



North Carolina

Summary of State Firearms Law

Last updated December 29, 2011

Overview

In its publication [*Gun Laws Matter: A Comparison of State Firearms Laws and Statistics*](#), LCAV ranked each state based on a review of state laws in 25 different firearms-related policy areas. North Carolina ranked 23 out of 50 – having enacted few gun violence prevention laws.

Among other things, North Carolina requires all [handgun purchasers to first obtain a license](#), after undergoing a background check. However, North Carolina does not:

- Require a person to undergo a [background check prior to purchasing](#) a long gun from an unlicensed seller;
- Prohibit the transfer or possession of [assault weapons](#), [50 caliber rifles](#), or [large capacity ammunition magazines](#);
- License or significantly regulate [firearms dealers](#);
- Limit the [number of firearms](#) that may be purchased at one time;
- Require firearm owners to [report lost or stolen firearms](#);
- Regulate [unsafe handguns](#);
- Regulate [ammunition sales](#);
- Allow [local governments to regulate](#) firearms or ammunition; or
- Provide local law enforcement with discretion to deny a [license to carry firearms](#).

North Carolina Statistics

Gun Deaths in North Carolina

North Carolina ranks 31st among the states in number of gun deaths per capita. In 2007, 1,116 people died from firearm-related injuries in North Carolina.¹

Crime Guns in North Carolina

Mayors Against Illegal Guns recently developed web pages detailing [data about each state's crime gun imports and exports](#). In every year from 2006 through 2009, North Carolina was one of the top ten interstate suppliers of crime guns.² North Carolina is the top interstate supplier of crime guns to Virginia and South Carolina.³

Number of Federally Licensed Firearms Dealers in North Carolina

There are 761 federally licensed firearms dealers and pawnbrokers in North Carolina.⁴

¹ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *WISQARS Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2007*, at http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_sy.html.

² Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *Trace the Guns: The Link Between Gun Laws and Interstate Gun Trafficking* 5 (September 2010), at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/report.pdf>.

³ Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *Trace the Guns*, at <http://www.tracetheguns.org>.

⁴ U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *List of Federal Firearms Licensees* (Mar. 2011), at <http://www.atf.gov/about/foia/ffl-list.html>.

North Carolina “Right to Bear Arms”

The North Carolina Constitution provides for the keeping and bearing of arms, but permits firearm-related regulation for public health and safety purposes. See [LCAV’s State Right to Bear Arms Provisions](#) for more-detailed information.

Local Authority to Regulate Firearms in North Carolina

North Carolina has preempted most areas of local firearms regulation. See [State Preemption/Local Authority to Regulate Firearms summary](#) for further information.

State Firearms Policies in North Carolina

To view the sections of the North Carolina Statutes provided in the summary below, search for the citation using the [North Carolina Code](#).

Please note that many firearm-related laws have exceptions for military and law enforcement personnel.

Persons Prohibited from Firearm Possession

North Carolina Prohibited Purchasers Generally

[Federal law prohibits certain persons from purchasing or possessing firearms](#), such as felons, certain domestic abusers, and certain people with a history of mental illness.

North Carolina law provides that, subject to certain limited exceptions, no person may possess a firearm if he or she has been acquitted by reason of insanity for, or determined to lack capacity in a proceeding for:

- Any felony in North Carolina;
- Any violation, punishable by more than one year imprisonment, committed in another state or federal court; or
- Assault by pointing a gun as defined by state law.⁵

No person may own, possess, purchase, receive, or attempt to possess, purchase or receive, a firearm, machine gun, ammunition, or permits to purchase a handgun or carry a concealed handgun if prohibited from doing so by a court as part of a domestic violence protective order in effect against that person.⁶

No person who has been convicted of a felony in North Carolina, or a violation punishable by more than one year imprisonment committed in another state or federal court, may purchase, own, possess, or have in his or her custody, care, or control any firearm.⁷

North Carolina law provides that in any case where a juvenile is placed on probation, the court may prohibit the juvenile from possessing a firearm.⁸ North Carolina law provides that a court imposing regular conditions of probation must prohibit the defendant from possessing a firearm without the written permission of the court.⁹ North Carolina law makes it a “controlling condition” for the release of a person from prison before the termination of his or her maximum

⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.3; *see also* N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-34.

⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.8.

⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.1.

⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 7B-2510.

⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15A-1343(b)(5).

prison term that the person not possess a firearm unless granted written permission by the Post-Release Supervision and Parole Commission (“Commission”) or a post-release supervision officer.¹⁰ Similarly, a North Carolina statute states that the Commission may require that a parolee refrain from possessing a firearm unless granted written permission by the Commission or the parole officer.¹¹

No person may purchase a handgun without a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed handgun permit.¹² Pursuant to state law, no person may obtain a permit to purchase a handgun if he or she:

- Is under an indictment or information for, or has been convicted of, a felony (except for felonies for antitrust violations, unfair trade practices, or restraints of trade), unless the person has been pardoned or had their rights restored under state law;
- Is a fugitive from justice;
- Is an unlawful user of or addicted to marijuana or any depressant, stimulant, or narcotic drug;
- Has been adjudicated mentally incompetent or been committed to a mental institution, unless his or her rights have been restored under state law;¹³
- Is unlawfully in the United States;
- Has been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States under dishonorable conditions;
- Has renounced his or her United States citizenship; or
- Is subject to a court order that:
 - Was issued after a hearing of which the person received actual notice, and at which the person had an opportunity to participate;
 - Restrains the person from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner of the person or child of the intimate partner of the person, or engaging in other conduct that would place an intimate partner in reasonable fear of bodily injury to the partner or child; and
 - Includes a finding that the person represents a credible threat to the physical safety of the intimate partner or child; or by its terms explicitly prohibits the use, attempted

¹⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15A-1368.4.

¹¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15A-1374.

¹² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402.

