

GUN LICENSING SAVES LIVES

Licensing laws help reduce gun crimes and thwart firearm traffickers. **Although licensing laws vary by state, the most comprehensive laws require all gun owners to obtain a license and regularly renew it.** Strong licensing laws require a background check prior to issue or renewal, firearm safety training, and written and performance-based tests showing that the applicant knows relevant gun laws and how to safely load, fire, and store a firearm.

LICENSING LAWS HELP PREVENT GUN CRIMES

Licensing laws are one way of closing the “private sale loophole” by ensuring that gun owners have passed a background check and by preventing prohibited individuals like felons and domestic abusers from buying guns. **Licensing laws also facilitate the removal of firearms from people who have become ineligible and help prevent the trafficking of crime guns.** A September 2010 report by Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that states requiring handgun purchasers to obtain a license were the source of significantly fewer guns used in out-of-state crimes than states without licensing laws.

LICENSING LAWS FACILITATE SAFE GUN OWNERSHIP

Safety training and testing requirements in licensing laws help make sure that gun owners obey the law and understand how to handle their firearms safely.

By training owners on safe firearm storage and operation, licensing laws encourage responsible gun ownership and help reduce the shocking number of unintentional shootings, firearm thefts, and accidents involving minors that occur every year.

State Approaches to Gun Licensing:

- **California:** All gun owners must obtain a firearm safety certificate and pass a written exam on gun laws and responsible gun ownership. Before purchasing a firearm, individuals must perform a safe handling demonstration in the presence of an instructor certified by the California Department of Justice.
- **Connecticut, Hawaii, and New Jersey:** Prospective buyers must obtain a license to purchase all firearms.
- **Illinois:** All gun owners must have a license to own firearms.
- **Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Rhode Island:** Prospective buyers are required to obtain a license to purchase handguns.
- **Massachusetts:** All gun owners must have a license to own firearms and prospective buyers must obtain a special license to purchase handguns.
- **New York:** Handgun owners must have a license to own firearms.

PUBLISHED JULY 2018

For more details and underlying research, visit lawcenter.giffords.org/licensing

giffordslawcenter.org

FACEBOOK /Giffords TWITTER @GiffordsCourage

280+

lifesaving gun safety laws have been enacted in 45 states and DC since the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

125,000

Americans are shot each year—over one million in the past decade.

25x

Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed by a gun than people in other developed nations.

WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

CONTACT US

media@giffords.org