



## Mountain Woodworker

### Hidden Compartment Furniture Hide-a-frame Picture Frames

In our day-to-day world home and work security is becoming a serious issue, Many customers are asking that I incorporate hidden compartments into their projects in order to keep valuable safe or to have a weapon readily available.

Picture frames that have these hidden compartments are called “hide-a-frame” picture frames. A custom made frame is a far better purchase than one that is already made and is commercially available. Buying an already made frame is usually the biggest mistakes that most people make.

#### Types of hide-a-frames

There are basically two types of frames:

1. Those that go over a hole or safe that is in the wall. These frames lay flat against a wall and only protrude out far enough to hold the picture that is in them.
2. Those that actually have a hidden compartment built into them. These frames protrude out from the wall because they have a concealed area built into them.

#### Which frame is best?

To answer this question you need to determined what you want to conceal and why. For example, do you want to conceal a large quantity of cash, jewelry or documents? If, so, how often are you going to access it? If you want to access the item daily or weekly, you might think about a built-in safe.

On the other hand if you want to conceal a single item that can be easily gotten to with a minimum of effort in case of an emergency, you might want to consider a readily accessible hidden compartment that is built into furniture.

You need to ask yourself what it is you want to hide and make safe, how large is the item(s), and how accessible does it need to be?

#### I've determined I want a hide-a-frame with a built in compartment

People often make two major mistakes when buying their hide-a-frames. The first mistake is to order only one frame and mount it on their wall. Most commercially made hide-a-frames are made for 8x10 or 11x14 pictures. If you buy only one and put it on a wall that has no other pictures on it, the frame will stick out like a sore thumb.



**A single small frame on a wall sticks out like a sore thumb.**

Your hide-a-frame should blend in with the rest of the room décor. Failure to have the frame blend in with the room décor is the second mistake. For example, let's assume that you have contemporary furniture in your living room. You should have a hide-a-frame that is also contemporary in design and looks.



**A montage of similar looking frames helps to hide the frame with the hidden compartment**

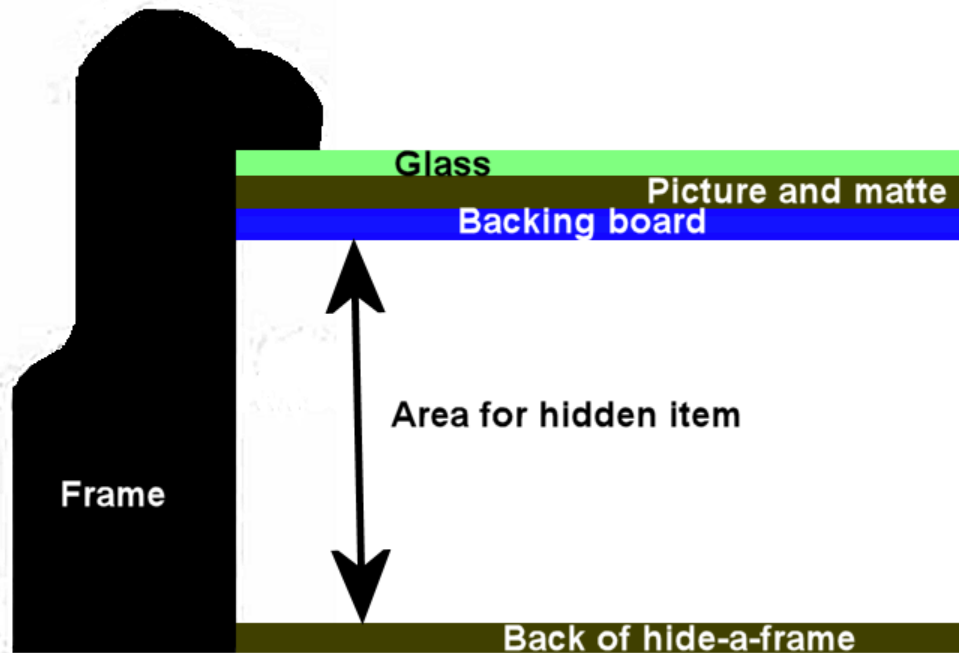
Large frames are not a problem, especially if the object you want to hide is large.



Over the years I have had clients order picture frames and hide-a-frames from me. I use two different approaches to make their frames. The first is to use commercially available frame material, and the second is to build the frame from scratch. The advantage of commercially made frame material is that the client may already have frames of the same material, thus continuity is maintained. With custom-made frames, the client is able to order several frames with the same look, also achieving continuity.

For the hide-a-frame process to work efficiently, the thickness of the item that is to be hidden must be known. Also the thickness of the picture that will be mounted in the frame must also be known.

For example, let's assume that you want to hide an item that is two inches thick and that you will be mounting a photograph in the frame. When determining the depth of the frame you need, the thickness of the glass, picture and matter, backing board, and the thickness of the back of the hide-a-frame all need to be taken into consideration.



Frame depth is the inside portion of the frame where the picture goes.

In this example, the frame depth needs to be at least 2-3/4."

### Frame styles

There are many different frame styles that you can choose from. Whatever style you choose:

- it should match your décor
- generally matches other frames on the wall where you will be hanging your hide-a-frame
- has the same general color as the other frames

Since your hide-a-frame will be attached directly to the wall, it will look odd if all but your hide-a-frame slant far out from the wall. Readjust the hanging wires on the other frames so that they fit more snugly to the wall.

### The final considerations

Placement of your hide-a-frame is very important. Keep in mind that usually the primary purpose of having a hide-a-frame is to be able to quickly access whatever you have in your frame in case of an emergency. With this in mind, consider which room you spend most of your time in. Here is where you will probably want to hand your hide-a-frame.

Once you have determined which room and wall you want to hang your hide-a-frame on you need to determine how you want it to open. Do you want the frame to open sideways (left or right), flip up, or flip down (not recommended)?

This is another major mistake that people make. The frame needs to open in a direction that is convenient to the user. I've seen people order a right side opening frame and they are left-handed -- makes it awkward in getting to their hidden item.

### **Ordering your hide-a-frame**

Please contact us at the information below to order your hide-a-frame product or to discuss your framing or hidden compartment furniture needs.

### **A final note**

The above information is intended solely to help educate our clients. It is not a set of instructions and the information is general in nature. How our hide-a-frame products are used is solely up to the purchaser. Phil Rasmussen, Mountain Woodworkers or any of our representative may be held liable for any resulting injuries, whether physically, financially, economically, or health wise, for the use our hide-a-frames. The purchaser is encouraged to consult an attorney on the legal use and liabilities of hide-a-frame type products. The laws, regulations and restrictions may vary from state-to-state.

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