¹³ See N.C. Gen. Stat. § 122C-54.1.

use, or threatened use of physical force against the intimate partner or child that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury.¹⁴

For information on the background check process used to enforce these provisions, see the [North Carolina Background Checks](#) section.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Prohibited Purchasers](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

¹⁴ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

North Carolina Minimum Age to Purchase / Possess

North Carolina law prohibits any person under the age of 18 from willfully and intentionally possessing or carrying a handgun, unless the minor:

- Possesses the handgun for educational or recreational purposes while supervised by an adult who is present;
- Is emancipated and possesses the handgun inside his or her residence; or
- Possesses the handgun while hunting outside the limits of an incorporated municipality and has written permission from a parent or guardian.¹⁵

There is no minimum age to possess rifles and shotguns in North Carolina.

A parent, guardian, or person standing in for a parent is prohibited from knowingly permitting his or her child under age 12 to possess or use a firearm (whether loaded or unloaded) while not supervised by the parent, guardian or person standing in for the parent.¹⁶ No other person may knowingly furnish a firearm to a child under the age of 12.¹⁷ Additionally, North Carolina prohibits any person from causing, encouraging, or aiding a minor who is less than age 18 to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any firearm on educational property.¹⁸ Moreover, North Carolina imposes a felony on any person who sells, offers for sale, gives or transfers in any way a handgun to a person under age 18.¹⁹

[Federal age restrictions](#) impose stricter limits.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Minimum Age to Purchase / Possess Firearms](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

¹⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.7.

¹⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-316.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.2(c).

¹⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-315.

Domestic Violence and Firearms in North Carolina

See [Regulating Guns in America: Domestic Violence and Firearms](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

North Carolina has no law:

- Prohibiting individuals convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors from purchasing or possessing firearms or ammunition, although [federal law](#) applies; or
- Requiring the removal or surrender of firearms from the scene of a domestic violence incident.

Firearm Prohibitions for Persons Subject to Domestic Violence Protective Orders, and Relinquishment of Firearms When Domestic Violence Protective Orders Are Issued

A North Carolina statute states that it is unlawful for any person to possess, purchase or receive or attempt to possess, purchase or receive a firearm, machine gun, ammunition, or a permit to purchase or carry concealed firearms if ordered by a court in a protective order that is in effect.²⁰

State law provides that upon issuance of an emergency or ex parte domestic violence protective order, the court must order the defendant to surrender to the sheriff all firearms, ammunition, permits to purchase firearms, and permits to carry concealed firearms that are in his or her care, custody, possession, ownership, or control if the court finds any of the following factors:

- The use or threatened use of a deadly weapon by the defendant or a pattern of prior conduct involving the use or threatened use of violence with a firearm against persons;
- Threats to seriously injure or kill the aggrieved party or minor child by the defendant;
- Threats to commit suicide by the defendant; or
- Serious injuries inflicted upon the aggrieved party or minor child by the defendant.²¹

Note that [federal law](#) is broader.

At any ex parte, emergency, and regular hearing for a domestic violence protective order, the court must inquire of the plaintiff the presence of, ownership of, or otherwise access to firearms by the defendant, as well as ammunition, permits to purchase firearms, and permits to carry concealed firearms, and include, whenever possible, identifying information regarding the description, number, and location of firearms, ammunition, and permits in the order.²²

²⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.8; *see also* Chapter 50B of the General Statutes regarding protective orders.

²¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(a).

²² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(b), (c).

Upon service of a domestic violence order that requires such surrender, the defendant must immediately surrender to the sheriff possession of all firearms, ammunition, permits to purchase firearms, and permits to carry concealed firearms that are in the care, custody, possession, ownership, or control of the defendant.²³ In the event that weapons cannot be surrendered at the time the order is served, the defendant must surrender the firearms, ammunitions, and permits to the sheriff within 24 hours of service at a time and place specified by the sheriff.²⁴

If the court orders the defendant to surrender firearms, ammunition, and permits, the court must inform the plaintiff and the defendant of the terms of the protective order and include these terms on the face of the order, including that the defendant is prohibited from possessing or purchasing a firearm for so long as the protective order or any successive protective order is in effect.²⁵ The sheriff may not release firearms, ammunition, or permits without a court order granting the release.²⁶

If the court does not enter a protective order when the ex parte or emergency order expires, the defendant may retrieve any weapons surrendered to the sheriff unless the court finds that the defendant is precluded from owning or possessing a firearm pursuant to state or federal law or final disposition of any pending criminal charges for crimes committed against the person protected by the protective order.²⁷

The defendant may request the return of any firearms, ammunition, or permits surrendered by filing a motion with the court at the expiration of the protective order or final disposition of any pending criminal charges and not later than 90 days thereafter. Upon receipt of the motion, the court must schedule a hearing and provide written notice to the plaintiff and to the sheriff who has control of the firearms, ammunition, or permits.²⁸ The inquiry must include:

- Whether the protective order has been renewed;
- Whether the defendant is subject to any other protective orders;
- Whether the defendant is disqualified from owning or possessing a firearm pursuant to federal or state law;²⁹ and
- Whether the defendant has any pending criminal charges, in either state or federal court for crimes committed against the person who is the subject of the protective order.³⁰

²³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(d). A third-party owner of firearms, ammunition, or permits who is otherwise eligible to possess such items may file a motion requesting the return of any such items seized as a result of the domestic violence protective order. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(g).

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(d)(1).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(e).

²⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(f).

