



Firearms for Personal Protection



Native hunters pull alongside a NOAA ship in 1936.

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The question “Can I carry firearms for personal protection on public lands in Alaska?” is asked quite often. Answers vary depending on which land agency manages the area in question. Answers are even more diverse in accordance with the 1980 ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) legislation. Newly designated public lands have different guidelines than do public lands designated prior to 1980. Alaska State Law defines restrictions on firearms on different public land units. This handout provides some basic

information regarding the legality of carrying a firearm. Please contact each specific land unit for further clarification since many units have special regulations that prohibit the carrying and discharge of firearms within specific areas because of safety concerns and other factors.

State Law says a person commits a crime if he/she “*knowingly possesses a deadly or defensive weapon that is concealed without a permit.*”

(Alaska Statutes 11.61.220)

The following is a list of public land agencies and specific national parks and their policies concerning the carrying of firearms for defensive purposes.

Bureau of Land Management:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

Fish and Game Areas:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

Fish and Wildlife Refuges:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

National Forests:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

State Parks:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

On General State Lands:
Yes, in accordance with State Law.

National Parks:
Generally NO in areas designated as National Parks, National Monuments and Historical Parks. Specific National Park locations where firearms are not allowed:

Aniakchak National Monument:
Not in the Monument (crater).

Denali National Park:
Not in the original park area including Visitor Center and along the park road corridor.

Glacier Bay National Park:

Not in the original park area including the Visitor Center.

Katmai National Park:

Not in the original park area.

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park:

Not in the park. It is illegal to take firearms across the border into Canada.

Sitka National Historical Park:

Not in the park.

Generally YES in areas designated as National Preserves and in National Parks and Monuments created by ANILCA in 1980, in accordance with state laws.

FOREIGN VISITORS:

New Application/Permit for Nonimmigrant Aliens Temporarily Bringing Firearms or Ammunition into the United States for Hunting or Other Lawful Sporting Purposes

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has created a new application/permit for nonimmigrant aliens. The new application/permit is called ATF Form 6NIA (Application and Permit for Temporary Importation of Firearms and Ammunition by Nonimmigrant Aliens).

The new ATF Form 6NIA can be downloaded from the ATF webpage at www.atf.gov or ordered from the ATF Distribution Center (703•455•7801). Applications are processed in approximately 6 to 8 weeks. Please provide a fax number (including country code) when possible to eliminate the possibility of approved permits being lost in the mail.

Nonimmigrant aliens with questions about the ATF Form 6NIA may call ATF's Firearms and Explosives Import Branch at 202•927•8320. The ATF webpage (www.atf.gov) has Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that provide useful information regarding the form.

National Preserves include:

Aniakchak
Bering Land Bridge
Denali
Glacier Bay
Gates of the Arctic
Lake Clark
Noatak
Wrangell-St. Elias
Yukon-Charley Rivers

National Parks & Monuments created by ANILCA in 1980 include:

Cape Krusenstern NM
Denali National Park (New Addition)
Gates of the Arctic
Glacier Bay (New Addition)
Kenai Fjords
Kobuk Valley
Lake Clark
Wrangell-St. Elias

EXCEPTIONS:

Kenai Fjords discourages weapons in the highly visited Exit Glacier area.

Be sure to contact your local Law Enforcement Ranger and/or the Alaska State Troopers for the final word on the law.

Common-sense approaches and education about bear safety can reduce the risk of bear encounters.

Here are some alternatives to firearms in bear country:

1. Use Good Camping Techniques

Store all food away from campsites.
Use bear-proof or airtight containers or hang your food in a tree.
Cook away from your tent. Your kitchen should be separate from camp.
Leave No Trace. "Pack it in, Pack it out." Don't habituate bears to campsites.
Choose your camp away from game trails.

2. Avoid Surprising Bears

Be alert to bear activity.
Avoid high grass if possible.
Make lots of noise. Sing, talk, or use bear bells.
Look for signs of bears (scat, strong smells, or game carcasses).

3. Respect Bear Habitat

Respect a bear's "personal" space. Keep your distance.
Be very cautious around a sow and cub.

4. Carry Pepperspray

Remember Pepperspray can be as harmful to you as it is to the bear!
Know how to use spray properly. Keep it readily available.
Do not discharge upwind or in a vehicle.
Check rules of transport.

5. Educate Yourself

Check out these websites for information on Leave No Trace and bear safety.
<http://www.nps.gov/aplic>
<http://www.lnt.org>
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/safety/bears.htm>



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"Meat for dinner " Sometimes the surveyors had to hunt their own food. Triangulation party of William M. Scaife (1923)