

Safe Storage Plan Requirements

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 1 of 6

a) Certified licensees maintaining a retail location shall develop a plan that addresses the safe storage of firearms and ammunition during retail hours, after closing, and any off-site storage areas where firearm inventory is maintained. Safe Storage Plans shall address the following areas:

- 1) Storage of firearms and ammunition during retail hours, after closing, and any off-site storage areas;
- 2) Access to firearms and ammunition during retail hours (business practices);
- 3) Procedures for removing/replacing firearms to show to customers;
- 4) Loss or theft reporting;
- 5) Description of anti-theft measures and practices;
- 6) Disaster plan;
- 7) Structural Security;
- 8) Inventory Security;
- 9) Employee Screening, if applicable; and,
- 10) Employee training and education about licensee's policy and procedures and loss prevention measures, if applicable.

b) Safe Storage Plans shall be submitted to the Department for approval.

If your Safe Storage Plan is determined to be inadequate by the Department a written letter documenting the inadequacies will be sent to you. You have 60 days to resubmit a corrected Safe Storage Plan for review. If you resubmit the same plan with no changes to correct the inadequacies noted by the Department in the written letter, the Department will revoke your certification.

c) A certified licensee maintaining a retail location shall ensure the following practices are implemented within their plans:

- 1) Store all firearms in inventory in a safe, vault, secured room, or locked display and in such a manner as to prevent diversion, theft or loss. If firearms are not stored in one of these manners, you must have a trigger lock, cable lock or similar device which prevents the firearms from being loaded, fired, and easily accessible to theft (i.e. picking them up and walking out of the store);
- 2) Keep all safes, vaults, displays, other equipment, or areas used for the storage of firearms in inventory securely locked or protected from entry, except for the actual time required to remove, replace or show for sale or transfer the firearm(s) in inventory. Do not remove trigger locks or similar device, if used, until firearm sale or transfer is completed;
- 3) Keep all locks and security equipment in good working order;
- 4) Prohibit keys from being left in locks and do not store or place keys in a location accessible to persons other than specifically authorized personnel;
- 5) Prohibit other security measures, such as combination numbers, keys, codes, passwords or electronic or biometric security systems, from being accessible to persons other than specifically authorized personnel;
- 6) Keep the retail location securely locked and protected from unauthorized entry at all times when closed for business or unoccupied by authorized personnel;

Safe Storage Plan Requirements

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 2 of 6

- 7) Prohibit ammunition storage within 5 feet of firearms, unless the ammunition is stored behind a counter designed for employees only or in a locked display case containing no firearms;
 - 8) Ensure inventory records are protected by securing the records after business hours in a location separate from the firearms inventory and only permit authorized personnel or law enforcement to view or handle the inventory records;
 - 9) Complete a firearms inventory on a regular basis, no less than once annually. Inventories must be conducted by at least two persons, unless owner operated, and shall be memorialized in an email or other written document which shall be made available upon request of the Department or other law enforcement entity. First and last name(s) of the individual(s) who conducted the firearms inventory shall be recorded in such documentation.
 - 10) Keep timely and accurate acquisition and disposition records. These records shall be made available to law enforcement entities upon request;
 - 11) Maintain a disaster plan that adequately ensures the timely securing of firearms in inventory in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The plan shall be made available to the Department upon request; and,
 - 12) Ensure employees with access to firearms in inventory or who otherwise handle firearms in inventory are not prohibited from possessing firearms under State or Federal law.
- d) If a retail location presents special security issues, such as exposed handling or unusual vulnerability to diversion, theft or loss, the Department may require additional safeguards, such as supervised watchman service.**
 - e) If a loss, theft or diversion of firearms in inventory has occurred from a retail location, the certified licensee shall notify the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the appropriate local law enforcement authority within 48 hours after the loss or theft is discovered. If any firearms previously reported as lost or stolen are subsequently recovered by the licensee, the licensee shall notify the ATF and appropriate local law enforcement authority of the recovery.**
 - f) Any licensee whose certification is revoked or not renewed shall dispose of its entire inventory under conditions approved by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives and the Department and provide notice to the Department and plan to transfer or otherwise dispose of inventory.**
 - g) Retail locations operating in a space that is 5,000 square feet or greater, or maintaining more than 100 firearms in inventory, shall provide current copies of floor plans to the Department and local law enforcement that have jurisdiction in the area where the retail location is located upon request.**
 - h) Notwithstanding the requirements of the Act or this Part, nothing shall prohibit members of the Department, local law enforcement or other federal, state or local government officials from entering any area of a location subject to the provisions of the Act if necessary to perform their governmental duties.**