²⁹ *See* 18 U.S.C. § 922 *et. seq.*

³⁰ *Id.*

The court must deny the return of firearms, ammunition, or permits if the court finds that the defendant is precluded from owning or possessing a firearm pursuant to state or federal law or if the defendant has any pending criminal charges for crimes committed against the person protected by the current protective order until the final disposition of those charges.³¹

It is unlawful for any person subject to a protective order prohibiting the possession or purchase of firearms to:

- Purchase or possess a firearm, ammunition, or permits to purchase or carry concealed firearms;
- Fail to surrender all firearms, ammunition, permits to purchase firearms, and permits to carry concealed firearms to the sheriff as ordered by the court;
- Fail to disclose all information pertaining to the possession of firearms, ammunition, and permits to purchase and permits to carry concealed firearms as requested by the court; or
- Provide false information to the court pertaining to any of these items.³²

In addition, North Carolina law provides that a court that has found that an act of domestic violence has occurred must grant a protective order.³³ Through the order, the court may prohibit a party from purchasing a firearm for a time fixed in the order.³⁴

Finally, pursuant to state law, no person may obtain a permit to purchase a handgun if he or she is subject to a court order that:

³¹ *Id.*

³² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.1(i), (j); *see also* N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.8.

³³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3.

³⁴ *Id.* North Carolina law defines “domestic violence” as the commission of one or more of the following acts upon an aggrieved party or upon a minor child residing with or in the custody of the aggrieved party by a person with whom the aggrieved party has or has had a “personal relationship”:

- Attempting to cause bodily injury, or intentionally causing bodily injury;
- Placing the aggrieved party or a member of the aggrieved party's family or household in fear of imminent serious bodily injury or continued harassment that rises to such a level as to inflict substantial emotional distress; or
- Committing one or more of the sexual offenses defined under state law. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-1(a).

“Personal relationship” means a relationship wherein the parties involved:

- Are current or former spouses;
- Are persons of opposite sex who live together or have lived together;
- Are related as parents and children, including others acting in loco parentis to a minor child, or as grandparents and grandchildren. For purposes of this subdivision, an aggrieved party may not obtain an order of protection against a child or grandchild under the age of 16;
- Have a child in common;
- Are current or former household members; or

Are persons of the opposite sex who are in a dating relationship or have been in a “dating relationship.” A “dating relationship” is one wherein the parties are romantically involved over time and on a continuous basis during the course of the relationship. A casual acquaintance or ordinary fraternization between persons in a business or social context is not a dating relationship. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-1(b).

- Was issued after a hearing of which the person received actual notice, and at which the person had an opportunity to participate;
- Restrains the person from harassing, stalking, or threatening an intimate partner of the person or child of the intimate partner of the person, or engaging in other conduct that would place an intimate partner in reasonable fear of bodily injury to the partner or child; and
- Includes a finding that the person represents a credible threat to the physical safety of the intimate partner or child; or by its terms explicitly prohibits the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the intimate partner or child that would reasonably be expected to cause bodily injury.³⁵

State law requires the sheriff of a county to provide for prompt entry of all domestic violence protective orders into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) protection order file, which is used in the background check process prior to firearm transfers.³⁶

For general information on the background check process and categories of prohibited purchasers or possessors, see the [North Carolina Background Checks](#) section.

³⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(c)(8). The terms of state law mirror the federal law that prohibits possession of a firearm by a person subject to a domestic violence protective order. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(8) and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(c)(8).

³⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 50B-3(d).

Disarming Prohibited Persons in North Carolina

North Carolina requires domestic abusers who have become subject to protective orders to surrender their firearms under certain circumstances. For further information, see the section entitled [Domestic Violence and Firearms](#). North Carolina has no other law requiring the disarming of individuals who have become [prohibited from possessing firearms](#).

Sales & Transfers

Background Checks in North Carolina

Federal law requires federally licensed firearms dealers (but not private sellers) to initiate a background check on the purchaser prior to sale of a firearm. Federal law provides states with the option of serving as a state “point of contact” and conducting their own background checks using state, as well as federal, records and databases, or having the checks performed by the FBI using only the federal National Instant Criminal Background Check System (“NICS”) database. (Note that state files are not always included in the federal database.)

North Carolina is a partial point of contact state for NICS. In North Carolina, firearms dealers must contact the FBI to process the background check required by federal law if the firearm being transferred is a long gun. If the firearm being transferred is a handgun, the seller (regardless of whether or not he or she is a firearms dealer) must verify that the purchaser holds either a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed weapons permit.³⁷ Both of these permits are issued by the local sheriff after a background check.³⁸ For further information about the background checks involved in issuing these permits, see the North Carolina Licensing of Gun Purchasers or Owners and North Carolina Concealed Weapons Permitting sections.

Federal law does not require dealers to conduct a background check if a firearm purchaser presents a state permit to purchase or possess firearms that meets certain conditions.³⁹ As a result, holders of permits to purchase handguns and concealed weapons permits in North Carolina are exempt from the federal background check requirement.⁴⁰ (Note, however, that people who have become prohibited from possessing firearms may continue to hold state permits to purchase or permit firearms – and pass background checks – if the state fails to remove these permits in a timely fashion.)

Private sellers (sellers who are not licensed dealers) are not required to conduct background checks when transferring a long gun in North Carolina, although federal and state laws prohibiting certain persons from purchasing or possessing firearms still apply. See the North Carolina Private Sales section.

See *Regulating Guns in America: Background Checks* for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

³⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *National Instant Criminal Background Check System Participation Map*, at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/nics/general-information/participation-map> (last visited Nov. 30, 2011).

³⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

³⁹ Federal law exempts persons who have been issued state permits to purchase or possess firearms from background checks if those permits were issued: 1) within the previous five years in the state in which the transfer is to take place; and 2) after an authorized government official has conducted a background investigation, including a search of the NICS database, to verify that possession of a firearm would not be unlawful. 18 U.S.C. § 922(t)(3), 27 C.F.R. § 478.102(d).

⁴⁰ Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, U.S. Dept. of Justice, *Brady Law: Permanent Brady Permit Chart* (Aug. 26, 2011), at <http://www.atf.gov/firearms/brady-law/permit-chart.html>.

Mental Health Reporting in North Carolina

Federal law prohibits any person from selling or otherwise transferring a firearm or ammunition to any person who has been “adjudicated as a mental defective” or “committed to any mental institution.”⁴¹ No federal law requires states to report the identities of these individuals to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) database, which the FBI uses to perform background checks prior to firearm transfers.

