



SPORTING ARMS AND AMMUNITION MANUFACTURERS' INSTITUTE, INC.
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Sporting Firearms

Safe Handling Considerations and Shipping Guidelines for Interstate Transportation

(The citations herein refer to federal regulations (current as of November 8, 2022): state and local laws may impose additional restrictions.)

This publication has been prepared by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute to provide anyone concerned with the handling or shipment of sporting firearms certain basic and important facts about the subject. These statements and recommendations do not supersede local, state or federal regulations, or constitute legal advice. Local authorities should be consulted regarding any regulation on the storage, transportation, display, sale, and handling of firearms within each individual community. Information is updated periodically, however SAAMI provides no warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy, adequacy or completeness of the information.

A person who possesses a valid Federal Firearms License (FFL) is referred to herein as a "licensee." Anyone who does not possess an FFL is described as a "non-licensee." Notations in brackets indicate federal regulations to which the reader may wish to refer: e.g. {[27CFR478.30](#)} refers to Title 27, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 478, Section 30.

General Transportation Regulations for Both Licensees and Non-Licensees

1. Certain persons are prohibited from shipping, transporting, or receiving firearms in interstate or foreign commerce {[27CFR478.32](#)):
 - Persons under indictment for, or has been convicted of a crime punishable by more than one-year imprisonment;
 - Is a fugitive from justice;
 - Unlawful users of or addicted to any controlled substance;
 - Adjudicated mental defectives or persons having been committed to a mental institution;

- Illegal aliens;
 - Persons having been discharged from the Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions;
 - Persons having renounced United States citizenship;
 - Persons subject to certain court restraining orders; or
 - Persons convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.
2. No one may knowingly transport, ship, or receive in interstate or foreign commerce a firearm which has had the manufacturer's or importer's serial number removed, obliterated, or altered [{27CFR478.34}](#).
 3. Any person not otherwise prohibited from transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm may transport a firearm interstate for any lawful purpose, if he may lawfully possess and carry the firearm in the place of origin and destination, and provided the firearm is unloaded and that it is not readily or directly accessible from the passenger compartment. In vehicles without a separate trunk, the gun must be in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console [{27CFR478.38}](#).
 4. No one may knowingly ship a firearm or ammunition in interstate or foreign commerce to any person other than a holder of a Federal Firearms License without written notice to the carrier that a firearm or ammunition is being shipped [{27CFR478.31a}](#).
 5. A carrier is required to obtain a written delivery receipt from the recipient of any shipment containing a firearm [{27CFR478.31d}](#).

Transportation Regulations for Federal Firearms License (FFL) Holders

1. Before shipping a firearm to another licensee, a holder of a Federal Firearms License (FFL) must at a minimum obtain a certified copy of the recipient's FFL. However, this is not required under the following conditions [{27CFR478.94}](#):
 - If the recipient has already furnished a certified copy of his current license, or
 - If the firearm is being returned to the recipient, or
 - If the recipient is part of a multi-licensed business organization, and a certified list of valid license information for all of the business locations has been provided.
2. Certain shipments or deliveries are prohibited [{27CFR478.99}](#):
 - A. Pistols or revolvers may not be sold or delivered to non-licensees residing outside the FFL holder's state. Rifles or shotguns may, under certain circumstances, be sold and

shipped to nonlicensees residing in other states; the requirements of [27CFR478.96 \(c\)](#) must be fully met.

- B. The minimum age for purchase or receipt of a rifle or shotgun is 18 years; for a pistol or revolver, it is 21 years [{27CFR478.99 \(b\)}](#).
- C. Firearms may not be sold or disposed of to the following categories of persons [{ATF Form 4473}](#) revised May 2020):

- Persons under indictment or information in any court for a felony, or any other crime for which the judge could imprison them for more than one year, or are a current member of the military who has been charged with violation(s) of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and whose charge(s) have been referred to a general court-martial;

Persons having ever been convicted in any court, including a military court, of a felony, or any other crime for which the judge could have imprisoned them for more than one year, even if they received a shorter sentence including probation;

- A fugitive from justice;

An unlawful user of, or addicted to, marijuana or any depressant, stimulant, narcotic drug, or any other controlled substance;

- Persons having ever been adjudicated as a mental defective or have ever been committed to a mental institution;
- Persons having ever been discharged from the Armed Forces under dishonorable conditions;
- Persons subject to a court order, including a Military Protection Order issued by a military judge or magistrate, restraining them from harassing, stalking, or threatening a child or an intimate partner or child of such partner;
- Persons having ever been convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence, or are or have ever been a member of the military and been convicted of a crime that included, as an element, the use of force against a person as identified in the instructions;
- Persons having renounced their United States citizenship; or
- Persons that are an alien illegally or unlawfully in the United States.

