

## 7 Signs A Weapon Is Being Concealed

1. Security Check
2. Unnatural Gait
3. Jacket Sag
4. Hunchback Stride
5. Bulges and Outline
6. Visible Weapon
7. Palming

**Learn to Recognize These Behaviors ..... written by Michael Dorn of [SaveHavensInternational.org](http://SaveHavensInternational.org)**

Officers and other campus personnel, such as school counselors and faculty members, have learned to identify the specific indicators that a person may be armed. Below are a few of the most common. It should be noted, however, that the following signs do not always indicate the presence of a weapon:

**1. Security Check:** Gun violators in particular will typically touch and/or adjust the weapons concealed on their bodies numerous times during the day. This may be a gentle and difficult to observe bump with the elbow, wrist or hand. On rare occasions, it could be a distinct grasping of the weapon as they adjust it. Violators often make this gesture when getting out of a chair or a car or when walking up a flight of stairs or high curb.

**2. Unnatural Gait:** Gun violators may walk with an awkward gait. They may fail to bend their knees because they have rifles or shotguns in their pants. They may also walk uncomfortably because they have guns, knives or other weapons hidden in their boots or shoes causing discomfort. Again, the total circumstances will indicate the likelihood of a weapon being present.

For example, an individual with a disability may also not bend the leg or walk with an unnatural gait, but he or she will likely not appear to be nervous. You will also not see the rigid line of a rifle running down the outer pants leg as the person walks or the periodic bulge from the butt of the gun above the waistband as it moves back and forth.

**3. Jacket Sag:** When you place a handgun in a jacket pocket, the coat typically hangs lower on the side where the weapon is located. In addition, you will often see the fabric pulled tight from the weight of the gun, and the weapon may swing as a violator walks. Often, the outline of the weapon may be observed in the pocket area. In some cases, the violator will attempt to hold or pin the weapon if it begins to swing or beat against their body.

In cases where the violator becomes extremely nervous when approached by an officer, he or she may actually grasp the weapon to keep it from swinging or put a hand in the pocket. While this is often seen when people have items other than a weapon in their pocket, it is also an indicator that is very typical of the gun violator, particularly when observed with other behaviors described here.

**4. Hunchback Stride:** When trying to conceal a shotgun, rifle or submachine gun under a coat while walking, the butt of the weapon will often cause a noticeable bulge behind the armpit. Additionally, the jacket does not move naturally because it is supported by the outline of the weapon. Also, when someone wears a shoulder holster or straps on a sawed-off rifle, shotgun or submachine gun under his or her arm, a bulge in front of or behind the armpit will often be visible.

**5. Bulges and the Outline of a Weapon:** An alert officer can often spot the telltale bulge of the weapon or, in some instances, the distinct outline of a handgun, knife or brass knuckles in a violator's pocket. This may also sometimes be observed in a woman's purse, book bag or other hand carried item. In some instances, violators wrap a long gun in a blanket or long jacket.

**6. Visible Weapon:** Clearly the most reliable of all the indicators is when the weapon can actually be seen. It is astounding how many times an armed intruder has entered a facility with a rifle or shotgun protruding from under his or her jacket without being observed by staff. In some cases, the butt of a handgun is visible because it is sticking out from a back or front pocket. A more common instance is the clip-on pocketknife that can be observed clipped to a front pocket or in the waistband.

**7. Palming:** Most often observed with the edged weapon violator but occasionally seen with gun violators, palming behaviors often indicate imminent risk to the observer. The knife violator may run the blade of the weapon up along the arm or behind the leg to conceal it from frontal view. Just before a target is attacked, a violator will also typically have his or her eyes fixed on the intended victim.