In 2008, North Carolina enacted a statute, which provides that, after a judicial determination that an individual must be involuntarily committed for either inpatient or outpatient mental health treatment, the clerk of the superior court in the county where the determination was made must, as soon as practicable, cause a report of the commitment to be transmitted to NICS.⁴² The clerk must report an individual involuntarily committed for outpatient mental health treatment to NICS only if the individual is found to be a danger to self or others.⁴³ The clerk must also cause to be transmitted to NICS a record where an individual is found not guilty by reason of insanity or found mentally incompetent to proceed to criminal trial.⁴⁴ Records of involuntary commitment are accessible only by an entity having proper access to NICS and are otherwise confidential.⁴⁵ The clerk must effect the required transmissions to NICS according to protocols established by the Administrative Office of the Courts.⁴⁶

State law allows a person involuntarily committed for mental health treatment to petition a court for a restoration of his or her eligibility to possess a firearm.⁴⁷ If the court grants the petition, it must forward the order to NICS for updating of the record.⁴⁸ In addition, state law requires that the clerk, upon receipt of documentation that an affected individual has received a relief from disabilities pursuant to state or applicable federal law, must cause the individual's record in NICS to be updated.⁴⁹

For general information on the background check process and categories of prohibited purchasers or possessors, see the [North Carolina Background Checks](#) and [North Carolina Prohibited Persons](#) sections.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Mental Health Reporting](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁴¹ 18 U.S.C. § 922(d)(4).

⁴² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 122C-54(d1).

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Id.*

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 122C-54.1.

⁴⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 122C-54.1(d).

⁴⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 122C-54(d1), 122C-54.1.

Multiple Purchases / Sales of Firearms in North Carolina

North Carolina has no law limiting the number of firearms that may be purchased or sold to an individual at one time, although an individual must obtain a separate [handgun purchase permit](#) for each handgun he or she intends to purchase or receive.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Restrictions on Multiple Purchases or Sales of Firearms](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Retention of Sales / Background Check Records in North Carolina

In North Carolina, every handgun dealer must keep an accurate record of all sales, including the buyer's name, residence, and the date of sale.⁵⁰ This record must be open to the inspection of any police officer in the state.⁵¹

North Carolina does not have any laws requiring the reporting of firearm sales to a state or local agency.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Retention of Firearm Sales and Background Check Records](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁵⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-406.

⁵¹ *Id.*

North Carolina Waiting Periods

North Carolina has no law imposing a waiting period prior to the purchase of a firearm, although it may take up to 30 days to receive a [license to purchase a handgun](#).⁵²

See [Regulating Guns in America: Waiting Periods](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁵² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(f).

Gun Dealers & Other Sellers

North Carolina Dealer Regulations

North Carolina does not license firearms dealers. However, firearms dealers are subject to state laws governing gun sales generally. See the [North Carolina Private Sales](#) section for further information. Pursuant to federal law, federally licensed firearms dealers must conduct background checks on prospective purchasers each time the dealer transfers a firearm. See the [North Carolina Background Checks](#) section.

Under state law, a retail seller or transferor must deliver a written copy of state law relating to storage of firearms to protect minors to the purchaser or transferee with every firearm transfer.⁵³ A retail or wholesale store or outlet that sells firearms must conspicuously post at each purchase counter the following warning:

"IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE OR LEAVE A FIREARM THAT CAN BE DISCHARGED IN A MANNER THAT A REASONABLE PERSON SHOULD KNOW IS ACCESSIBLE TO A MINOR."⁵⁴

See the section entitled [Retention of Sales / Background Check Records](#) for laws requiring dealers to retain records of sales.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Dealer Regulations](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁵³ N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-315.2, 14-315.1.

⁵⁴ *Id.*

Private Sales in North Carolina

North Carolina law prohibits the sale or transfer of a handgun to a person who has not obtained a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed handgun permit.⁵⁵ Furthermore, it is unlawful for any person to receive a handgun from any postmaster, postal clerk, employee in the parcel post department, rural mail carrier, express agent or employee, railroad agent or employee within North Carolina without having a permit in his or her possession and without exhibiting the permit at the time of delivery to the person delivering the firearm.⁵⁶

Once obtained, the permit to purchase a handgun, issued by the sheriff of the county in which the purchaser resides, is valid for up to five years and is good for the purchase of one handgun.⁵⁷ To obtain a permit, an applicant must present evidence that he or she is of good moral character and desires the weapon for protection, target shooting, collecting or hunting.⁵⁸ Applicants must undergo a background check to obtain a permit.⁵⁹ See the [North Carolina Licensing of Gun Purchasers or Owners](#) section for more information.

North Carolina imposes a felony on any person who sells, offers for sale, gives or transfers in any way a handgun to a person under age 18.⁶⁰ However, it is not an offense if the handgun is:

- Lent to the minor for temporary use;
- Transferred to an adult custodian and the minor takes only temporary possession as allowed by the adult custodian; or
- A devise distributed to a parent or guardian and the minor takes only temporary possession as allowed by the adult custodian.

Long gun transfers by private sellers (non-firearms dealers) are not subject to background checks in North Carolina, although federal and state purchaser prohibitions still apply.

State law prohibits transferring any deadly weapon or any cartridge or ammunition for firearms to any inmate of a charitable, mental or penal institution, or local confinement facility.⁶¹

State law governs sales of firearms by any employee of the state in the exercise of his or her official duty.⁶²

See [Regulating Guns in America: Private Sales](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁵⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402.

⁵⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402(a).

⁵⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-403.

⁵⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(a)(2), (3).

⁵⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

⁶⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-315.

⁶¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-258.1(a).

⁶² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-63.1.

North Carolina Gun Shows

North Carolina does not have a law regulating gun shows.

