



MARYLAND GUN LAWS SUMMARY

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WHO CAN OWN OR POSSESS A FIREARM IN MARYLAND

Federal law establishes a baseline national standard regarding individuals' eligibility to acquire and possess firearms. Under federal law, people are generally prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms if they have been convicted of a felony or some domestic violence misdemeanors, or if they are subject to certain court orders related to domestic violence or a serious mental condition. However, federal law merely provides a baseline, and has gaps that allow individuals who have demonstrated significant risk factors for violence or self-harm to legally acquire and possess guns. Maryland law fills in some of these gaps.

o **Handguns and regulated firearms:** (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §§5-118-124)

- Handguns and assault weapons are categorized as regulated firearms. To purchase a regulated firearm, you must first obtain a Handgun Qualifying License (HQL). An applicant must apply through the Maryland State Police (MSP), take a 4-hour gun safety course, and pass a finger-print based background check (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §§ 5-101, 5-117, 5-117.1, 5-118, 5-123).
- Each HQL is valid for 10 years. Prior to each purchase of a regulated firearm, the dealer must conduct a standard background check through the National Instant Criminal Background Checks System (NICS) system to ensure the purchaser's qualifications have not changed throughout the time period (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §117.1).
- There is a 7-day waiting period for the purchase of a regulated firearm. A purchaser may only acquire one regulated firearm every 30 days (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §§ 5-123-124).



- There is a minimum age requirement of 21 years of age to be eligible to purchase a handgun (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-117.1).

Thus, Maryland attempts to fill some of the gaps in the federal law by allowing the Secretary of the Maryland State Police the ability to deny a transfer of a “regulated firearm” (a handgun or an assault weapon) (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(r); MD Code, Crim. Law §4-301(d)(3), (e)) if the prospective purchaser, lessee, or transferee (MD Code, Pub. Safety §§ 5-101(g) and 5-134(b)):

- Has been convicted of a crime of violence (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(b-1));
- Has been convicted of any Maryland-classified felony;
- Has been convicted of conspiracy to commit a felony;
- Has been convicted of a common law crime for which the person received a term of imprisonment for more than two years;
- Has been convicted of any Maryland-classified misdemeanor that carries a statutory penalty of more than two years;
- Is a fugitive from justice;
- Is a habitual drunkard;
- Is an addict or habitual user of any controlled dangerous substance;
- Is suffering from a mental disorder (See MD Code, Health-Gen §10-101(f)(2) for definition) and has a history of violent behavior, unless the purchaser, lessee, or transferee possesses a physician’s certificate stating that he or she is capable of possessing a regulated firearm without undue danger to himself, herself or others;
- Has been confined for more than 30 consecutive days to a facility (See MD Code, Health-Gen §10-101(e)) unless the purchaser, lessee, or transferee possesses a physician’s certificate stating that he or she is



capable of possessing a regulated firearm without undue danger to himself, herself or others;

- Is visibly under the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Is under 21 years of age;
- Is a participant in a “straw purchase” (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(v));
- Is subject to a “non ex parte civil protective order;” (MD Code, Fam. Law §4-506);
- If under the age of 30 years at the time of the transaction, has been adjudicated delinquent by a juvenile court for an act that would be a disqualifying crime if committed by an adult; or
- Has not completed a certified firearms safety training course, required to obtain a regulated firearm (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-134(b)(14)).

Firearm prohibitions for *possession* of a regulated firearm in Maryland are substantially similar to those regarding transfers of firearms, but do not include prohibitions for being “visibly under the influence of alcohol or drugs” or “a participant in a straw purchase,” and completing a certified firearms safety training course is not required. Moreover, the possession prohibitions include different, more expansive mental health restrictions, generally restricting firearm possession by any person who:

- Suffers from a mental disorder and has a history of violent behavior against himself, herself or another person (this prohibition does not contain the physician certificate exception) (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(6));
- Has been found incompetent to stand trial (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(7));



- Has been found “not criminally responsible” (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(8) and MD Code, Crim. Proc. §3-110);
- Has been voluntarily admitted for more than 30 consecutive days to a mental health facility (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(9));
- Has been involuntarily committed to a mental health facility (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(10); or
- Is under the protection of a guardian appointed by a court under Maryland law, except for cases in which the appointment of a guardian is solely a result of a physical disability (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(11)).

