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### Licensing Gun Owners & Purchasers Policy Summary

Posted on August 23, 2013

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#### BACKGROUND

Licensing laws facilitate responsible gun ownership by requiring a person to obtain a license before purchasing a firearm. Although licensing laws vary, the most comprehensive laws require all gun owners to possess a license and regularly renew it. These licenses may only be issued or renewed after the applicant has undergone a background check and safety training, and has passed written and performance-based tests showing that the applicant knows how to safely load, fire and store a gun, and has knowledge of relevant firearms laws.

Licensing laws are one method for closing the “private sale loophole” and ensuring that every person who purchases or possesses a gun has undergone a background check. Other states close the private sale loophole by requiring a background check at the point of sale of a firearm. For more information about this issue, see our summary on [Universal Background Checks & the Private Sale Loophole](#). Licensing laws that require periodic renewal can also help law enforcement confirm that a gun owner

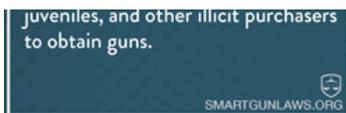
#### LICENSING LAWS ARE ESSENTIAL

Licensing laws facilitate responsible gun ownership by requiring a person to obtain a license before purchasing or possessing a firearm.

Licensing laws help prevent the illegal trafficking of crime guns and make it more difficult for criminals, juveniles, and other illicit purchasers

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remains eligible to possess firearms, and can facilitate the removal of firearms from people who have become ineligible.



**Training and testing requirements in licensing laws are designed to ensure that gun owners understand relevant firearms laws, and know how to safely store and handle firearms.** Proper storage and handling of firearms help reduce the shocking number of unintentional shootings, firearms thefts, and incidents in which unauthorized persons, such as children and criminals, gain access to firearms every year. For statistics regarding these problems, see our summary on [Safe Storage & Gun Locks](#).

**Licensing laws also help prevent the trafficking of crime guns,** and make it more difficult for criminals, juveniles and other prohibited purchasers to obtain guns.

- A September 2010 report by Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that states that require purchase permits for all handgun sales are the sources of guns recovered from crimes in other states at less than one-third the rate of states that do not have such laws.<sup>1</sup>
- A 2001 study analyzing firearm tracing data from 25 U.S. cities revealed that states with some form of both registration and licensing systems have greater success keeping firearms initially sold by dealers in the state from being recovered in crimes than states without such systems in place.<sup>2</sup>

In 2007, Missouri repealed its requirement that handgun purchasers obtain a permit after a background check. Since that repeal:

- The share of crime guns recovered in Missouri that were originally purchased in-state has grown by 25%;
- A key indicator of crime gun trafficking – the share of guns that were recovered at crime scenes within two years of their original sale – has doubled; and
- The crime gun murder rate in the state has risen nearly 25%.<sup>3</sup>



**Public opinion polls show that Americans strongly support licensing laws.** A national survey conducted in January 2013 found that 77.3% of Americans (including 59.4% of gun owners) support requiring people to obtain a license from a local law enforcement agency before buying a gun to verify their identity and ensure that they are not legally prohibited from having a gun.<sup>4</sup> The licensing of handgun owners receives even more support, with 85% of respondents – including 73% of gun owners – in a 2001 nationwide poll favoring laws requiring handgun purchasers to obtain a permit before buying a handgun.<sup>5</sup> In that poll, 70% of the respondents mistakenly believed that a system of licensing and registration already exists.<sup>6</sup> For information about registration laws, see our summary on [Registration of Firearms](#).

## SUMMARY OF FEDERAL LAW

Federal law does not require licensing of gun owners or purchasers.

For information about the exemption that federal law provides for certain license holders to the background check required when a firearm is purchased from a licensed dealer, see our summary on [Background Checks Procedure](#).

## SUMMARY OF STATE LAW

In general, licensing laws fall into two broad categories.<sup>7</sup> Eleven jurisdictions mandate that prospective firearm purchasers obtain a permit or license prior to the purchase of at least some firearms. These laws are sometimes known as “permit to purchase” licensing schemes. Illinois and Massachusetts, on

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the other hand, require a “license to own” a firearm, and New York requires a license to own a handgun. Unlike a permit to purchase, a license to own a firearm must remain valid for as long as the person owns the firearm. The District of Columbia’s registration requirement also functions as a license requirement.

Any of these forms of licensing requirement can be used to impose a background check requirement. See our summary on [Universal Background Checks & the Private Sale Loophole](#) for further information. Both permits to purchase and licenses to own firearms can also be used to ensure that firearm owners or purchasers have undergone adequate safety training or testing.