See the [North Carolina Private Sales](#) section for state laws that apply at gun shows.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Gun Shows](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

North Carolina Immunity Statutes

North Carolina law provides that the lawful design, marketing, manufacture, distribution, sale, or transfer of firearms or ammunition to the public is not an unreasonably dangerous activity and does not constitute a nuisance *per se*.⁶³ North Carolina law further provides that the state is the only government entity that may bring an action against a firearms or ammunition marketer, manufacturer, distributor, dealer, seller or trade association relating to the lawful design, marketing, manufacture, distribution, sale, or transfer of firearms or ammunition to the public.⁶⁴ North Carolina law also provides that, in such a case, “it is the unlawful use of firearms and ammunition, rather than their lawful design, marketing, manufacture, distribution, sale, or transfer that is the proximate cause of injuries arising from their unlawful use.”⁶⁵ North Carolina does *not* prohibit a local government from bringing an action against a firearms or ammunition marketer, manufacturer, distributor, dealer, seller or trade association for breach of contract or warranty for defective materials or workmanship as to firearms or ammunition purchased by the local government.⁶⁶

North Carolina law provides that, in a products liability action involving firearms or ammunition, the question of whether a firearm or ammunition shell is defective in design must not be based on a comparison or weighing of the benefits of the product against its risk of causing damage, injury or death.⁶⁷

North Carolina further provides that in a products liability action brought against a firearm or ammunition manufacturer, importer, distributor, or retailer that alleges a design defect, the burden is on the plaintiff to prove:

- That the actual design of the firearm or ammunition was defective, causing it not to function in a manner reasonably expected by an ordinary consumer of firearms or ammunition; and
- That any defective design was the proximate cause of the injury, damage, or death.⁶⁸

North Carolina provides that the operator or owner of a sport shooting range is not subject to civil liability or criminal prosecution or an action for nuisance, and a state court may not enjoin the use or operation of the range on the basis of noise or noise pollution resulting from the operation or use of the range if the range was in existence on September 1, 1994 and the range was in compliance with any noise control laws that applied at the time the range began operation.⁶⁹ Rules adopted by any state department or agency for limiting levels of noise in terms

⁶³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-409.40.

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 99B-11(a).

⁶⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 99B-11(b).

⁶⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-409.46(a), (b).

of decibel level that may occur in the outdoor atmosphere do not apply to a sport shooting range.⁷⁰

A person who acquires title to real property adversely affected by the use of a sport shooting range initially operated prior to the time the person acquired title must not maintain a nuisance action on the basis of noise or noise pollution against the owner of the range to restrain, enjoin, or impede its use.⁷¹ However, the person may maintain a nuisance action within one year of the date of a substantial change in use.⁷² This section does not prohibit actions for negligence or recklessness in the operation of the range or by a person using the range.⁷³ For information about local regulation of sport shooting ranges, see the [North Carolina State Preemption](#) section.

For detailed information about government and private party lawsuits against the gun industry, the status of litigation involving gun industry immunity statutes in various states, or pending gun industry immunity legislation, visit the [Brady Center's Legal Action Project](#) and the [Coalition to Stop Gun Violence's Gun Industry Immunity page](#).

See [LCAV's policy page on Immunity Statutes / Manufacturer Litigation](#) for further information.

⁷⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-409.46(c).

⁷¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-409.46(d).

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ *Id.*

Gun Owner Responsibilities

Licensing of Gun Owners or Purchasers in North Carolina

North Carolina law provides that no person may purchase or receive a handgun without a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed handgun permit.⁷⁴ Once obtained, a permit to purchase a handgun, issued by the sheriff of the county in which the purchaser resides, is valid for up to five years and may be used to purchase one handgun.⁷⁵ To obtain a permit, an applicant must be a resident of the county in which he or she is applying.⁷⁶ North Carolina law also provides that a permit will be denied to an applicant falls into one of certain categories.⁷⁷ See the section entitled [Prohibited Purchasers Generally](#) for a list of these categories.

The sheriff must verify, before the issuance of a permit, that it is not a violation of state or federal law for the applicant to purchase, transfer, receive, or possess a handgun. The sheriff must determine the criminal and background history of any applicant by:

- Accessing computerized criminal history records as maintained by the State Bureau of Investigation and the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
- Conducting a national criminal history records check;
- Conducting a check through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS); and
- Conducting a criminal history check through the Administrative Office of the Courts.⁷⁸

An applicant must also present evidence that he or she is of good moral character and desires the weapon for protection, target shooting, collecting or hunting.⁷⁹ The sheriff must inform the applicant whether he or she is granting or denying a license within 30 days of the application.⁸⁰

The sheriff of each county must keep a record of all permits to purchase a handgun, including the name, date, place of residence, and age of each person to whom a permit is issued.⁸¹

New residents of North Carolina do not need a license to bring their handguns into the state.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Licensing of Gun Owners or Purchasers](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁷⁴ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402.

⁷⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-403.

⁷⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

⁷⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

⁷⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(a)(1).

⁷⁹ *Id.*

⁸⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(f).

⁸¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-405.

North Carolina Registration of Firearms

North Carolina has no law that requires the comprehensive registration of firearms throughout the state. However, the sheriff of each county must keep a record of all permits to purchase a handgun, including the name, date, place of residence, and age of each person to whom a permit is issued.⁸²

See [*Regulating Guns in America: Registration of Firearms*](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

⁸² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-405.

