

REPORT

Communities on the Move

Local Gun Safety Legislation in California

SHARE

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Local communities in California have enacted some of the strongest and most innovative gun safety policies in the nation.

These courageous efforts by local governments in the face of fierce gun lobby opposition have often led the way for new and improved gun laws at the state level—laws that prevent shootings and save lives.

INTRODUCTION


A fundamental function of local government is to pass laws that address specific needs of its community. Because they face fewer bureaucratic and political hurdles, local governments are also often incubators of pioneering policies, especially when it comes to gun violence prevention.

Recognizing and fearing this, the gun lobby has spent the past several decades seeking to

CALIFORNIA: A MODEL FOR GUN SAFETY

California has not fallen victim to gun lobby strong-arming and still allows local governments wide latitude to prevent gun violence in their communities.¹ Starting in the mid-1990s, California communities began passing hundreds of local laws that go above and beyond state and federal law to prevent gun violence and tragedies. This local activity has also acted as a catalyst for state laws. Many of California's strong state gun laws were initially conceptualized and adopted at the local level.

STATE



California
Gun Law Scorecard Grade: A

The following is a sampling of state laws that began as local laws in California:

- Requiring child-safety firearm locks
- Prohibiting the sale and manufacture of unsafe handguns
- Requiring guns to be safely stored in vehicles
- Prohibiting the sale and possession of large capacity ammunition magazines
- Requiring gun dealer employees to undergo background checks
- Regulating ammunition sales
- Limiting handgun purchases to one per month

California communities continue to tirelessly advance new gun safety legislation, modeling new gun safety laws for the rest of the state and the nation. Giffords Law Center has been tracking these ordinances since 2000.

HERE TO HELP

Interested in partnering with us to draft, enact, or implement lifesaving gun safety legislation in your community? Our attorneys provide free assistance to lawmakers, public officials, and advocates working toward solutions to the gun violence crisis.

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Notes on Local Gun Law Data

The below data on local gun laws is from cities with populations of 90,000 or greater as of 2012 and counties with populations of 500,000 or greater as of 2013, as well as smaller counties and cities that have enacted several gun laws.

Requirements that only affect dealers of concealable firearms only are marked with an asterisk (*), and requirements that affect only dealers of ammunition are marked with a double asterisk (**).

GUN DEALER LAWS

Special Permit Required to be a Firearm Dealer

Both federal and California law impose minimal requirements for firearm dealers to obtain state and federal licenses. Local oversight of gun dealers remains important to ensure that dealers are following local, state, and federal laws, and operating responsibly and safely. Local jurisdictions can ensure that law enforcement is aware of and monitoring the operation of gun dealers in a community by requiring dealers to get a local license in addition to state and federal licenses. 104 jurisdictions require firearm dealers to obtain a local license or permit in order to operate.

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Jurisdictions that Require Gun Dealers to Obtain a Local License to Operate

- Alameda
- Alameda County
- Albany
- Anaheim*
- Antioch
- Berkeley
- Beverly Hills
- Burbank
- Campbell
- Carson
- Cathedral City
- Chino
- Chula Vista*
- Commerce
- Contra Costa County
- Corona
- Covina*
- Daly City
- Diamond Bar
- El Cerrito
- El Monte*
- El Segundo
- Elk Grove*
- Emeryville
- Escondido
- Fremont
- Fresno County
- Fullerton
- Glendale*
- Glendora*
- Hayward
- Hercules
- Industry*
- La Puente
- Lafayette
- Lawndale
- Orange*
- Oxnard*
- Pacific Grove*
- Pacifica
- Palmdale*
- Palo Alto
- Pasadena*
- Piedmont
- Pinole
- Pittsburg
- Pleasanton
- Pleasant Hill
- Reedley
- Richmond
- Sacramento*
- Sacramento County*²
- Salinas
- San Anselmo
- San Bruno*
- San Bernardino County
- San Carlos
- San Diego
- San Diego County
- San Francisco City and County
- San Joaquin County
- San Jose*
- San Leandro
- San Mateo County
- San Pablo
- San Rafael
- Santa Ana
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Barbara County*
- Santa Clara County
- Santa Cruz
- Santa Cruz County
- Santa Monica

- Long Beach
- Lomita*
- Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County
- Los Gatos
- Lynwood*
- Marin County
- Maywood
- Merced*
- Millbrae*
- Mission Viejo*
- Monrovia*
- Monterey County*
- Moraga
- Morgan Hill
- Oakland
- Oakley
- Orange County*
- Oceanside*
- Santa Ros
- Saratoga
- Scotts Valley
- Solana Beach
- Sonoma County
- South El Monte
- South Gate
- South Pasadena
- Stockton
- Tiburon
- Union City
- Walnut
- West Hollywood
- Westlake Village

Additional Site Security and Safe Storage

California imposes modest requirements on gun dealers to keep their inventory safe from theft when the business is closed. Unfortunately, these requirements do not go far enough and perpetrators have begun using a method called “smash and grab”—when an assailant drives his or her car into the dealer—to steal guns from dealers, even those that are in compliance with California law. Local jurisdictions can do more to prevent gun thefts by requiring dealers to secure their inventory in ways that go above and beyond state law. 35 jurisdictions require firearm dealers to meet standards for site security and safe storage of inventory that are more rigorous than what is required by California Penal Code §26890 and §17110.