Maryland also explicitly prohibits any person from possessing a regulated firearm or a standard rifle or shotgun if that person (MD Code, Pub. Safety §§5-133(b), (c)(1), 5-205(b), 5-206);

- Has been convicted of a crime of violence, as defined (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(c) for crimes that constitute a “crime of violence”);
- Has been convicted of specified crimes related to controlled substances under Maryland law;¹
- Has been convicted of an offense under the laws of another state or the United States that would constitute a “crime of violence” or one of the controlled substance-related crimes listed above if committed in Maryland;

¹ See MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-602 (distributing, possessing with intent to distribute, or dispensing controlled dangerous substances); MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-603 (equipment to produce controlled dangerous substances); MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-604 (creating or possessing counterfeit substance); MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-605 (keeping common nuisance); MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-612 (volume dealer of controlled substances); MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-613 (drug kingpin); or MD Code, Crim. Law § 5-614 (importer of certain controlled dangerous substances).



- Has been convicted of a disqualifying crime (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(b-1));
- Has been convicted of a violation classified as a crime under common law and received a term of imprisonment of more than two years;
- Is a fugitive from justice;
- Is a habitual drunkard;
- Is addicted to or a habitual user of a controlled dangerous substance;
- Suffers from a mental disorder as defined by state law and has a history of violent behavior against himself, herself or another person;
- Has been found incompetent to stand trial under state law;
- Has been found “not criminally responsible” under state law;
- Has been voluntarily admitted for more than 30 consecutive days to a mental health facility as defined under state law (MD Code, Health-Gen §10-101);
- Has been involuntarily committed to a mental health facility as defined under state law;
- Is under the protection of a guardian appointed by a court, (MD Code, Est. & Trusts §§ 13-201(c) and 13-705) except for cases in which the appointment of a guardian is solely as a result of a physical disability;
- Is a respondent against whom: 1) a current non *ex parte* civil protective order has been entered; (MD Code, Fam. Law §4-506) or 2) an order for protection (MD Code, Fam. Law §4-508.1) has been issued by a court of another state or a Native American tribe and is in effect; or
- If under age 30 at the time of possession, has been adjudicated delinquent by a juvenile court for an act that would be a disqualifying crime if committed by an adult.



Longguns

As of 2021, a background check is required for the purchase or transfer of any long gun. Certain exceptions do apply such that a long gun may be transferred between family members and to members of law enforcement or the military (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-204.1).

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN (MD Code, Crim. Law §§ 4-301, 4-303)

- Maryland prohibits the possession, sale, offering of sale, transfer, purchase, receipt, or transportation into the state of an assault weapon, which includes assault pistols and assault long guns.
- Assault weapons are categorized as “regulated firearms.” Regulated firearms are either banned or subject to enhanced background checks, firearm dealer regulations, private sale requirements and reporting of lost or stolen firearms regulations. In addition, purchasers must:
 - be 21 years of age or older;
 - Wait 7-days before transfer can be completed;
 - be limited to no more than 1 assault weapon in any 30-day period.
- Within the regulated category, most assault-style weapons are banned. The ban includes:
 - Brand and model specific list including copycat weapons;
 - Any semi-automatic rifle with any two of these features:
 - A folding stock
 - A grenade launcher or flare launcher; or
 - A flash suppressor;
 - A semi automatic centerfire rifle with fixed magazine and capacity to accept more than 10 rounds;



- A semi automatic centerfire rifle with an over length less than 29 inches;
 - A semi automatic pistol with fixed magazine that can accept more than 10 rounds;
 - A semi automatic shotgun that has a folding stock;
 - A shotgun with a revolving cylinder.
- There is a minimum age requirement of 21 years of age to be eligible to purchase a regulated firearm.
 - All 'rapid fire trigger devices' or bump stocks are prohibited.

