Pistol Grip Conversion Overview

Saiga 223, 5.45x39, 7.62x39 & .308 Rifles and 20ga, 12ga & .410 Shotguns

The purpose of this overview is to give you a general idea of the work required so you can decide if you want to tackle the job yourself. This is by no means the only way or best way, it's just an example. We assume you have basic AK fieldstripping knowledge and mechanical ability. We are not responsible for anything you do to your weapon.

Why Convert?

The Saiga pistol grip conversion accomplishes several things and is truly the best thing you can do for your rifle. Improved trigger pull & feel, rifle balance and most importantly you can legally install a pistol grip, thread the barrel and use high capacity magazines. (depending on your local laws)

Factory config Saiga 7.62x39

Pistol grip converted Saiga 7.62x39

The pistol grip conversion can be performed with average mechanical ability and some basic hand tools. You know your own abilities so make sure you read this overview and familiarize yourself with the process.

If you are not 100% confident in your ability to do this, take to a professional gunsmith. When fully assembled, you need to verify function of the safety and fire control group and understand how to do that.

About Section 922(r) of Title 18, U.S.C.

Saigas are imported in a sporterized configuration. No pistol grip or high capacity magazines allowed. Magazine capacity as imported is 10 rounds max for rifles and 5 rounds max for shotguns.

To legally install a pistol grip and use high capacity magazines, the weapon needs to be converted into a US made firearm.

Section 922(r), of Title 18, U.S.C. prohibits assembly of certain semiautomatic rifles from imported parts. The implementing regulations in Title 27, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 178.39(a), provide that no person shall assemble a semiautomatic rifle or any shotgun using more than 10 of the imported parts listed in paragraph (c) of this section if the assembled firearm is prohibited from importation under section 925(d) (3) as not being particularly suitable for or readily adaptable to sporting purposes.

For further information about 922(r), go to the ATF website http://www.atf.gov or http://uscode.house.gov and search for 18 U.S.C. § 922(r) and 27 CFR § 478.39 of the Gun Control Act (GCA) of 1968.

See our 922r page: http://www.dinzagarms.com/922r/922r.html for the complete list of countable parts, some examples to compare to, and links to the definition letters and applicable legislation.

Rifle Parts Count

The rifles have 14 countable parts per 922r out of the box from the factory. When you add a pistol grip you will need 5 US made parts put on the rifle to keep it legal. See our 922r page for the complete list of countable parts and some examples to compare to.

Swapping in 5 US made parts converts the rifle to a US made firearm and you are then free add a pistol grip and use high capacity magazines. The easiest parts to swap, since they need to be replaced/installed anyway, are the Fire Control Group (+3), Pistol Grip (+1) and Buttstock (+1).

If you add a muzzle device, you will need 6 US made parts. A piston and handguard are easy parts to replace. I prefer to make the weapon compliant itself so you do not have to worry about putting a foreign magazine in it.

Shotgun Parts Count

On the shotguns, a new definition letter was issued in 2011 stating the factory config Saiga-12 shotgun with threaded muzzle has 16 countable parts per 922r, adding the carrier extension, front trunnion and muzzle device if equipped with something other than a thread protector. The general consensus is this letter replaces the previous letter and also applies to the 20 gauge and .410 models as well.

Doing the conversion and adding a pistol grip will require swapping in 7 US made parts to keep it legal per 922r. Fire Control Group (+3), Pistol Grip (+1), Buttstock (+1), Gas Piston (+1) and handguard (+1) would easily get you the parts needed. This would allow you to use a foreign muzzle device and foreign magazines.

Conversion Parts Overview

Conversion Kits

To aid in doing the conversion, we sell conversion kits geared specifically for each model of Saiga that package all the parts and hardware you need. They're are available as a basic kit and as a deluxe kit with contents varying slightly due to the differences in the weapons. The only items needed after the conversion kit are a stamped receiver AK buttstock and an AK pistol grip.

CONVKIT1D – Deluxe Conversion Kit Pictured, geometry may vary

Basic Conversion Kit

This kit assumes you are reshaping your factory triggerguard and using hitch pin clips or e-clips to hold in the FCG pins. It includes: tapco fcg, disconnector spring, pistol grip nut, pistol grip screw, hitch pin clips, triggerguard hardware and nylon hole plugs. No triggerguard or FCG retaining plate included.

Deluxe Conversion Kit

The deluxe version is the same as the basic except it adds a FCG retaining plate and a premade bolt-on triggerguard. Both are real time savers compared to hitch pin clips for the FCG pins and reshaping the factory triggerguard. In the 308, 410, 20ga & 12ga deluxe kits, the triggerguard has an integral pistol grip nut eliminating the need to cut a pistol grip nut hole in the receiver.

Fire Control Groups

We use a Tapco G2 as a base FCG and modify them for each specific application. We profile and polish the hammer and trigger contact points to smooth cycling and improve overall trigger feel. We also turn the bolt-hold-open lever clearance, machine the receiver cross rivet clearance, weld up a pad for the safety lever and many other things. The disconnector should never be touched.