Reporting Lost or Stolen Firearms

North Carolina does not require firearms owners to report the loss or theft of a firearm.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Reporting Lost or Stolen Firearms](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Firearms in Public Places

Concealed Weapons Permitting in North Carolina

See [Regulating Guns in America: Carrying Concealed Weapons](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

North Carolina is a “shall issue” state, meaning that the local sheriff must issue a concealed handgun permit if the applicant meets certain qualifications. Pursuant to state law, a sheriff must issue a permit to an applicant who:

- Is a citizen of the United States and has been a resident of the state 30 days or longer immediately preceding the filing of the application;
- Is 21 years of age or older;
- Does not suffer from a physical or mental infirmity that prevents the safe handling of a handgun; and
- Has successfully completed an approved firearms safety and training course which involves the actual firing of handguns and instruction in the state laws governing the carrying of a concealed handgun and the use of deadly force.⁸³

State law requires a sheriff to deny a permit to an applicant who:

- Is ineligible to own, possess, or receive a firearm under state or federal law;
- Is under indictment for a felony or against whom a finding of probable cause exists for a felony;
- Has been adjudicated guilty of a felony in any court, unless: (i) the felony is an offense that pertains to antitrust violations, unfair trade practices, or restraints of trade, or (ii) the person’s firearm rights have been restored pursuant to state law;
- Is a fugitive from justice;
- Is an unlawful user of or addicted to marijuana, alcohol, or any depressant, stimulant, or narcotic drug or other controlled substance;

⁸³ N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-415.12.

- Is currently, or has been previously adjudicated to be, lacking mental capacity or mentally ill, unless his or her eligibility has been restored under state law, unless his rights have been restored;⁸⁴
- Is or has been discharged from the Armed Forces under conditions other than honorable;
- Is or has been adjudicated guilty of or received a prayer for judgment continued or suspended sentence for one or more crimes of violence constituting a misdemeanor;
- Has had entry of a prayer for judgment continued for a criminal offense which would disqualify the person from obtaining a concealed handgun permit;
- Is free on bond or personal recognizance pending trial, appeal, or sentencing for a crime which would disqualify him or her from obtaining a concealed handgun permit; or
- Has been convicted of an impaired driving offense within three years prior to the date on which the application is submitted.⁸⁵

Except when on one's own premises, a person who carries a concealed firearm without a permit commits a misdemeanor. A second offense constitutes a felony.⁸⁶

Firearm Safety Training

All persons applying for a license to carry a concealed deadly weapon in North Carolina must complete a training course involving the actual firing of handguns and instruction in the laws of the State governing the carrying of concealed handgun and the use of deadly force.⁸⁷ The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission must prepare and publish general guidelines for courses and qualifications of instructors which would satisfy the requirements of this subdivision.⁸⁸ An approved course must be any course which satisfies the requirements of this subdivision and is certified or sponsored by:

- The North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission,
- The National Rifle Association, or
- A law enforcement agency, college, private or public institution or organization, or firearms training school, taught by instructors certified by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission or the National Rifle Association.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 122C-54.1, 14-415.12(c).

⁸⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.12(b). Additional application and background check requirements, as well as permit suspension or disqualification information, are detailed under state law. N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-415.13 through 14-415.18.

⁸⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-269.

⁸⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.12(a)(4).

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ *Id.*

Every instructor of an approved course must file a copy of the firearms course description, outline, and proof of certification annually, or upon modification of the course if more frequently, with the North Carolina Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission.⁹⁰

A photocopy of a certificate of completion of any of the courses or classes or an affidavit from the instructor, school, club, organization or group that conducted or taught said course or class attesting to the successful completion of the course or class by the applicant or a copy of any document which shows successful completion of the course or class constitutes evidence of qualification under this section.⁹¹

Duration & Renewal

A North Carolina concealed carry permit is valid for up to five years.⁹² A criminal background check is performed each time a permit is renewed.⁹³

Disclosure or Use of Information

The sheriff must maintain a list of the name and identifying information of each person issued a permit. This information must be available to state and local law enforcement upon request.⁹⁴

In addition, the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation's Division of Criminal Information maintains statistics by county on the number of applications for concealed handgun permits, the number of concealed handgun permits that have been issued, the number of concealed handgun permits that have been denied and the number of concealed handgun permits that have been revoked since December 1, 1995. For this information, see the [North Carolina Attorney General website](#).

Reciprocity

[Effective December 1, 2011](#), a concealed handgun permit issued by any other state is valid in North Carolina.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ *Id.*

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.11(b).

⁹³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.16.

⁹⁴ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.17.

⁹⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.24.

Open Carrying in North Carolina

North Carolina permits the [open carrying](#) of firearms on the person in public with no permit or license required.

Location Restrictions

Guns in Vehicles in North Carolina

North Carolina permits the [open carrying](#) of a long gun or a handgun in a motor vehicle with no license or permit required. Except when on one's own premises, a person who carries a concealed firearm without a [permit](#) commits a misdemeanor. A second offense constitutes a felony.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-269.

Guns in Schools in North Carolina

North Carolina law prohibits any person, including a [concealed handgun permittee](#), from carrying a firearm, openly or concealed, on educational property or at a curricular or extracurricular activity sponsored by a school.⁹⁷

In some instances, North Carolina law also penalizes a parent or legal guardian of an unemancipated minor who commits a felony using a firearm on educational property.⁹⁸ For additional information, see the [North Carolina Child Access Prevention Section](#).

See [LCAV's policy page on Guns in Schools](#) for further information.

⁹⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.2(b).

⁹⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 1-538.3.

Other Location Restrictions in North Carolina

No person, including a concealed handgun permittee, may carry a firearm, openly or concealed into the State Capitol Building, the Executive Mansion, the Western Residence of the Governor, or in any building housing any court of the General Court of Justice, except that a concealed handgun permittee may keep a firearm locked in his or her vehicle.⁹⁹

No person, including a concealed handgun permittee, may willfully or intentionally possess a firearm at any parade, funeral procession, picket line, or demonstration upon any private health care facility or public place (except for a firearm carried in a pickup truck at a holiday parade or in a funeral procession).¹⁰⁰

North Carolina prohibits any person from transporting a firearm in an area in which a declared state of emergency exists or within the immediate vicinity of a riot.¹⁰¹

Additionally, with the exception of a concealed handgun permittee who is a district attorney, assistant district attorney, or investigator employed by the office of the district attorney, a concealed handgun permit does not authorize a person to carry a concealed handgun into the following locations:

- At an assembly where a fee is charged for admission, except with the permission of the owner, lessee, or person or organization sponsoring the event;
- In an establishment where alcohol is sold and consumed, unless the person is the owner or lessee of the premises or business establishment;
- Educational facilities;¹⁰²
- Any establishment where alcohol is served;
- A law enforcement or correctional facility;
- A state or federal building or office of the state or federal government;
- A state-owned rest area or rest stop along the highways;
- A state-owned hunting and fishing reservation;

⁹⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-269.4.