#### State Licensing Requirements for Gun Purchase or Possession

	Type of firearms	Type of license	Safety training or exam required	Duration
<a href="#">California<sup>8</sup></a>	All firearms	Permit to purchase	Yes	5 years <sup>9</sup>
<a href="#">Connecticut<sup>10</sup></a>	All firearms	Permit to purchase	Yes	5 years
<a href="#">District of Columbia<sup>11</sup></a>	All firearms	Registration	Yes	3 years
<a href="#">Hawaii<sup>12</sup></a>	All firearms	Permit to purchase	Yes (handguns)	10 days
			No (long guns)	1 year
<a href="#">Iowa<sup>13</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase	No	1 year
<a href="#">Illinois<sup>14</sup></a>	All firearms	License to own	No	10 years
<a href="#">Maryland<sup>15</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase	Yes	10 years
<a href="#">Massachusetts<sup>16</sup></a>	All firearms and ammunition devices	License to own	Yes	6 years
		Permit to purchase (handguns only)	Yes	10 days
<a href="#">Michigan<sup>17</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase <sup>18</sup>	No	30 days
<a href="#">Nebraska<sup>19</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase	No	3 years
<a href="#">New Jersey<sup>20</sup></a>	All firearms	Permit to purchase <sup>21</sup>	No	So long as eligible (long guns)
				90 days (handguns) <sup>22</sup>
<a href="#">New York<sup>23</sup></a>	Handguns	License to own	No	5 years
<a href="#">North Carolina<sup>24</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase	No	5 years
<a href="#">Rhode Island<sup>25</sup></a>	Handguns	Permit to purchase	Yes	unspecified

Minnesota offers an optional permit to purchase handguns and semiautomatic military-style assault weapons; this permit only exempts the holder from the state requirement of a background check prior to the purchase of such weapons from a federally licensed dealer.<sup>26</sup> See our summary on [Background Checks Procedure](#) for more information.

#### Description of State Laws Governing Licensing of Gun Owners or Purchasers

For citations to these laws please see the chart above.

**1. States Requiring Licenses for Purchasers or Owners of All Firearms:** The laws described below require licenses to possess and/or permits to purchase for all firearms. California, Connecticut, Hawaii and New Jersey require permits to purchase all firearms. Illinois requires a license to purchase and possess all firearms. Massachusetts requires a license to possess all firearms and a permit to purchase handguns. Each state’s licensing scheme has unique elements, which are described below

**California – Permit to Purchase:** California requires a Firearm Safety Certificate (“FSC”) prior to purchase of any firearm. The FSC is valid for 5 years. This requirement is currently only applicable to handguns, but will become applicable to all firearms as of January 1, 2015.

- **Duration:** California Firearm Safety Certificates are valid for five years from the date of issue.
- **No Limit on Number of Firearms Purchased:** California does not impose any limit on the number of firearms that may be purchased by the holder of a permit or certificate.

**Connecticut – Permit to Purchase:** <sup>27</sup> Connecticut requires a person who wishes to purchase or receive a handgun to obtain either a permit to carry a handgun or a handgun eligibility certificate. Connecticut requires a person who wishes to purchase or receive a long gun to obtain a long gun eligibility certificate, a permit to carry a handgun, or a handgun eligibility certificate. Permits and certificates may be revoked in the event the holder becomes disqualified.

- **Duration:** Connecticut permits and certificates are valid for five years from the date of issue.
- **No Limit on Number of Firearms Purchased:** Connecticut does not impose any limit on the number of firearms that may be purchased by the holder of a permit or certificate.

**District of Columbia – Registration:** Details about D.C.’s registration requirements for all firearms can be

found in our summary on the [Registration of Firearms](#).

*Hawaii – Permit to Purchase:* In Hawaii, anyone wishing to acquire a firearm must obtain a permit from the county chief of police.<sup>28</sup> As part of the application process, applicants undergo a background check and must sign a waiver allowing access to mental health records. Permits may not issue until at least 14 days have passed after the date of application, and all permits must be issued or denied before the 20<sup>th</sup> day from the date of application. (Several exceptions exist to the 14-day waiting period, including transfers to law enforcement officers, persons licensed to carry a handgun, and sales to licensed dealers.) Permits may be revoked for good cause. When a firearm is purchased, the permit is used as a record of the purchase, and must be sent with a description of the firearm purchased, to the issuing authority.