Tips For Constructing a Safe Storage Plan

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 3 of 6

Structural Security of Retail Location and Any Off-Site Storage Locations:

- **Business location** – (i.e. High crime area) Do you need an external fence and/or lighting to secure your location?
- **Door and window locks, including window frames and doorjamb**s – Does each external window and door have a lock? Are the locks being utilized? Do you need additional security features such as, but not limited to, bars on your external windows, reinforced door locks, etc.
- **Unsecured opening** – (i.e. air conditioning units in windows, holes in exterior walls, vents, chimneys, etc.) Do you have additional security features which hinder their exploitation to allow entry?
- **Walls and ceilings** – Are your walls and ceiling made of sturdy material?
- **Exterior lighting and surrounding structures** – (i.e. shrubs, trees, ladders, dumpsters, etc.) Have you removed objects which criminals may use to their advantage to gain entry into your building?
- **Front windows and entrance** – Are you able to see customers approach your entrance? Can someone inside conceal themselves from public view so that a robbery would be undetected while it was being committed?
- **Alarm system** – ***Required*** for each certified licensee maintaining an inventory of firearms for sale or transfer ***on or before January 2, 2020***. Until then, it is highly recommended you have an alarm monitoring system or service that will notify local law enforcement of an unauthorized intrusion into the premises where the firearm inventory is maintained. You should make sure your alarm system is always in proper working order.
- **Protect your alarm codes, safe combinations, and keys to the premises and firearm/ammunition cabinets.** It is highly recommended you change your alarm code(s) on a regular basis and reduce the number of keys copied. You may also find it useful to maintain a key log to sign them in and out.
- **Video surveillance system** – ***Required*** for each certified licensee operating a retail location in this State ***on or before January 2, 2021***. Until then, it is highly recommended you maintain a functioning video surveillance system. The video surveillance system shall maintain video surveillance of critical areas of the business premises, including, but not limited to, all places where firearms in inventory are stored, handled, sold, or transferred and each entrance and exit. Best practice is to have a system which stores the video recordings off-site and regularly backs-up. If not feasible, it is recommended to place the video recording system in a locked room or in a locked cabinet to avoid theft of recordings. The ability to export still images (.jpg, .bmp or .gif) and video (industry standard format which can be played on a standard computer operating system) for law enforcement purposes is required.

All video surveillance records, along with any sound recordings obtained from them, shall be kept for a period of not less than 90 days. (430 ILCS 68/5-80).

Tips For Constructing a Safe Storage Plan

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 4 of 6

Inventory Security:

Inventory security is the way in which business merchandise and equipment is accounted for from the date it is received (acquired) by the business to the date of its disposition (sale, trade, etc.). At the core of inventory security is the practice of complete and consistent documentation. The following additional steps are recommended practices to help protect inventory:

- **Evaluate your business-hours store layout while you are open.** Are unsecured firearms displayed within reach of customers? Does your business have blind spots in which customers can access inventory? Are display cases kept locked unless an employee is showing an item from that case? Are all cases and firearms secured if an employee has to step away from the location firearms are being viewed by the customer (i.e. Has to go to the storage room in back).
- **Conduct periodic physical inventories and reconcile to book inventory.** Complete physical inventory counts and reconciliation to book inventory enable an FFL dealer to know which firearms have been transferred legally and which firearms may have been lost or stolen. Without reliable records, it is impossible to determine if firearms have been transferred or are still in inventory. If this cannot be established and a crime occurs, the licensee will not be able to provide ATF and/or the local law enforcement authorities with an accurate list of lost or stolen firearms. An inaccurate report could result in the arrest of an honest citizen or the inability to prosecute a criminal. Without reliable records, you may not even become aware that a crime has occurred. An inventory of firearms shall be completed at least annually. The Department recommends monthly to ensure the safeguard of your firearm inventory.
- Recommended you store your inventory logs in a fireproof, water tight safe or backup your data off-site with a secure electronic storage system.
- It is highly recommended to only remove one firearm at a time while with a customer. If the customer wants to view another firearm, place original firearm back in the display case / storage area before removing another firearm.
- Display case construction should include (but not required) smash resistant or shatterproof glass, reinforced metal locking cabinets, or a combination of other security features.
- Recommended employee/customer ratio (1:1). Having one employee with a customer at a time allows for better observation and control of your inventory and safety.
- Highly recommended all dealers, at a minimum, check and verify the serial numbers of firearms received in shipping match the bill of lading from the shipping company or supplier.

