

Summary of Public Law 2015, Chapter 327 (127th Legis., LD 652)

Once it goes into effect, Public Law 2015, Chapter 327 (LD 652), “An Act To Authorize the Carrying of Concealed Handguns without a Permit,” allows a person who is not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Maine without a permit. This law also authorizes a person to possess a loaded pistol or revolver while in a motor vehicle, trailer or other vehicle being hauled by a motor vehicle.

The new law goes into effect 90 days from final adjournment of the Legislature. It amends statutes in Maine Titles 12 and 25.

Concealed carry without a permit is limited to people who are 21 or older, with the following exception: If a person is 18 years of age or older, and is on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard, or has been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces or the National Guard, and is not otherwise prohibited from carrying a firearm, the person may carry a concealed handgun. A person who is 18-20 years old and without the referenced military qualifications must have a permit to carry concealed. The law applies to both residents of Maine and non-residents.

The law does not otherwise change where a person may carry or who may possess a firearm. It will still be illegal to possess a firearm in the following places, with some very limited exceptions:

- Courthouses (17-A M.R.S. § 1058)
- State Parks (12 M.R.S. § 1803(6), (7) and Bureau of Parks and Lands Rules Chapter 1)
- Acadia National Park (12 M.R.S. § 756)
- Schools (20-A M.R.S. § 6552)
- Federal buildings (18 U.S.C. § 930)
- State Capitol area (25 M.R.S. § 2904 & DPS Rule Chapter 41)
- Private property when prohibited by the property owner
- Establishments licensed for on-premises consumption of liquor, if the premises are posted. Note that even if there is no posted prohibition, it is illegal to carry on these premises while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs. (17-A M.R.S. §1057)

There will be some circumstances in which an optional handgun permit will authorize the permittee to in certain locations or during an activity when an unpermitted person could not:

- Acadia National Park (Permit required; 12 M.R.S. §756)
- State Parks (Permit required; open carry not permitted; 12 M.R.S. § 1803(7))
- Regular archery hunting-deer only (Permit required; 12 MRS § 11403)
- Employees' vehicles on work premises (Permit required; vehicle must be locked and firearm must not be visible; 26 M.R.S. §600)

If an individual is carrying a concealed handgun without a permit, he/she has a duty, when coming into contact with any law enforcement officer during a routine stop, detention or arrest, to immediately inform the law enforcement officer that the individual is carrying a concealed handgun.

The law pertains only to handguns, not all weapons. It is important to remember that this law does NOT authorize persons who are prohibited from possessing firearms to carry them. If a person is prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm, this law does nothing to change that prohibition. A person may be prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under state law, federal law, or both. Prohibitions include convictions (felony and qualifying misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence); some juvenile adjudications; many protection from abuse orders, dishonorable discharge from the military; immigration status; deferred disposition status; certain mental health adjudications (civil involuntary commitment; finding of not guilty by reason of insanity; finding of not competent to stand trial) and certain probate adjudications. Prohibitions may also be imposed by conditions of bail, probation, and deferred disposition agreements.

Firearms laws are complex. The summary above is necessarily an overview. Persons may wish to contact qualified private counsel and or review the applicable law if they have questions regarding whether they can legally possess firearms or ammunition. This agency is not authorized to give legal advice. This summary cannot be used as a defense to illegal activity

involving firearms or ammunition.

This agency strongly recommends that all persons carrying firearms be familiar with firearms safety and the circumstances under which deadly force may be used.