



Colorado Gun Laws Overview

Universal Background Checks (2000 amendment and 2013 law: CRS 18-12-112)

All persons who wish to buy or receive by transfer a firearm must undergo a background check through a federally licensed firearms dealer. This applies to firearms purchased at dealer, at gun show, through classified ads, on-line or through friends. There are exceptions: bona-fide gift or loan with family members, 72-hour loan.

Background checks are paid for by the buyer, not the taxpayer. (CRS 24-33.5-424) (2013 law)

There is no waiting period. (11 other states and DC require a waiting period for some firearms).

Prohibited Purchasers (CRS 24-33.5-424) (2000 law)

Expands federal prohibitions (felons, domestic violence misdemeanants, adjudicated mentally ill, those under domestic violence protective order, illegal immigrants, alcohol and drug abusers, dishonorably discharged and fugitives from justice) to include those "under arrest" for crimes.

Extends categories of prohibited juvenile offenders. (CRS 18-12-108).

Straw Purchases (2000 law: CRS 18-12-111)

Persons who knowingly purchase or obtain a firearm for a person is ineligible to possess a firearm under federal or state law commits a felony. (penalty: 2000 law)

Juvenile Possession of Handguns

Persons who provide a handgun to a person under 18 commit a felony. (CRS 18-12-108.7) (2000 law)

A person under 18 in possession of a handgun commits a misdemeanor. (CRS 18-12-108.5)

There are exceptions for target shooting and on family property, etc.

Domestic Violence Offenders

Persons who are under a protection order are prohibited from possessing or attempting to purchase or receive a firearm or ammunition while the protection order is in effect. (CRS 13-14-105.5 and 18-6-803.5)

Upon conviction of a domestic violence offense or imposition of a domestic violence protection order, the offender must relinquish his or her firearms and ammunition and is prohibited from acquiring firearms or ammunition for the duration of the order. (2013 law CRS 13-14-105.5 and 18-6-801)

Mental Illness Records (CRS 13-5-142 and 13-9-123)

The clerk of courts must periodically report to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) the names of persons who have been adjudicated as mentally ill. (2002 law)

High Capacity Ammunition Ban (18-12-301 to 18-12-303)

Prohibits the sale and transfer of fixed and detachable large capacity ammunition magazines designed to accept more than 15 rounds. Owners may continue to possess, but not transfer or sell, those magazines purchased before July 1, 2013. (2013 law)

Lawsuit Ban

Firearms and ammunition manufacturers, importers, and dealers are shielded from liability, except in the case of defects. In the event of a dismissed lawsuit the court shall award reasonable attorney fees and costs to the defendant. (CRS 13-21-501 to 13-21-505). (2000 law)

Stand Your Ground

Colorado only has stand-your-ground provisions for within a domicile (Castle Doctrine – CRS 18-1.704.5, 1985 law). Efforts to expand that “shoot-first” concept to businesses have been defeated for 10 straight years.

Open Carry

Although not expressly stated in statute, Colorado allows people to openly carry firearms without a permit. Home-rule cities may enact ordinances to limit or prohibit them.

Loaded firearms prohibited in any public transportation facility except with CCW permit (CRS 18-9-118)

Presence on racetracks could put owner’s license in jeopardy (CRS 12-60-507)

Concealed Carry (CCW) (CRS 18-12-201 to CRS 18-12-213, 2003 law, residency/reciprocity change in 2007)

Colorado sheriffs shall issue concealed carry permits to applicants who pass a background check, unless the sheriff has documented evidence of unsuitability (only 9 states and DC are MAY issue states).

Requirements for permit: legal resident of Colorado, 21, eligible to possess firearm, not convicted of perjury with respect to the CCW application, not habitual user of alcohol, not an unlawful user of or addicted to a controlled substance, not subject to a protection order, and demonstrates competence with a handgun.

Colorado recognizes permits from other states if the permittee is 1) 21 or over, 2) is a resident of that state, or 3) has been a Colorado resident for 90 days or fewer.

Concealed handguns may not be taken on K-12 schools or school property. (Can be in locked container of a vehicle). (CRS 18-12-105.5)

A CCW permit enables a person to carry a handgun onto state college and university campuses, although some campuses limit CCW possession to selected dormitories, and prohibit them at sports stadiums. (2012 court decision)

A person may carry a concealed firearm, even if they do not have a CCW permit, while in a private vehicle, as long as they are legal to possess a firearm. The firearm must be unloaded unless it is a handgun. (CRS 18-12-105.6)

Reckless Usage (CRS 18-12-106)

It is a misdemeanor to aim a firearm at another person, or recklessly or with criminal negligence discharge a firearm, set an unattended loaded trap with a gun, or possess a firearm while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or of a controlled substance.

Preemption (CRS 29-11.7-101 to 29-11.7-104)

A local government may not enact an ordinance or regulation of types of firearms that are legal under state and federal laws, and signs must be posted where open-carry is prohibited. A court decision indicated that some home rule cities retain some rights on regulations, such as Denver’s assault weapons and Saturday night specials ban and that they can regulate open carry as they wish. (2003 law)

Dangerous Weapons

Possession of a dangerous weapon (i.e., silencer, machine gun, shot shotgun or rifle or ballistic knife) is a felony unless one has valid permit and license for it. (18-12-102)