Furniture

The Saigas are basically a high end AK and require stamped receiver AK buttstocks and pistol grips. These are the only items needed that are not included in the kits.

Conversion Work Overview

Getting Started
It's a good idea to fire the weapon and ensure it's properly functioning prior to doing the conversion. If after the conversion it's malfunctioning, you can quickly trace down the issue.

Disassembly
Field strip your weapon, removing the magazine, dust cover, recoil spring & bolt carrier. Save all parts, some are getting reused and some are discarded.

Rear FCG Pins
Drill the 2 rear FCG pin/rivet heads on the right hand side of the receiver with the 3/16" drill bit (in the conversion kit) and punch them out the LH side of the receiver. These are located immediately above the trigger, about ¾" apart. Care must be taken to not drill into the receiver.
Note: the Saiga 308 does not have the 2 rear FCG pins and this step is skipped.

Stripped receiver

Front FCG Pins
Remove the 2 front FCG retaining pins by clipping or prying the retaining wire out of the grooves in the pins and push the pins out the LH side of the receiver. The retaining wire runs along the bottom left side inside the receiver.

The front FCG pins hold the trigger block/disconnector, hammer & spring and bolt-hold-open lever and spring. These pins, hammer spring, BHO lever & BHO spring will be reused.

Remove all FCG parts, BHO lever & spring, safety lever and buttstock (1 screw on the bottom and 2 on top). To remove the safety lever, rotate it up straight vertical and pull out the RH side of the receiver.

Receiver Plate/Triggerguard Removal

There are 3 rivets holding on the receiver plate/triggerguard. The Saiga 308 has 2 rivets and a couple small spot-welds.

Receiver with bottom plate/triggerguard removed

If you go with the basic conversion kits, you will be reshaping the factory triggerguard. You will need to drill through the center rivet under the triggerguard from the inside of the receiver since it is blocked by the triggerguard on the outside. Reference any conventional AK for how to reshape it and drill through the ends with the 3/16" drill to install through the existing rivet holes with the included hardware. Some prefer to weld the triggerguard on.

If you go with the deluxe conversion kit, you can cut the triggerguard away from the plate to easily access the center rivet.

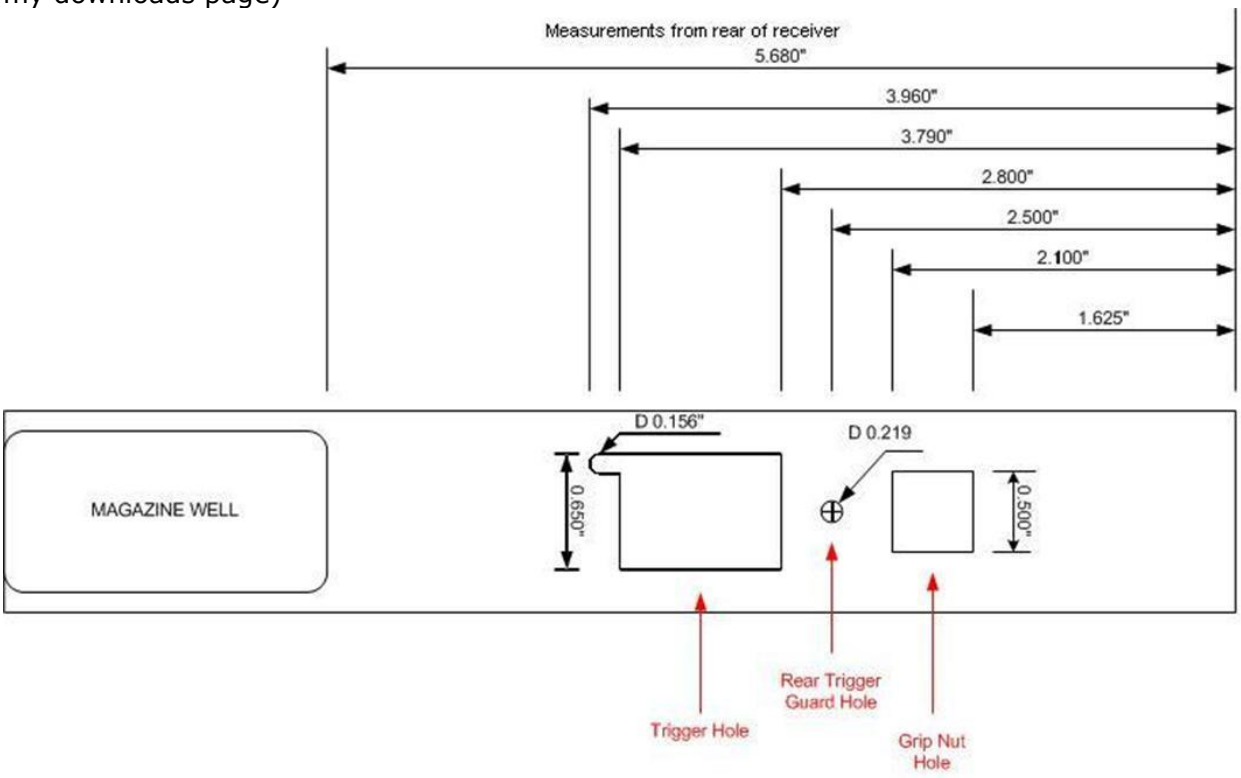
Grind the rivet heads down flush with the plate & pry the plate off. Grind the remaining rivet bodies down flush with the receiver and pop them through with a center/pin punch.

