridge is made of 360 brass and can actually double as a snap cap. You could practice dry firing if you desired with the Visualock in place. In the case of the BHP, without the magazine, the trigger would not work either (magazine safety). Now, the nice thing is that there is a big red end on your pistol that you can identify from a distance that the lock is in place. The weapon itself is nearly as streamlined as normal and would fit in pistol cases and in some instances holsters with the Visualock installed.



Figure 14

The end of the Visualock is, well, highly visual red warning. It tells you from a distance the weapon is unloaded.



Figure 15

The Visualock allows you to keep clean the lines of the weapon, making it easier to store.

To remove the lock, first remove the magazine (if installed) and then simply insert the key into the lock, push down and rotate counter clockwise (anti clockwise if you want to call it that....) and the lock can be removed from the barrel. A matter of seconds. Nearly as fast, I do think, as a standard trigger lock. Cycle the action of the weapon and the security cartridge will be ejected much the same as a spent shell. Viola, you are back in the shooting business. The neat thing is that you won't have to try to figure out what key goes to which lock anymore. One key fits all in this case.

The Visualock system is available in over 130 different caliber/barrel combinations. The locks are made for pistols, revolvers, rifles and shotguns ranging from the .17 HMR to 10-gauge shotgun. Custom made calibers are available as well. The lock is available at various sporting good stores or from the company web site. The suggested retail cost is \$30 (pistol) to \$34 (shotgun).

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