After Hour Storage:

- Encouraged to conduct an overall count of firearms on hand at the close of business. This will help determine if anything is lost or has been stolen. If a firearm is determined to be lost or stolen, you must report it as instructed in letter (e) above on page 2 in the Safe Storage Plan Requirements.

Tips For Constructing a Safe Storage Plan

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 5 of 6

- **Evaluate your after-hours store layout while you are closed.** Have firearms and ammunition been secured? If criminals break into the store, are firearms readily accessible or are secondary measures in place (i.e. firearms secured by locking cable, etc.)? The best business practice is to remove all firearms from display cases and racks and place them in a firearm vault at night. As an alternative, some businesses utilize reinforced, locking display cases with smash resistant or shatterproof glass.
- Ensure both video surveillance and alarm systems are functioning and activated before the last person leaves at the close of business.
- If you do not store your inventory at a retail location and utilize an off-site storage location such as your home; you may want to take extra precautions when loading firearms into the transportation vehicle. It is recommended, if feasible, to load the firearms within a fenced in area with a second person observing the surrounding area for anything out of the ordinary. It is suggested to take different routes to and from your retail location each day to avoid criminals learning your routine. It is preferred that firearms are not left in your vehicle unattended at any time. Since you are maintaining your firearm inventory off-site, you must have an alarm system at the off-site location as *required by statute on or before January 2, 2020*.
- By wiping down all countertops and door knobs each night you may help law enforcement apprehend criminals more quickly with the use of fingerprints left behind. It could be the difference between an unsolved crime and capturing the criminal(s).
- It is not recommended to leave personal messages on your answering machine which discloses your vacation plans or other significant amounts of time you may be away from your firearm inventory.

Employee Screening:

The same care that is given to the safe handling and storage of firearms should be given to the selection of the people whom the licensee authorizes to do that work. Reluctance to embarrass or offend strangers or acquaintances must be set aside to ensure the security of the business. It is neither lawful nor in the licensee's interest to knowingly allow a prohibited person to possess firearms or engage in firearms sales. The importance of conscientiousness and trustworthiness is underscored by the high level of responsibility placed upon persons who are in a position to transfer firearms.

- **Institute an employee screening process.** ATF recommends conducting background checks on all employees and applicants (even relatives). Many private companies are available to perform these checks on a fee basis. Background checks should be repeated after an established period of time has elapsed. Applicants/employees should also provide references. These references should be contacted, interviewed, and asked to provide the names of other potential references, not listed by the applicant/employee.
- **Require proof of identity.** Require that each applicant/employee produce a government-issued identification card – a driver's license, for example – and a social security card.

Tips For Constructing a Safe Storage Plan

(430 ILCS 68/5-55)

Page 6 of 6

- All employees who are an Illinois residents, are required to have a valid FOID card in accordance to 430 ILCS 68/5-40.
- You are encouraged to obtain a waiver from your employee to verify the employee's FOID status from the Department.
- **Discuss questions with the local police or ATF.** If it appears that an applicant or employee may not be eligible to possess or transfer firearms, the local police or local ATF office should be contacted for guidance. (For assistance in locating the nearest ATF office, visit the Web site at <http://www.atf.gov/field>)

Disaster Preparedness:

Every business should have a disaster plan. Federal firearms licensees have a double interest in having a plan in place because they need to safeguard their business to facilitate a quick recovery, and they need to protect the public from the risk of theft/loss of firearms and ammunition in the event of a disaster. The following suggestions can form a guide for developing a plan to follow in the event of impending disaster:

- Create and maintain a current set of records (and consider a second set maintained at an off-site location) that includes: insurance policies; supplier and contact list; computer records backup; and a second set of business records.
- Create a list of employee phone numbers and establish a plan under which, in the event of a disaster, they have a phone number to call to report that they are OK.
- Secure your inventory. Utilize safes and cable locks that can retain and protect inventory.
- Perform a full inventory and take Acquisition and Disposition records to a safe location until the threat has passed.
- Make your disaster plan "multi-hazard" by taking into account each possibility: fire; tornado; flooding; civil unrest; etc.
- ATF can approve variances to move business operations (including NFA firearms) in special circumstances, which can include impending natural disasters.
- For more information on disaster preparedness, request a copy of ATF Publication 3317.7, Disaster Preparedness for Federal Firearms Licensees from the ATF Distribution Center by calling 301-583-4696.