Transportation Regulations for Non-Licensees

1. A non-licensee may mail a rifle or shotgun to a resident of his own state or to a licensee in any state. Handguns must not be mailed. [{U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual Section C024}](#).
2. A non-licensee may not transfer, sell, trade, give, transport, or deliver a firearm to another non-licensee who lives in a different state [{27CFR478.30}](#). However, a person may ship a firearm to himself, in care of another person in the state where he intends to hunt or shoot if the other person does not open the package.
3. A non-licensee who is not otherwise prohibited from possessing or shipping a firearm may ship the firearm direct to a licensee for any lawful purpose, and the licensee may return that firearm or a replacement of the same kind and type directly to the individual [{27CFR478.147}](#).

Packing Firearms for Shipment

1. All firearms must be unloaded prior to shipment. Ensure that magazines and chambers are empty, and do not include any ammunition in the package with the firearm. [{Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service, Domestic Mail Manual, Mailing Firearms – Clarification}](#), [{FedEx – How to Ship firearms}](#), [{UPS – How to Ship Firearms}](#)
2. Protect the finish of the firearm from abrasion by preventing movement within the box or case, and cushion against impact during transportation.
3. A factory-supplied individual box or case must be enclosed in a carton which will conceal the identity of the contents and afford additional protection from damage. The outer packaging must not bear any marks, tags, or labels indicating what the contents are [{27CFR478.31 \(b\)}](#).

Firearms Safety

The fundamental rules of firearms safety are brief and simple, and they apply to all firearms - rifles, shotguns, pistols, and revolvers. They apply to all locations where firearms may be handled - in the home, in the store, on the range, and in the field. These rules apply equally to all persons, , whether experienced in the use of firearms or a complete novice.

1. **Keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction.** This is the primary rule of firearm safety. A “safe direction” is one in which if the firearm went off, it would not cause injury or damage. Common sense dictates the safe direction, depending upon current circumstances.
2. **Keep firearms unloaded when not actually in use.** Each time you pick up a firearm, immediately open the action and inspect the chamber(s), which should be empty. If the firearm has a magazine, remove it before opening the action and ensure that it is empty. If you do not know how to open the action, leave the firearm alone and seek help from someone who does. Firearms and ammunition should be secured in a safe place, separate from each other.

3. **Do not rely upon a firearm's "safety."** A "safety" is a mechanical device which can fail at any time. Always keep your finger off the trigger until you are on target and have decided to shoot.
4. **Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.** Be aware of everything which the bullet might strike. Identify your target positively and know what is behind it. A .22 caliber bullet can travel over a mile, and a .30-06 more than three miles.
5. **Use correct ammunition.** Improper ammunition can destroy a firearm and cause serious personal injury. Be certain that the ammunition exactly matches the caliber or gauge of your firearm.
6. **If the firearm fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care!** Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction while you carefully open the action, unload, and dispose of the cartridge safely.
7. **Always wear eye and ear protection.** Any exposure to shooting noise can permanently damage hearing; vision protection is essential to protect your eyesight.
8. **Be sure the barrel is clear of obstructions before shooting.** Before loading a firearm, open the action, ensure there is no ammunition in the chamber or magazine, and visually inspect the bore. Any obstruction, however small, can severely damage a firearm or cause significant injuries to the shooter or those nearby.
9. **Do not alter or modify your firearm, and have it serviced regularly.** Firearms are complicated mechanisms; modifications, repairs, and servicing require training and experience. Check with the manufacturer for details and recommended service intervals.
10. **Learn the mechanical and handling characteristics of your firearm.** Read and refer to the instruction manual which is available from the manufacturer. Do not use any firearm without a complete understanding of its functioning and safe use.

This publication has been prepared by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, Inc., based on information currently available. It is furnished to interested persons as a courtesy and in the interests of safety and compliance with applicable regulations and laws. It is not intended to be comprehensive; it does not modify or replace suggestions, standards, or regulations made by designated authorities, public, or private. It is subject to revision as additional knowledge and experience are gained. SAAMI expressly disclaims any warranty, obligation, or liability whatsoever in connection with the information contained herein or its use.

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