- **Duration:** Permits to acquire a handgun are valid for 10 days from the date of issue, and long gun permits are valid for one year from date of issue.
- **Single Purchase:** Handgun purchases are limited to one handgun per permit.

*Illinois – License to Purchase or Possess:* In Illinois, no person may acquire or possess any firearm or ammunition without a valid Firearm Owner's Identification (FOID) card. Each applicant for a FOID card is required to complete an application and "submit evidence" to the Department of State Police (DSP) that she or he is not a prohibited purchaser.<sup>29</sup> The DSP has the authority to revoke a FOID card if the holder becomes a prohibited purchaser. Effective January 1, 2014, a private person who sells or transfers a firearm must contact DSP to verify the validity of the purchaser's FOID card.

- **Duration:** FOID cards are valid for ten years from the date of issue.
- **No Limit on Number of Firearms Purchased:** Illinois does not impose any limit on the number of firearms that may be purchased by the holder of a FOID card.

*Massachusetts – License to Possess and Permit to Purchase:* In Massachusetts, all firearm possessors are required to obtain either a Firearm Identification (FID) card or a Class A or B license to carry a firearm. FID card holders are permitted to purchase and possess rifles or shotguns, excluding large capacity weapons.<sup>30</sup> A Class A license allows the licensee to purchase and possess all types of lawful firearms; a Class B license is limited to "non-large capacity" handguns and any rifle or shotgun, but does not permit carrying concealed, loaded handguns in a public place.<sup>31</sup> All applicants must undergo a background check. The licensing authority has 40 days to approve or deny the application. A FID card or Class A or B license must be revoked or suspended if the holder becomes disqualified from obtaining the card or license.

To purchase a handgun in Massachusetts, a FID card holder must also obtain a permit to purchase. A permit to purchase is issued at the discretion of the licensing authority for a "proper purpose," following a background check.

- **Duration:** FID cards and Class A and Class B licenses are valid for 6 years; permits to acquire handguns are valid for 10 days.
- **Single Purchase:** Handgun purchases are limited to one handgun per permit. However, there is no limit on the number of firearms that may be purchased with a Class A or Class B license, or on the number of non-large capacity rifles or shotguns that may be purchased with a FID Card.

*New Jersey – Permit to Purchase:* In New Jersey, all handgun purchasers must obtain a permit to purchase a handgun. Purchasers of rifles or shotguns are required to obtain a Firearms Purchaser Identification Card (FPIC). Both require the applicant to undergo a background check and waive confidentiality relating to any institutional confinement for a mental or psychiatric condition. New Jersey law also provides that no handgun transfer permit or FPIC may be issued where the transfer would not be in the interest of the public health, safety or welfare. In addition, the applicant must be of "good character and good repute in the community" where he or she lives. The FPIC or permit must be issued within 30 days of application, or 45 days if the applicant is a non-resident. A FPIC may be revoked by a superior court after a hearing with notice, upon a finding that the holder no longer qualifies for the FPIC.

- **Duration:** Handgun purchase permits in New Jersey are valid for 90 days, and may be extended for an additional 90 days for good cause. New Jersey FPICs are valid as long as the holder remains eligible to possess a firearm.
- **Single Purchase:** Handgun purchases are limited to one handgun per permit and one handgun per 30 day-period.<sup>32</sup>

**2. States Requiring Licenses or Permits for Handguns Only:** Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island all require licenses or permits for purchase or possession of handguns only.<sup>33</sup>

*Iowa:* Iowa requires an annual permit to acquire pistols or revolvers. Permits may be revoked in the event the holder becomes disqualified.

*Maryland:* Maryland requires that a person obtain a permit before the person buys, rents, or receives a

handgun. A permit is valid for 10 years.

*Michigan:* Michigan requires either a license to carry a concealed handgun or a handgun purchase license, although a person who purchases a handgun from a licensed dealer does not need either license. A handgun purchase license is valid for 30 days.

*Nebraska:* Nebraska issues handgun certificates, although handgun purchasers outside Omaha who purchase from licensed dealers or who have a concealed weapons permit do not need a handgun certificate. Purchasers from private sellers must obtain a handgun certificate. Handgun certificates are valid for 3 years.

*New York:* New York requires a license to purchase or possess a handgun.<sup>34</sup> Handgun licenses in New York must be recertified every 5 years, and must specify the weapon by caliber, make, model, manufacturer's name and serial number. Specific provisions apply to permits in New York City, where the duration is 3 years, and in Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester Counties, where the duration is 5 years.