SAFE FIREARM STORAGE AND CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION

Neither U.S. nor Maryland state laws require that gun owners safely store their firearms. Maryland law does require that gun owners store loaded firearms where they know that a child under 16 would not gain access (MD Code, Crim. Law §4-104). In addition, handguns must be sold with an integrated mechanical safety device. This internal device should keep the handgun from being discharged unless the device has been deactivated. (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-132).

In addition to the above, individuals who are allowed by law to transport firearms in automobiles must do so in an “enclosed case” or “enclosed holster” (See MD Code, Crim. Law §4-203).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FIREARMS

Federal law prohibits purchase and possession of firearms and ammunition by people who have been convicted in any court of a “misdemeanor crime



of domestic violence,” and/or who are subject to certain domestic violence protective orders (18 USC §922(g)(8),(9)).

In 2022, Congress enacted and President Biden signed a new law that prohibits purchase and possession of firearms for five years by people convicted in any court of a “misdemeanor crime of domestic violence” against a victim with whom they have or had a current or recent former dating relationship (18 USC §921(a)(33) and §922(g)(9)). If a person is convicted more than once of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence against a person with whom they have or had a dating relationship, the prohibition on gun purchases and possession lasts indefinitely, i.e., it does not automatically expire after five years, although the person can seek restoration of their firearms rights in the same manner as people convicted of felonies or other misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. (18 USC §921(a)(33)).

Maryland prohibits the sale or other transfer of a “regulated firearm” (handgun or assault weapon) to, or possession of a firearm by, any person “convicted of a disqualifying crime” (MD Code, Pub. Safety §§5-133(b)(1), (c), 5-134(b)(2)). A person “convicted of a disqualifying crime” is also prohibited from possessing a standard rifle or shotgun (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-205).

A “disqualifying crime” is generally defined as:

1. A crime of violence in Maryland or another state; or
2. Any Maryland-classified misdemeanor that carries a statutory penalty of more than two years (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(g)).



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDER

- People subject to a “non ex parte civil protective order” are prohibited from possessing a handgun or assault weapon (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-133(b)(12)).
- People may not sell, rent, or transfer a handgun or assault weapon to a person who is subject to a current “non ex parte civil protective order” issued pursuant to MD Code, Fam. Law §4-506 (See MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-134(b)(10)).
- As noted above, Federal law also prohibits the purchase and possession of firearms and ammunition by people subject to certain domestic violence-related protective orders.

A person is also eligible to receive a domestic violence order of protection if he or she falls into the following categories (MD Code, Fam. Law §4-501(m)):

- A current or former spouse;
- A cohabitant;
- A person related to the respondent by blood, marriage, or adoption;
- A parent, stepparent, child, or stepchild of the respondent or the person eligible for relief who resides or resided with the respondent or person eligible for relief for at least 90 days within 1 year before filing this petition;
- A vulnerable adult;
- An individual who has a child in common with the respondent;
- An individual who alleges that the respondent committed, within 6 months before the filing of the petition, any of the following acts against the individual:
 - Rape or a sexual offense, or attempted rape or sexual offense.



REMOVAL OR SURRENDER OF FIREARMS

- A final domestic violence **protective order** issued under MD Code, Fam. Law § 4-506 must order the person subject to the order to surrender to law enforcement any firearm in his or her possession, and to refrain from possession of any firearm for the duration of the protective order. Law enforcement receiving a firearm lawfully surrendered must transport and store the firearm safely while the protective order is in effect. Maryland law addresses the retaking of possession of the firearm at the expiration of a protective order (MD Code, Fam. Law §4-506.1).
- In 2018, Maryland enacted a law that requires a person convicted of a disqualifying crime to surrender any firearms, if the court has found that the crime was “domestically related,” (MD Code, Crim. Proc. §6-234). When a person is charged with such a crime, the state’s attorney must provide the person with a notice that a person convicted of such a crime is prohibited from possessing firearms. When a person is convicted of or pleads guilty to a **domestic violence-related** crime, the court must order the person to surrender his or her firearms within 2 business days after the conviction to a law enforcement agency or a federally licensed firearms dealer. The person may designate a representative to transfer their firearms. The Police Training and Standards Commission, in consultation with the Maryland State’s Attorneys’ Association, is required to develop a training curriculum to ensure use of best practices in investigating compliance with these requirements. MD Code, Pub. Safety §3-207(i).
- Maryland allows a law enforcement officer responding to an alleged **domestic violence incident** to remove a firearm **from the scene** if he