Rear FCG Holes *– does not apply to the 308 rifle*

Carefully ream the 4 existing rear FCG holes, 2 on each side of the receiver, with the 3/16" drill bit and pop in the black nylon hole plugs. Depending how you do the triggerguard, you may want to install a hole plug in front of the trigger as well.

Pistol Grip Nut Hole

If you are using the basic conversion kit and reshaping your factory triggerguard, you will need to cut the pistol grip nut hole in the receiver. This applies to the 308 rifle and the 410, 20ga & 12ga shotguns. See the diagram below for the pistol grip nut hole location. (also on my downloads page)



CAUTION! NOT DRAWN TO SCALE!

Note that the hole is not square as the grip nut is at an angle. It helps to drill a small hole in each corner, then connect the dots with a dremel cutting disc.

Verify that the triggerguard fits as it should. Pay close attention to the mounting holes. The 308 requires you to drill an additional hole if you are installing the commercial bolt-on triggerguard.

Fit the buttstock to the receiver and pistol grip fits nice. When inserting the buttstock, make sure it clears the hole plugs you installed, you may need to relieve them where the rear plugs interfere.

Finishing it up

Now that your Saiga is completely stripped, the last step is to prep & paint the bare metal on the bottom of the receiver. There are infinite ways to do this.

For a quick touchup job, Duplicolor Ceramic Engine Enamel Low Gloss Black in the rattle can is a perfect match and dries quickly. Available at most automotive stores.

If you are all set up to sandblast and apply a nice firearm finish like Duracoat, Gunkote, Moly Resin or Ceramakote, now is the time. You will want to refinish the entire barreled receiver and dust cover to ensure a good match.

Triggerguard Assembly

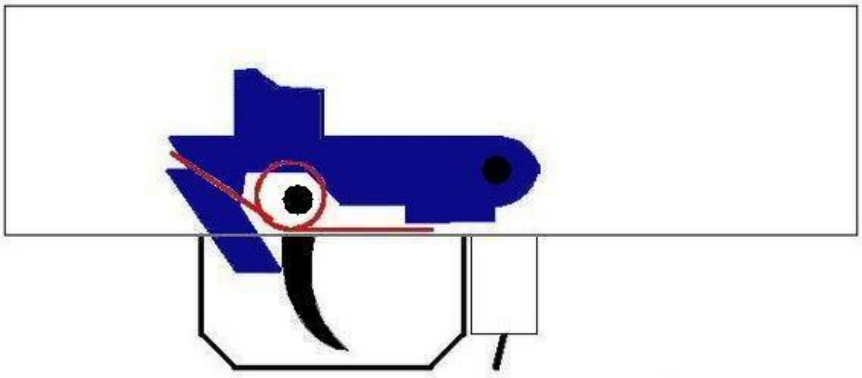
After the weapon has dried and is safe to handle, assemble the triggerguard and pistol grip nut with included hardware. Some of the premade triggerguards have an integral grip nut.

Painted receiver with fcg, triggerguard and pistol grip nut installed

Install FCG & BHO lever

Move the hammer spring from the factory hammer onto the new US made Hammer and install it. You will need to slip the front end of the BHO lever between the RH side of the hammer and the RH side of the receiver. Push the FCG pin completely through the receiver.

Next drop in the trigger & disconnector assembly. Start the pin in the left side of the receiver and through the assembly but do not push it through completely.



BHO lever & spring orientation

The BHO spring installs between the RH side of the BHO lever and the RH side of the receiver. Loop some monofilament through the BHO spring loop then down through the BHO lever hole behind the trigger. You may find it useful to push the spring down from the top with a small screw driver while you pull the monofilament down & forward. While holding the line down, slip the trigger pin through the center of the BHO lever spring and into the RH side of the receiver.

Install the hitch pin clips, e-clips, fcg retaining wire – or if you bought the deluxe kit – FCG retaining plate – onto the 2 FCG pins.

Clean & Reassemble

Insert the safety lever and verify the FCG and safety functions correctly. Clean the barrel and add a few drops of CLP or light machine oil to the FCG parts. Reinstall the bolt carrier, recoil spring and dust cover. Done!