*North Carolina:* North Carolina requires a handgun purchaser to obtain either a permit to purchase a handgun or a concealed handgun permit. Both are valid for 5 years. The handgun purchase permit is valid for purchase of a single handgun, and must be revoked if the person becomes ineligible.

*Rhode Island:* Rhode Island requires a pistol/revolver safety certificate issued by the state Department of Environmental Management. The certificate remains valid indefinitely.

### **3. States Requiring Safety Training or a Safety Exam Prior to Issuance of a License or**

**Permit:** California, Connecticut, D.C., and Massachusetts require safety training or testing before a license or permit is issued. Massachusetts requires safety training of all applicants for a Firearm Identification (FID) card, Class A or Class B license, or permit to purchase a handgun. Applicants must submit a basic firearms safety certificate issued following a course that includes instruction on: (1) the safe use, handling and storage of firearms; (2) methods for securing and childproofing firearms; (3) the applicable laws relating to the possession, transportation and storage of firearms; and (4) knowledge of operation, potential dangers and basic competency in the ownership and usage of firearms.

In the District of Columbia, an applicant to register a firearm must complete a firearms training and safety class and demonstrate knowledge about firearms laws, safe storage of firearms, and requirements for storage.

California requires anyone purchasing a handgun to obtain a Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC) prior to purchase. To obtain a FSC, the applicant must pass a written safety test. In addition, subject to limited exceptions, all firearm purchasers are required to perform a safe handling demonstration with the firearm being purchased in the presence of a certified instructor. California law specifies various safe handling tasks the prospective purchaser must perform based on the type of firearm to be purchased.

Connecticut requires safety training prior to issuance of any firearm permit. More specifically, in Connecticut, applicants for a handgun eligibility certificate, a permit to carry a handgun, or a long gun eligibility certificate must successfully complete an approved course in the safety and use of firearms.

Hawaii, Maryland, and Rhode Island also require safety training or a safety exam prior to issuance of a handgun license or permit. Hawaii requires handgun permit applicants to complete an approved course that focuses on: (1) the safe use, handling and storage of firearms and firearms safety in the home; and (2) state firearms laws. Maryland applicants must complete an approved firearm safety training course that includes instruction on state firearms law, home firearm safety, handgun mechanisms and operation, and an orientation component that demonstrates the person's safe operation and handling of a firearm. In Rhode Island, anyone wishing to purchase a handgun who does not have a concealed handgun license and is not a member of law enforcement must complete a basic two-hour handgun safety course.<sup>35</sup>

## **SELECTED LOCAL LAW**

### **New York City**

As noted above, while state law in New York requires a person to obtain a permit for the purchase or possession of a handgun, this requirement does not apply to rifles or shotguns. In New York City, however, a rifle or shotgun permit is required for the purchase or possession of rifles or shotguns. Permits are issued following a background check, and are valid for three years. Permits are renewed automatically unless the police commissioner has reason to believe the applicant's status has changed since the previous application. Permits may be revoked and weapons seized upon evidence that the holder of the permit has become disqualified. A rifle or shotgun permit is also required for possession of rifle or shotgun ammunition and a rifle or shotgun ammunition feeding device.<sup>36</sup>

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## FEATURES OF COMPREHENSIVE LAW

The features listed below are intended to provide a framework from which policy options may be considered.<sup>37</sup> A jurisdiction considering new legislation should consult with counsel.

- License is required for possession of any firearm (*D.C., Illinois, Massachusetts*), and must be shown prior to purchase of any firearm (*California, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Jersey*)
- License must be shown prior to purchase of a firearm from any seller, even if the seller is not a licensed dealer (*5 states and D.C. — any firearm; 8 states — handguns only*)
- License conditions include:
  - Thorough background check (*Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey – all firearms; Iowa, Michigan, New York and North Carolina also require background checks, but only for handgun licenses*)
  - Safety training (*Connecticut, D.C., Massachusetts – all firearms; Hawaii, Maryland, and Rhode Island also require safety training, but only for handgun licenses*)
  - Hands-on testing, including firing testing, to demonstrate safe use of firearms
  - Written testing to demonstrate knowledge of applicable firearm laws (*California and D.C. require testing on firearms laws*)
- License has finite duration (*California, Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts – all firearms; Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey and North Carolina also have licenses of finite duration, but only for handguns*)
- Renewal process includes background check and testing as described above (*Massachusetts*)
- Licensee is required to report theft or loss of license and firearms<sup>38</sup>
- License is subject to revocation in cases where licensee becomes a prohibited purchaser (*Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey – all firearms; Iowa also provides for revocation under these circumstances, but only for handgun licenses*), or fails to comply with applicable federal, state and local firearms laws
- Fee for license is set at a level sufficient to cover administrative costs associated with licensing system
- Firearm seller or transferor must obtain a copy of the purchaser's license, record a description of the firearm purchased, and forward this record to law enforcement<sup>39</sup>
- Additional requirements are imposed for handgun permit to purchase:
  - Short duration applies to handgun permit to purchase (*Hawaii – 10 days, Massachusetts – 10 days, Michigan – 30 days, New Jersey – 90 days*)
  - Permit to purchase is limited to one handgun per permit (*Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina*)

1. Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *Trace the Guns: The Link Between Gun Laws and Interstate Gun Trafficking* 17 (2010), available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/report.pdf>. According to this report, states that require handgun purchase permits often require that a prospective gun buyer visit a law enforcement agency to obtain the permit – which may deter criminals and traffickers from applying. The report also suggests that the enhanced background checks these laws may impose on license applicants make it more difficult for gun traffickers to obtain firearms. *Id.* See also Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *The Movement of Illegal Guns in America: The Link between Gun Laws and Interstate Gun Trafficking* 14 (Dec. 2008), at [http://www.mayorsagainstilllegalguns.org/downloads/pdf/trace\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.mayorsagainstilllegalguns.org/downloads/pdf/trace_report_final.pdf). [PDF]
2. Daniel W. Webster et al., *Relationship Between Licensing, Registration, and Other Gun Sales Laws and the Source State of Crime Guns*, 7 *Inj. Prevention* 184, 188-89 (2001). The study included jurisdictions with concealed carry permits and dealer sales reporting, which have elements of licensing or registration but are not comprehensive licensing or registration systems. [PDF]
3. Mayors Against Illegal Guns, *The Impact of Eliminating Missouri's Background Check Requirement*, at [http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/5d/f/1990/MAIG\\_-\\_Lessons\\_from\\_Missouri0713.pdf](http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/5d/f/1990/MAIG_-_Lessons_from_Missouri0713.pdf). [PDF]
4. Colleen L. Barry et al., *Perspective: After Newtown — Public Opinion on Gun Policy and Mental Illness*, 368 *New Eng. J. Med.* 1077-1081 (March 21, 2013) at [http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1300512?query=featured\\_home&&](http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1300512?query=featured_home&&). [PDF]
5. Press Release, The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, *New Poll Finds American Voters Overwhelmingly Support Handgun Licensing and Registration, Criminal Background Checks* (June 12, 2001), at <http://www.commondreams.org/news2001/0612-05.htm>. See Lois Hess, Editorial, *Bush Undermining Gun Control Laws*, *Balt. Sun*, July 31, 2001, at 11A, at <http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0731-03.htm> (82% of respondents supported laws requiring the licensing and registration of handguns). [PDF]
6. *Id.* [PDF]
7. This summary does not include a description of states issuing permits to carry concealed weapons, nor does it include a discussion of state background check requirements. These topics are addressed in our summaries on [Carrying Concealed Weapons and Background Checks Procedure](#). [PDF]
8. Cal. Penal Code §§ 16370, 16670, 26840-26859, 31610-31700. [PDF]
9. In California, universal background checks help to ensure that prohibited persons would not be permitted to purchase

firearms, notwithstanding the long duration of the Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC). To address the problem posed by gun owners who could fall into a prohibited category while the FSC remains valid, the state maintains a Prohibited Armed Persons File, an on-line database that allows the California Department of Justice to cross-reference information on persons who own or possess a firearm against a list of individuals who have become ineligible to own or possess firearms. Cal. Penal Code §§ 30000, 30005. This information may be shared with a limited group of public and private entities and individuals, including law enforcement, for the purpose of determining if persons are armed yet prohibited from possessing firearms. Cal. Penal Code § 30000. [\[D\]](#)

10. Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 29-33, 29-36f – 29-36i, 29-37a, 29-38g – 29-38j. [\[D\]](#)
11. D. C. Code Ann. §§ 7-2502.01 – 7-2502.10; D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 24, D.C. Mun. Regs. tit. 24, §§ 2311 – 2320. [\[D\]](#)
12. Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 134-2, 134-13. [\[D\]](#)
13. Iowa Code §§ 724.15 – 724.20. [\[D\]](#)
14. 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. 65/1 – 65/15a. [\[D\]](#)
15. Md. Code Ann. Pub. Safety § 5-117.1. 2013 Md. SB 281 (Approved by the Governor May 16, 2013). [\[D\]](#)
16. Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, §§ 121, 129B, 129C, 131, 131A, 131E, 131P. [\[D\]](#)
17. Mich. Comp. Laws §§ 28.422, 28.422a. [\[D\]](#)
18. Michigan's permit requirement appears to apply to purchase but not possession, although Michigan's law says that the license is required to "purchase, carry, possess, or transport a pistol." The word "possess" was added in 2008. 2008 Mich. ALS 195 (effective January 7, 2009). However, the law also says, "A license is void unless used within 30 days after the date it is issued." Mich. Comp. Laws § 28.422. In addition, individuals who obtain a handgun from a licensed dealer after a background check are exempt from the license requirement. Mich. Comp. Laws § 28.422a. [\[D\]](#)
19. Neb. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 69-2404, 69-2407, 69-2409. [\[D\]](#)
20. N.J. Stat. Ann. § 2C:58-3. [\[D\]](#)
21. New Jersey's law appears to prohibit "possession" without a permit, but exempts possession in the home or place of business from this requirement, making this prohibition apply primarily to guns in public. See N.J. Stat. §§ 2C:39-5, 2C:39-6(e). [\[D\]](#)
22. New Jersey's handgun permit may be extended for an additional 90 days upon a showing of good cause. [\[D\]](#)
23. N.Y. Penal Law §§ 400.00 – 400.01. [\[D\]](#)
24. N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-402 – 14-404. [\[D\]](#)
25. R. I. Gen. Laws §§ 11-47-35 – 11-47-35.1. [\[D\]](#)
26. Minn. Stat. §§ 624.7131, 624.7132. [\[D\]](#)
27. Connecticut's permit requirement for long gun purchases will take effect on April 1, 2014. [\[D\]](#)
28. Hawaii also requires registration of all firearms. Registration requirements are outlined in our summary on the [Registration of Firearms](#). [\[D\]](#)
29. Illinois prohibits any person who has been a patient in a mental institution within the past five years from obtaining a FOID card, with certain exceptions. Upon request by the Department of State Police, the applicant must sign a release waiving any right to confidentiality and requesting the disclosure to the Department of State Police of limited mental health institution admission information. 430 Ill. Comp. Stat. 65/4. [\[D\]](#)
30. Massachusetts defines "large capacity weapon" to include assault weapons, certain semi-automatic weapons, and certain large capacity rotating-cylinder firearms. [\[D\]](#)
31. A Class A license allows the licensee to purchase, rent, lease, borrow, possess and carry all types of lawful firearms, including both large and non-large capacity handguns, rifles, shotguns, and feeding devices and ammunition for these firearms. Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 140, § 131(a). [\[D\]](#)
32. For limits on the number of firearms that may be purchased over a specified time period, see our summary on [Sales of Multiple Firearms](#). [\[D\]](#)
33. State laws in Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan, New York and North Carolina explicitly require a background check prior to issuance of the requisite handgun license or permit. The handgun licensing systems in Maryland, and Rhode Island are designed primarily to ensure the handgun owner has undergone the required safety training; those three states have other laws that require a background check before sale of a handgun. [\[D\]](#)
34. In New York, in addition to passing a background check to verify that the applicant is not prohibited from possessing a firearm, no one may possess a handgun unless he or she is of "good moral character" and presents "no good cause" for denial of the license. [\[D\]](#)
35. Rhode Island's concealed handgun licensing process includes a requirement that the applicant pass a target shooting test. R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-47-15. Rhode Island does not require firing training or testing for other handgun licensees. Likewise, none of the other states listed above requires such training as part of its safety training or certification. Hawaii includes firing training as one of several options available to applicants to satisfy the firearms safety training requirement. Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 134-2(g). [\[D\]](#)
36. New York, N.Y., Admin. Code § 10-131, 10-303 et seq., Rules tit. 38, § 3-01 et seq. [\[D\]](#)
37. The most comprehensive system of regulating the purchase, possession and ownership of firearms combines licensing of gun owners with registration of all firearms. Additional information on registration of firearms, including the features of comprehensive registration laws, is contained in our summary on the [Registration of Firearms](#). [\[D\]](#)
38. See our summary on [Reporting Lost or Stolen Firearms](#) for further information about this requirement. [\[D\]](#)
39. See, e.g., Haw. Rev. Stat. § 134-2. See our summary on [Maintaining Records and Reporting Gun Sales](#) for more information about these laws. [\[D\]](#)

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