¹⁰⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-277.2.

¹⁰¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-288.7.

¹⁰² North Carolina has defined “educational facilities” to include school buildings, school buses, school campuses, school grounds, school recreational areas, school athletic fields, or other property owned or operated by any board of education or school board of trustees, or directors for the administration of any school. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.2(a).

- Any place where the legal possessor has posted conspicuous notice or stated that carrying a concealed handgun is prohibited; or
- Any places where the carrying of a concealed firearm is prohibited under federal law.¹⁰³

Pursuant to [a law enacted in 2011](#), a concealed handgun permittee is authorized to carry a concealed handgun into a state park,¹⁰⁴ or a financial institution. However, the law allows a local government to adopt an ordinance prohibiting the carrying of a concealed handgun on a municipal and county playground, athletic field, swimming pool, or athletic facility, although a concealed handgun licensee may still secure a handgun within the trunk, glove box, or other enclosed compartment or area of a locked vehicle.¹⁰⁵

North Carolina has no statutes prohibiting firearms in the following places, although administrative regulations may apply:

- Hospitals;
- Sports arenas;
- Gambling facilities; or
- Polling places.

¹⁰³ N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-415.11, 14-415.27.

¹⁰⁴ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.11(c1).

¹⁰⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-415.23.

Consumer & Child Safety

North Carolina Design Safety Standards for Handguns

North Carolina does not specifically regulate junk guns or unsafe firearms.

See [*Regulating Guns in America: Design Safety Standards for Handguns*](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Locking Devices in North Carolina

North Carolina does not require a locking device to accompany the sale of a firearm (although the [federal law](#) applies), and no state statutes require firearm owners to lock their weapons.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Locking Devices](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Personalized / Owner-Authorized Firearms in North Carolina

North Carolina does not require firearms to be personalized.

See [*Regulating Guns in America: Personalized Firearms*](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

North Carolina Child Access Prevention

School Property

Pursuant to North Carolina law, a parent or legal guardian who has care, custody and control of an unemancipated minor may be held civilly liable for negligent supervision of the minor if the minor commits a felony involving injury to persons or property through use of a firearm on educational property.¹⁰⁶ The parent or legal guardian will only be liable if he or she:

- Knew or should have known of the minor's likelihood to commit the act;
- Had the opportunity and ability to control the minor; and
- Made no reasonable effort to correct, restrain or properly supervise the minor.¹⁰⁷

Storage

Pursuant to state law, any person who resides with a minor and owns or possesses a firearm stored or left: 1) in a condition in which it can be discharged; and 2) in a manner that the person knew or should have known that an unsupervised minor would be able to gain access to the firearm, is criminally liable for a misdemeanor if the minor gains access to the firearm and:

- Possesses the firearm on educational property;
- Exhibits the firearm in a public place in a careless, angry or threatening manner;
- Causes personal injury or death with the firearm that is not caused during self-defense; or
- Uses the firearm in the commission of a crime.¹⁰⁸

Under state law, a retail seller or transferor must deliver a written copy of state law relating to storage of firearms to protect minors to the purchaser or transferee with every firearm transfer.¹⁰⁹ A retail or wholesale store or outlet that sells firearms must conspicuously post at each purchase counter the following warning:

"IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE OR LEAVE A FIREARM THAT CAN BE DISCHARGED IN A MANNER THAT A REASONABLE PERSON SHOULD KNOW IS ACCESSIBLE TO A MINOR."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 1-538.3. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 48A-2 defines a "minor" as a person under the age of 18.

¹⁰⁷ *Id.*

¹⁰⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-315.1.

¹⁰⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-315.2; *see also* N.C. Gen. Stat. 14-315.1.

¹¹⁰ *Id.*

Use of Firearm/Furnishing Firearm

A parent, guardian, or person standing in for a parent is prohibited from knowingly permitting his or her child under age 12 to possess or use a firearm (whether loaded or unloaded) while not supervised by the parent, guardian or person standing in for the parent.¹¹¹ No person may knowingly furnish a firearm to a child under the age of 12.¹¹²

For age requirements for the purchase or possession of firearms in North Carolina, see the [North Carolina Minimum Age to Purchase / Possess](#) section.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Child Access Prevention](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

¹¹¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-316.

¹¹² *Id.*

Classes of Weapons / Ammunition

Assault Weapons in North Carolina

North Carolina has no law regulating assault weapons.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Assault Weapons](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines in North Carolina

North Carolina has no law regulating large capacity ammunition magazines.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Fifty Caliber Rifles in North Carolina

North Carolina has no law regulating fifty caliber rifles.

See [*Regulating Guns in America: Fifty Caliber Rifles*](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

Machine Guns/Automatic Firearms in North Carolina

With certain exceptions, North Carolina prohibits any person, firm, or corporation from manufacturing, selling, giving away, disposing of, using, or possessing any machine gun or submachine gun, unless the person lawfully possesses or owns the weapon in compliance with federal law.¹¹³ Federal law generally allows private citizens to possess machine guns manufactured prior to May 19, 1986 so long as they are registered, and are not prohibited by state or local law. However, North Carolina law explicitly grants a sheriff discretion in executing the paperwork required by the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for such person to obtain the weapon.¹¹⁴

See [LCAV's policy page on Machine Guns](#) for further information.

