

Summary of Maryland Firearm Laws

1. Self-Defense Laws

- Maryland allows people to use reasonable force to defend themselves if they believe they are in immediate danger of serious harm.
- The force used must not be excessive and must match the threat.
- To claim self-defense, the person must believe they are in danger, the belief must be reasonable, they must not start the conflict, and the force must be appropriate.
- Maryland follows the Castle Doctrine, meaning people generally do not have to retreat if attacked in their own home.
- Outside the home, a person usually must attempt to retreat safely before using deadly force.

2. Safe Storage of Firearms

- Gun owners must store firearms safely so children cannot access them.
- Leaving a loaded firearm where an unsupervised child could access it is illegal.
- Jaelynn's Law (2023) strengthened storage rules and created penalties up to \$1,000.

3. Who Cannot Possess Firearms

- People convicted of certain crimes, fugitives, habitual drug users, and some individuals with certain mental health rulings cannot possess firearms.
- People under certain court protective orders are also prohibited.
- Federal law also bans firearm possession for certain felons and domestic violence offenders.

4. Losing the Right to Possess a Gun

- If someone becomes prohibited from owning a firearm, they must surrender it to law enforcement, sell or transfer it legally, or request that it be destroyed.

5. Reporting Lost or Stolen Guns

- A firearm owner must report a lost or stolen gun to law enforcement within 72 hours of discovering it.
- Failure to report can result in fines or criminal penalties.

6. Banned Firearms and Accessories

- Maryland bans many assault weapons and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds.
- Rapid-fire devices such as bump stocks, binary triggers, and trigger cranks are also prohibited.

7. Special Permits for Certain Firearms

- Machine guns, short-barreled rifles, and short-barreled shotguns require special registration.
- Some weapons require approval from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and a federal tax stamp.

8. Straw Purchases

- A straw purchase is when someone buys a gun for another person who cannot legally buy one.
- This is illegal and can lead to severe criminal penalties.

9. Armed Trespassing

- A person cannot enter someone else's property with a firearm unless the owner gives permission or signs clearly allow firearms.

10. Places Where Firearms Are Prohibited

- Firearms are banned in locations such as schools, government buildings, polling places, aircraft, some parks, and certain public infrastructure areas.
- They are also restricted in places selling alcohol or cannabis for on-site consumption, stadiums, and museums.

11. Transporting Firearms

- Firearms often must be unloaded and stored in an enclosed case during transport.
- They may be transported legally to locations such as gun shops, repair shops, target ranges, or hunting activities.