A Quick Guide to Gun Regulations in the Intermountain Region - National Park Service

Congress approved a new law allowing loaded firearms in national parks starting Feb. 22, 2010. That means people can openly carry legal handguns, rifles, shotguns and other firearms and also may carry concealed guns as allowed by state statute.

While this law changes gun regulations in national parks, there are still many important restrictions on the transportation and use of guns under state and federal laws:

- Although it is now legal to carry loaded guns in national parks, guns **cannot** be fired except in rare circumstances. Hunting is illegal in most national parks except under special permits. Target practice also is banned.
- For national security reasons, guns cannot be carried into federal facilities within national parks. Notice of this rule will be clearly displayed outside all federal facilities. If you are unsure if a park building is a federal facility, look for a sign or ask a park ranger.
- If you can possess firearms legally according to the laws of the state in which a park is located, you can generally carry them in that park.
- A permit is required to carry concealed weapons. Some concealed-weapons permits are recognized in multiple states, but many are not. It is the gun owner's responsibility to know and understand what laws apply.
- **Not all guns are legal.** Revolvers, shotguns and semiautomatic firearms are legal, for instance, but fully automatic guns may not be depending on the state.
- It is illegal in most states to carry a gun while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- The new federal law applies state law to the possession of guns in national parks. Because some national parks are in more than one state, the laws governing firearms may change depending on your location within that park. It is your responsibility to understand individual state laws and to know which state you are in when in a multi-state national park.
- Guns may not be allowed on shuttle buses, ferries or boats within certain national parks, depending on the state.
- State laws governing minimum for possession of guns vary widely. In most states, you must be at least 18 years old. It is the responsibility of those with guns to understand these laws for the state and park in which they carry firearms.
- Other weapons such as bows, swords, and pellet or BB guns are not affected by the new law and remain prohibited by the National Park Service.

National Park Service law enforcement rangers are trained to explain and enforce firearms laws. But gun owners are legally responsible for understanding federal, state and local laws, which vary widely from state to state. It also is the owner's responsibility to ensure that guns are stored safely.

Visit State Websites for More Information

The online location of state firearms laws and information varies. Use the search function with related words, such as: firearms, concealed, permitted.

Arizona http://az.gov/

Colorado http://www.colorado.gov/

Idaho http://www.accessidaho.org/

Montana http://mt.gov/

New Mexico http://www.newmexico.gov/

Oklahoma http://www.ok.gov/

Texas http://www.texasonline.com/portal/tol

Utah http://www.utah.gov/index.html

Wyoming http://www.wyoming.gov/

For videos that demonstrate how to avoid animal attacks, visit www.nps.gov/yell/photosmultimedia/safetyvideos.htm or ask a park ranger for advice and assistance.

What the New Law Says

The new law allowing guns in national parks was created as part of the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009, which was approved by Congress and President Barack Obama. It took effect Feb. 22, 2010. Here is the partial text of Section 512, Protecting Americans from Violent Crimes:

> **"Protecting the Right of Individuals To Bear arms in Units of the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System**—The Secretary of the Interior shall not promulgate or enforce any regulation that prohibits an individual from possessing a firearm including an assembled or functional firearm in any unit of the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System if—(1) the individual is not otherwise prohibited by law from possessing the firearm; and (2) the possession of the firearm is in compliance with the law of the State in which the unit of the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System is located."

Park visitors, Rocky Mountain National Park

Park visitors, Santa Monica National Recreation Area

What to Do If You Feel Threatened

If you feel threatened by someone with a fire-arm, please contact the nearest park ranger or park office for help.

For additional information about this issue, please contact the Intermountain Region of the Park Service at:
IMR_Guns_In_Parks@nps.gov

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