



If Your State Doesn't Have the Castle Doctrine, You'd Better Have a Retreat Plan

The state of New Mexico does not have the Castle Doctrine. That means that you can defend your property from invasion, but you must first retreat. Until we bring back drawbridges or pass the Castle Doctrine, we need a plan (review "What Stuff Should You Include in a Family Action Plan?"). You can legally keep and use firearms to defend yourself and your family in the case of imminent bodily harm. You must retreat to get away from the threat.

In my article about a family action plan I talked about a safe room and practice for the whole family. That still applies. Retreating with your family meets the retreat clause.

If someone tries to gain entry into your safe room:

-  Announce that you have a gun
-  You will defend yourself
-  You have called 911

You have satisfied the law and can use reasonable force to eliminate the threat. That doesn't always mean you can shoot first. The determination of applicable force means that you must have been in **imminent danger of great bodily harm or death**.

That means a lot of different things to a lot of people. To a small woman shielding her two kids from a lone attacker, any weapon is justified. To a trained ex-military or police officer, the case is entirely different.

These are not things that you think about as they happen. You are initially shocked and think "I can't believe this is happening to me." If you have to ponder, you will hesitate. If you hesitate, you will die.

You must have an action plan. You must think about many options and scenarios. You must know what actions require a response from you. You must be ready to act decisively, quickly, and accurately.

Remember: If you have a plan, you have a chance. Hope is not a plan!

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