

## **Frequently Asked Questions Implementation of Firearms Law**

**Q. Why do people have firearms in national parks – they never did before?**

*A. In most national parks, only authorized law enforcement officials have been allowed to carry firearms, but a 2009 federal law made national parks – and national wildlife refuges – generally subject to applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. When did this happen?**

*A. The law was enacted on May 22, 2009, and became effective February 22, 2010.*

**Q. Were there parks where I could bring a firearm before February 22?**

*A. Yes, in most Alaska national parks and in a limited number of other national parks that allow hunting (when the firearm was brought for the purpose of hunting). The law does not change existing state and federal laws regarding hunting or the conditions for hunting in national parks. Also, people who drove with firearms could have an unloaded firearm that was rendered inoperable and packed, cased, or stowed when their travels took them through a national park.*

**Q. Can I have a firearm in every park after February 22, 2010?**

*A. If you can legally possess a firearm outside of a national park, you can possess it in that park on and after February 22, 2010. It is up to visitors to understand the requirements of federal law and the laws of the states/localities they live in or are travelling to (or through). Park websites have been updated to offer basic information about the applicable state law(s) and will generally include a link to a state website with more information.*

**Q. How do I know where I can take a firearm?**

*A. It is the responsibility of each individual to know and understand applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. Can I openly carry my firearm in a national park?**

*A. If it is allowed by applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. Can I carry a concealed firearm in a national park?**

*A. If it is allowed by applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. Can I have a firearm in my hotel room if it is inside a national park?**

*A. Unless the hotel has a policy on firearms, if it is allowed by applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. Can I have a firearm in my car or tent?**

*A. If it is allowed by applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. Can I take a firearm anywhere I go in the park?**

*A. No. Federal law prohibits firearms in “federal facilities,” which are generally defined as federally-owned or -leased buildings where federal employees work on a regular basis. Buildings that meet this definition will have signs posted at public entrances noting the prohibition on firearms.*

**Q. If I have a firearm and need to enter a building where it is prohibited, what do I do with it?**

*A. Safely store it according applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. If I’m in a park that is located in multiple states, how do I know which state’s laws apply?**

*A: It is up to the individual to know the laws of the state they are in and where they are.*

**Q. If I travel with a firearm, but do not wish to take it into a national park, how/where should I store it?**

*A: Safely store it according to applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws.*

**Q. I’ve got my firearm, can I hunt while I’m here?**

*A. Only a limited number of national parks allow hunting. You must adhere to the park’s hunting rules and regulations.*

**Q. I have a permit to carry a concealed firearm from my *home* state, does that allow me to carry a firearm here?**

*A. Some permits are recognized in multiple states, many are not. It is up to the individual to know which states accept their concealed carry permit.*

**Q. How do I know when I’m in a national park?**

*A: National parks will generally have posted signs indicating that you are entering a national park. In backcountry areas or large expanses such as those in Great Smoky Mountains National Park or Yellowstone National Park, it is up to the individual to know where they are and what the laws of that state are.*

**Q. Where can I find the firearms laws for each state?**

*A: Go to the following link for individual state websites.*

*[http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/State\\_and\\_Territories.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/State_and_Territories.shtml)*

**Q. What kinds of firearms are allowed?**

*A: Any firearm that is not prohibited by applicable federal, state, or local law.*

**Q. I am worried that having firearms in national parks will affect the safety of my family and the experience we hope to have. Should I still come?**

*A. For nearly 100 years, the mission of the National Park Service has been to protect and preserve the parks and to help visitors enjoy them. The parks belong to all Americans – those who support this new law and those who do not. Our commitment is to enforce the law, enforce it fairly, and to ensure the safety of our visitors, the parks and their resources, while all visitors enjoy these special places.*

**Q. My family and I come here to enjoy the peacefulness of the park – why is the National Park Service allowing people to bring firearms?**

*A. Firearms are allowed – consistent with applicable federal, state, and local firearms laws – as a result of a new federal law enacted in May 2009.*

**Q. I am frightened by firearms and am leaving the park. Can I have my entrance fee refunded? My annual pass refunded?**

*A. Park superintendents have the authority to provide a refund if the circumstances warrant it.*

**Q. What should I do if I feel threatened by someone with a firearm?**

*A. Contact the nearest park ranger or contact the park office and let them know why you feel threatened.*

**Q. What should I do if I see someone drinking alcohol who has a firearm?**

*A. Contact the nearest park ranger or contact the park office and report what you have seen.*