

## WEAPON GUIDE

# RUGER SP101

SMALL ARMS REVIEW TEAM

### COMPACT REVOLVER (.357 MAGNUM)



Five-shot .357 Magnum chambered SP101 with 3" barrel (Model 5719).

The Ruger SP101 (c. 1989) is the strongest small frame revolver, making it well suited to use with the powerful .357 Magnum round.

Originally designed for the .38 Special round, it was soon realized that it was more than strong enough to handle the full power .357 Magnum round due to its beefy dimensions, so the frame and cylinder were lengthened slightly to accommodate the more powerful round.

Although available with a 2.25" barrel this is too short as a lot of gunpowder is wasted, reducing the performance of the .357 Magnum round to 9x19mm performance levels but with far more muzzle blast/flash. The longer 3" barrel is essential for this round.

The Remington HTP 125gr. SJHP .357 Magnum load (583 ft-lbs/1,450 fps) has the best one-shot stop record of any handgun round in police

service (most such shootings involved the use of police service revolvers).

A lighter recoiling .327 Federal Magnum version (6-shot) is available but the .357 Mag round is far more proven, has a far greater range of defensive loads available for it, and can be loaded with the lower power .38 Special rounds.

The problem with the .327 Fed Mag is that it is a high pressure round (45,000 psi vs. 35,000 psi for the .357 Mag and 9x19mm rounds), so full power loads can cause extraction issues while these full power loads performs no better than the best 9x19mm loads in a short 2.25" or 3" barrel but have markedly sharper recoil and much more muzzle blast/flash.

If you want a pocket gun the lighter internal hammer Ruger LCR and S&W Centennial revolvers are best, but if you want the best

stopping power in the smallest practical package the 3" barrel version of the .357 Mag chambered SP101 is best.

The best 9x19mm and .327 Fed Mag loads have a 90% chance of a one-shot stop (upper torso hit), but the best .357 Mag load have a 95% chance. That is a big difference and helps explain why many people still prefer .357 Mag revolvers for defensive use despite their recoil and muzzle blast/flash.

If you prefer the shorter 2.25" barrel version of this revolver the 9x19mm variant is best as the .357 Mag loads lose so much velocity and energy in this short barrel they do not perform any better than the best 9mm loads but have far more muzzle blast/flash. It should be used with full moon clips, with loaded clips stored in FMC or PMC full moon clip carriers (Del Fatti Leather) or plastic 35mm film canisters.

### SUMMARY

The ideal small frame revolver for the .357 Magnum round with the 3" barrel and the best defensive handgun for concealed carry in a belt holster.

### ACCESSORIES

#### Log Book

Firearm Usage & Maintenance Log Book. [Blackheart International]

#### Cleaning Kit

BoreSnake Soft Sided Cleaning Kit (34002). [Hoppe's]

#### Speedloader

HKS Speedloader Model 36-A. [HKS]

#### Dry Fire Rounds

A-Zoom Snap Caps. [Lyman Products Corporation]

#### Ear Plugs

EarPro EP3 or EP4. [SureFire]

#### Wood Grips

Secret Service Grips. [Eagle Grips]

#### Belt Holster

BHYCS-TB Inside the Waist Scabbard with Thumb Break. [Black Hills Leather Store]

#### Waistpack Holster

Stealth Pac. [Coronado Leather]

#### Tactical Flashlight

E1B Backup MaxVision. [SureFire]

### HOT TIP

Have a gunsmith give it an action job and fit an Apex or Wolff spring kit for a lighter and smoother trigger pull.