¹¹³ N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-409(b). Subsection (a) of the same statute defines "machine gun" or "submachine gun" as "any weapon which shoots, is designed to shoot, or can be readily restored to shoot, automatically more than one shot, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger. The term shall also include the frame or receiver of any such weapon, any combination of parts designed and intended for use in converting a weapon into a machine gun, and any combination of parts from which a machine gun can be assembled if such parts are in the possession or under the control of a person."

¹¹⁴ *Id.* Other exceptions to the prohibition on possession of a machine gun include:

- Banks, merchants, and recognized business establishments for use in their respective places of business, who shall first apply to and receive from the sheriff of the county in which said business is located, a permit to possess the said weapons for the purpose of defending the said business;
- Officers and soldiers of the United States Army, when in discharge of their official duties, officers and soldiers of the militia when called into actual service, officers of the State, or of any county, city or town, charged with the execution of the laws of the State, when acting in the discharge of their official duties;
- The manufacture, use or possession of such weapons for scientific or experimental purposes when such manufacture, use or possession is lawful under federal laws and the weapon is registered with a federal agency, and when a permit to manufacture, use or possess the weapon is issued by the sheriff of the county in which the weapon is located; and
- Any bona fide resident of this State who already owns a machine gun used in former wars, as a relic or souvenir may retain and keep same as his or her property without violating the provisions of this section upon his reporting said ownership to the sheriff of the county in which said person lives. N.C. Gen. Stat. §14-409(b).

Non-Powder Guns in North Carolina

In certain counties in North Carolina, it is unlawful for any parent or guardian to knowingly permit his child under the age of 12 years to use, possess, or have custody of an air rifle, air pistol, or BB gun.¹¹⁵ Additionally, North Carolina prohibits any person from causing, encouraging, or aiding a minor who is less than 18 years old to possess or carry, whether openly or concealed, any BB gun, stun gun, air rifle, or air pistol.¹¹⁶ North Carolina has no other law regulating non-powder guns.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Non-Powder Guns](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

¹¹⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-316.

¹¹⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-269.2(e).

North Carolina Ammunition Regulation

North Carolina prohibits any person from importing, manufacturing, possessing, storing, transporting, selling, offering to sell, purchasing, offering to purchase, delivering, giving or acquiring any teflon-coated bullet.¹¹⁷ This prohibition does not apply to the following individuals:

- Licensed importers, manufacturers, and dealers for the purpose of sale to authorized law-enforcement agencies; or
- Inventors, designers, ordinance consultants and researchers, chemists, physicists, and other persons employed by or under contract with a manufacturing company engaged in making or doing research designed to enlarge knowledge or to facilitate the creation, development, or manufacture of more effective police-type body armor.¹¹⁸

North Carolina does **not**:

- Require a license for the sale of ammunition;
- Require sellers of ammunition to maintain a record of the purchasers;
- Require a license to purchase or possess ammunition; or
- Prohibit the possession, transfer or use of armor-piercing, although the [federal prohibition on certain kinds of armor-piercing ammunition](#) applies.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Ammunition Regulation](#) for a comprehensive discussion of this issue.

¹¹⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-34.3(a).

¹¹⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-34.3(b).

Crime Gun Investigation

North Carolina Microstamping/Ballistic Identification

North Carolina has no law requiring firearm microstamping or ballistic identification.

See [Regulating Guns in America: Ballistic Identification](#) and LCAV's policy page on [Firearm Microstamping](#) for comprehensive discussions of these issues.

Firearms Trafficking in North Carolina

North Carolina law prohibits anyone from selling or otherwise transferring a handgun to a person who has not obtained a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed handgun permit.¹¹⁹

Furthermore, it is unlawful for any person to receive a handgun from any postmaster, postal clerk, employee in the parcel post department, rural mail carrier, express agent or employee, railroad agent or employee within North Carolina without having a permit in his or her possession and without exhibiting the permit at the time of delivery to the person delivering the firearm.¹²⁰ To obtain a permit, an applicant must present evidence to the sheriff of the county in which he or she resides that he or she is of good moral character and desires the weapon for protection, target shooting, collecting or hunting.¹²¹ Applicants must also undergo a background check.¹²² Once obtained, the permit to purchase a handgun is valid for up to five years and is good for the purchase of one handgun.¹²³ See the [North Carolina Licensing of Gun Purchasers or Owners](#) section for more information.

North Carolina enacted [a law in 2011](#) that penalizes any person who knowingly solicits, persuades, encourages, or entices a licensed dealer or private seller of firearms or ammunition to transfer a firearm or ammunition under circumstances that the person knows would violate the laws of this State or the United States.¹²⁴ The law also penalizes any person who provides to a licensed dealer or private seller of firearms or ammunition information that the person knows to be materially false information with the intent to deceive the dealer or seller about the legality of a transfer of a firearm or ammunition.¹²⁵ Any person who willfully procures another to engage in conduct prohibited by this law may be held accountable as a principal.¹²⁶

It is unlawful for any person to alter, deface, destroy, or remove the permanent serial number, manufacturer's identification plate, or other permanent distinguishing number or identification mark from any firearm with the intent thereby to conceal or misrepresent the identity of the firearm.¹²⁷ It is also unlawful for any person knowingly to sell, buy, or be in possession of any firearm on which the permanent serial number, manufacturer's identification plate, or other permanent distinguishing number or identification mark has been altered, defaced, destroyed, or removed for the purpose of concealing or misrepresenting the identity of the firearm.¹²⁸

See LCAV's [policy page on Firearms Trafficking](#) for further information.

¹¹⁹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402.

¹²⁰ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-402(a).

¹²¹ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404(a)(2), (3).

¹²² N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-404.

¹²³ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-403.

¹²⁴ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-408.1(b).

¹²⁵ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-408.1(c).

¹²⁶ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-408.1(d).

¹²⁷ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-160.2(a).

¹²⁸ N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-160.2(b).

State Links

[Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Charlotte Field Division \(NC, SC\)](#)

[North Carolinians Against Gun Violence Education Fund](#)

[North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

[North Carolina Department of Justice](#)