or she: 1) has probable cause to believe an act of domestic violence has occurred; and 2) observed the firearm on the scene during the response. The officer must provide information to the owner regarding the process for retrieving the firearm and must provide safe storage for the firearm during any related domestic violence legal proceeding. The owner may resume possession of the firearm at the conclusion of legal proceedings related to the domestic violence incident, unless ordered by a court to surrender the weapon. MD Code, Fam. Law §4-511.

EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDERS (ERPO): MD Code, Pub. Safety §§5-601-605

In 2018, Maryland enacted a law that enables certain individuals to petition a court to remove guns from a person in crisis. These ERPOs allow a:

- Law enforcement officer,
- Family member,
- Dating partner,
- Mental health professional or
- Health officer

To file a petition demonstrating to a judge that an individual poses a danger to themselves or others. If the court determines that the petitioner has met the standard of proof, it will issue an order that lasts up to one year. An individual subject to an ERPO must relinquish their guns to law enforcement.



FIREARM DEALERS

Federal law requires firearms dealers to obtain a license from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF). In addition, any person in Maryland engaged in the business of selling, renting, or transferring state-defined “regulated firearms” (handguns and assault weapons) (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(r)) must have a Maryland firearms dealer’s license (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-106). A separate license is required for each place of business where regulated firearms are sold. Prospective dealers may only obtain such a license if they are not prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under federal and state law.

As of October 1, 2013, the Secretary of State Police (Secretary) must disapprove an application for a dealer’s license if the Secretary:

- Determines that the applicant supplied false information or made a false statement; or
- Receives a letter from the applicant’s licensed attending physician that the applicant suffers from a mental disorder and is a danger to the applicant or to another (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-110(a)(1)-(3)).

The Secretary also must disapprove such an application if the Secretary determines that the applicant intends that a person who is not eligible to be issued a dealer’s license or whose dealer’s license has been revoked or suspended:

- Will participate in the management or operation of the business for which the license is sought; or



- Holds a legal or equitable interest in the business for which the license is sought (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-110(a)(4)).

A regulated firearms dealer's license is valid for one year (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-111(a)).

A licensed dealer must keep records of all receipts, sales, and other dispositions of firearms affected in connection with the licensed dealer's business. (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145(a)(1)).

The records must include:

- The name and address of each person from whom the dealer acquires a firearm and to whom the dealer sells or otherwise disposes of a firearm;
- A precise description, including make, model, caliber, and serial number of each firearm acquired, sold, or otherwise disposed of;
- The date of each acquisition, sale, or other disposition; and
- Any other information required by regulations adopted by the Secretary (MD Code., Pub. Safety §5-145(a)(2), (3)).

The Secretary must adopt regulations specifying the time period and form in which records are to be kept (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145-(a)(2)).

When a firearms business is discontinued and succeeded by a new dealer, the records required to be kept under the above provisions must reflect the business discontinuance and succession and must be delivered to the successor dealer (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145(c)).

A dealer must respond within 48 hours after receipt of a request from the Secretary for information contained in the required records when the



information is requested in connection with a bona fide criminal investigation (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145(d)(1)).

The Secretary must inspect the inventory and records of a licensed dealer at least once every two years, and may inspect the inventory and records at any time during the normal business hours of the licensed dealer's business. (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145(f)).

FIREARM DEALER SECURITY REQUIREMENTS (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-145.1)

Enacted in 2022, licenced firearm dealers in Maryland are now required to equip their premises with certain security related enhancements which include:

- Video surveillance equipment inside and outside buildings;
- Security features designed to prevent unauthorized entry on all exterior doors and windows (i.e., bars, security screens, metal doors, grates, or other MSP approved barrier);
- Monitored burglar alarm;
- Barriers designed to prevent structural breach by motor vehicle;
- Outside of business hours, firearms are locked in a vault, safe, or secure room.

A failure to comply with these requirements is subject to a fine and for subsequent offense suspension or revocation of license.

PRIVATE SALES

“Private” firearms sellers (persons who are not licensed dealers) must process transfers of “regulated firearms” (handguns and assault weapons) (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101(r)) and rifles and shotguns through a licensed dealer, who conducts a background check. (Md. Code Pub. Safety §5-124(a)



and Md. Code Pub. Safety §5-204.1). Regulated firearms may also be transferred through a designated law enforcement agency (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-124(a)(2)). In addition, no regulated firearm, rifle, or shotgun transfers may be made to any person whom the private seller knows or has a reasonable cause to believe is a prohibited purchaser under state law (MD Code, Pub. Safety §§ 5-134(b) and 5-207(c)).

PUBLIC CARRY OF FIREARMS

Maryland prohibits wearing, carrying, or transporting a handgun, whether concealed or open, on or about the person without a permit (MD Code, Crim. Law §4-203(a), (b)(2), MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-303). This prohibition does not apply on real estate that the person owns or leases, where the person resides, or within the confines of a business establishment that the person owns or leases (MD Code, Crim. Law §4-203(a), (b)(2)).

Though Maryland law states that the Secretary of the Maryland State Police (“Secretary”) shall issue a handgun carry permit within a reasonable time to any person who meets the minimum statutory requirements to receive a permit, those minimum requirements provide the Secretary with discretion to issue or deny such permits. Prior to the 2022 Supreme Court decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Assn., Inc. v. Bruen* (597 U.S. ___ (2022)), Maryland had been considered a “may-issue” state for 50 years (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-306(a). Prior to that and since 1886, the only people allowed to carry a firearm in public were officials who needed a firearm as part of their official equipment. However, the *Bruen* decision effectively removed the requirement that an applicant have a “good and substantial” reason for carrying a firearm in public. At present, the Secretary is required to issue a handgun carry permit when he or she finds, based on an investigation, that the applicant (1) has not exhibited a propensity for violence or instability



that may reasonably render the person's possession of a handgun a danger to the person or to another.

Any person wishing to obtain a handgun carry permit must also: (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-306(a), (c)).

- Be an "adult;"
- Have no felony convictions or misdemeanor convictions for which a sentence of imprisonment for more than one year has been imposed (unless such a person has been pardoned or successfully petitioned for relief from this prohibition);
- If under age 30, have no adjudications of delinquency in a juvenile court for any act that would be a felony or "crime of violence" if committed by an adult or for any misdemeanor carrying a statutory penalty of two years or more, and have never been committed to any detention, training or correctional institution for more than one year as a juvenile;
- Have no convictions involving the possession, use or distribution of controlled substances, and not be presently an alcoholic, addict or habitual user of a controlled dangerous substance, (unless the habitual use of the controlled dangerous substance is under legitimate medical direction); and
- Meet all federal and state requirements to possess a handgun.

Applicants for a first-time permit are required to submit a nonrefundable application fee not to exceed \$75 (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-304(b)(2)(i)).

A handgun carry permit will be revoked if the permittee no longer satisfies the qualifications to hold a permit or fails to carry the permit any time they



carry, wear or transport a handgun (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-310(a)). Anyone failing to return to the Secretary their revoked permit is criminally liable for a misdemeanor (Md. Code Pub. Safety §5-313). Permittees are criminally liable for a misdemeanor if they wear, carry or transport a handgun while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-314).

Maryland also imposes a misdemeanor upon any person who carries, wears or transports a handgun, whether concealed or in open view, without a valid handgun permit. Prior to *Bruen*, the Secretary of State Police retained the power to limit the geographic area, circumstances, or times in which the handgun permit is effective (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-307(b)). The Secretary lifted all restrictions on already issued permits in July of 2022 immediately increasing the number of permit holders allowed to carry firearms in public.

Maryland handgun carry permits generally expire “on the last day of the holder’s birth month following 2 years after the date the permit is issued.” Permits may be renewed for successive periods of three years each, upon application and payment of a renewal fee. Applicants must continue to possess the qualifications set forth in the handgun permitting rules of MD Code, Pub. Safety § 5-306 to renew a permit (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-309(b)).

Maryland does not recognize concealed weapons permits issued in other states.

FIREARM SAFETY TRAINING

There are two types of firearm safety training required by Maryland law: Handgun Qualification License Training and Wear/Carry Permit Training.



To purchase a handgun in Maryland, a person must complete the Handgun Qualification License training (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-117.1). This training includes:

- 4 hours of instruction
- Coverage of state firearm law
- Home firearm safety
- Handgun mechanisms and operation
- Demonstration of safe operation and handling.

In order to qualify for a public carry license, one must complete the Wear and Carry Permit Training (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-306). This training requires:

- 16 hours for a first time applicant and 8 hours for a renewal
- Coverage of state firearm law
- Home firearm safety
- Handgun mechanisms and operation
- [Competency](#) with gun safety and proficiency with 70% accuracy
 - Basic applicant must shoot a course of at least 25 rounds from no further than 15 yards with at least 70% accuracy
 - Designated security personnel must shoot a practical police course of at least 50 rounds, from no further than 25 yards and score at least 70% accuracy.



LOCATION RESTRICTIONS IN MARYLAND

Restrictions on the wear, carry and transport of handguns and firearms in certain places appear throughout Maryland law and regulations. Below are statutes and regulations detailing the handgun and firearm restrictions.

1. On school property (MD Code, Crim. Law §4-102);
2. Within 1,000 feet of a demonstration in a public place (MD Code, Crim. Law §4-208) after a warning;
3. In legislative buildings (MD Code, State Gov. §2-1702);
4. Aboard aircraft (MD Code, Transportation §5-1008);
5. In lodging establishments innkeepers may refuse or remove lodgers when they reasonably believe individuals possess property that may be dangerous to other individuals, such as firearms or explosives (MD Code, Bus. Reg. §15-203);
6. On dredge boats, other than two 10 gauge shotguns (MD Code, Nat. Resources §4-1013(f));
7. In or around State-owned public buildings and grounds (MD Code, Regs. 04.05.01.03);
8. On Chesapeake Forest Lands (MD Code, Regs. 08.01.07.14);
9. In State Forests (MD Code, Regs. 08.07.01.04);
10. In State Parks (MD Code, Regs. 08.07.06.04);
11. In State Highway Rest Areas (MD Code, Regs 11.04.07.12);
12. Under the Division of Correction, in community adult rehabilitation centers (MD Code, Regs 12.02.03.10);



13. In child care centers, except for small centers located in residences, firearms may not be kept on the premises (MD Code, of Regs. 13A.16.10.04) (In small residential centers the firearm must be stored unloaded, partially disassembled, in a locked container with ammunition in a separate locked container).

PRIVATELY MADE FIREARMS (GHOST GUNS)

In 2022, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) issued a new regulation, “Definition of ‘Frame or Receiver’ and Identification of Firearms,” which defines the weapons parts kits that can be readily converted into a fully assembled firearm, to including to function as a frame or receiver, as “firearms.” (27 C.F.R. pts. 447, 478, 479.) Defining these kits as firearms requires sellers of these kits to have a federal firearm license, to serialize the parts and retain records, and to conduct a background check before every sale of a kit. The new rule does not affect the regulation of firearms built at home from scratch, those assembled with a fully manufactured frame or receiver, or the building of a historical replica.

Also in 2022, the Maryland General Assembly adopted legislation designed to mirror the requirements of the new federal regulation requiring licensed sellers of firearm kits to treat the kits and unfinished frames and receivers as firearms. The Maryland law also fills gaps left by the federal rule. Maryland requires that firearm kits and parts are sold as firearms and in accordance with all laws surrounding the selling of firearms such as background checks and waiting periods. Furthermore, it requires that current owners of unserialized privately made firearms bring those firearms into compliance with serialization by March 1, 2023. The law sets out a framework for serialization including specifications for marking (MD Code, Pub. Safety §5-101, MD Code, Pub. Safety §§ 5-701-706).