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Jurisdictions that Require Additional Site Security at Gun Dealers

- Alameda
- Albany
- Antioch
- Burbank³
- Campbell
- Cathedral City
- Concord
- Corona
- El Cerrito
- Emeryville
- Palm Springs
- Piedmont
- Pinole
- Pleasant Hill
- Richmond
- San Bruno
- San Buenaventura**
- San Carlos
- San Diego
- San Francisco City and County

Requiring Firearm Dealers to Carry Liability Insurance

While federal law provides the gun industry with sweeping and unprecedented immunity from civil lawsuits, there are still ways in which individuals who have been harmed by a gun dealer’s practices can obtain compensation. 34 jurisdictions require firearm dealers to carry liability insurance, typically with a minimum coverage of \$1 million.

Jurisdictions that Require Gun Dealers to Have Liability Insurance

- Berkeley
- Beverly Hills
- Campbell
- Pasadena
- Piedmont
- Pinole
- Pleasant Hill

- Carson**
- Cathedral City
- Emeryville
- Fremont
- Hayward
- Lafayette
- Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County
- Los Gatos
- Marin County
- Maywood
- Moraga
- Morgan Hill
- Oakland
- Oakley
- Palo Alto
- Pleasanton
- Richmond
- Salinas
- San Anselmo
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- San Pablo
- San Rafael
- Santa Cruz
- Santa Cruz County
- Santa Monica
- Tiburon

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Home Occupation

Neither federal nor California law prohibit gun dealers from operating out of residential homes, allowing unscrupulous gun dealers to evade detection and possibly bringing criminals and illegal activity into residential neighborhoods. 79 jurisdictions either prevent firearm dealers from being located in residential areas or prohibit firearm sales as a "home occupation" (i.e., a home business).

Jurisdictions that Prohibit Gun Dealers as a Home Occupation

- Alameda County
- Albany
- Antioch
- Arcadia**
- Artesia
- Berkeley
- Beverly Hills
- Burbank
- Calabasas
- Calistoga
- Campbell
- Cathedral City
- Carson**
- Chino
- Colma
- Covina
- Contra Costa County
- Daly City
- El Cerrito
- Elk Grove
- Emeryville
- Fairfield
- Fontana
- Fremont
- Fresno
- Hayward
- Hercules⁴
- Hollister
- Inglewood
- La Puente
- Morgan Hill
- Newark
- Oakland
- Oakley⁶
- Ontario
- Orange*
- Oxnard
- Pacifica
- Palmdale
- Palo Alto
- Pasadena
- Pinole
- Pittsburg
- Pleasant Hill⁷
- Pleasanton
- Rialto
- Rosemead
- Roseville
- Salinas⁸
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- San Jose
- San Pablo
- San Rafael
- San Ramon
- Santa Clarita
- Santa Cruz⁹
- Santa Cruz County
- Santa Monica
- Santa Rosa

- Lafayette
- Lancaster
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County
- Los Gatos
- Marin County
- Mission Viejo
- Montebello
- Monterey County⁵
- Moraga
- Moreno Valley**
- Sonoma County
- Stockton
- Tiburon
- Union City
- Vacaville
- Vallejo
- Victorville
- Westlake Village
- Westminster

Keeping Dealers away from “Sensitive Areas”

Laws that zone certain types of businesses, such as gun dealers, away from areas where children and families frequent or where dangerous behavior is more likely to occur is best left to local jurisdictions. These laws help ensure that criminal activity associated with firearm dealers does not take place near areas where there are a high concentration of children, and that exposure to guns is left to the discretion of parents. 28 jurisdictions prohibit firearm dealers from operating within certain distances of “sensitive areas,” such as schools, day care centers, bars, and parks.

Jurisdictions that Restrict Dealers from Operating near “Sensitive Areas”

- Alameda County
- Albany
- Burbank¹⁰
- Calabasas
- Campbell
- Cathedral City
- Contra Costa County
- Culver City
- Diamond Bar
- El Cerrito
- Emeryville
- Hercules
- Los Gatos
- Monterey County
- Oakland
- Oakley
- Pacifica
- Palo Alto
- Pinole
- Pleasant Hill¹¹
- Redondo Beach
- Salinas
- San Buenaventura (same as City of Ventura)
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- San Pablo
- San Rafael
- Santa Cruz
- Santa Cruz County
- Santa Fe Springs
- West Hollywood¹²

Requiring Dealers to Report Their Inventory

Requiring gun dealers to regularly report their inventory to law enforcement helps law enforcement solve crimes, and deters dealers from trafficking firearms. The following nine jurisdictions require firearm dealers to periodically report their inventory to law enforcement.

- Beverly Hills
- Campbell
- Emeryville
- Los Angeles
- Oakland
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- Santa Monica
- West Hollywood

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Requiring Dealers to Videotape Sales

Videotaping gun sales provides law enforcement with the evidence they need to solve certain gun crimes such as straw purchases and robberies. Videotaping sales also deters illegal activity at gun stores. [Laws requiring videotaping are popular with the public and Walmart, the nation's largest gun seller, began voluntarily videotaping gun sales in 2008.](#) The following eight jurisdictions require firearm dealers to have a camera system in place that videotapes all firearm sales.

- Campbell
- El Cerrito
- Emeryville
- Pleasant Hill
- San Carlos
- San Jose
- Santa Cruz County
- San Francisco City and County

Requiring Dealers to Post Additional Notices

Requiring gun dealers to post notices about local laws, warnings about the dangers of keeping guns in the home, or information about suicide prevention helps ensure gun purchasers have necessary information to make informed choices and provides resources to a person in crisis. The following ten jurisdictions require firearm dealers post additional notices and warnings in addition to what is required by state law.

- Campbell
- Cathedral City
- Emeryville
- Livermore
- Los Angeles
- Oakland
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- San Leandro
- West Hollywood

Prohibiting Unaccompanied Minors and Prohibited Persons from Entering Gun Stores

Individuals [under age 21](#) and [many categories of criminals and other dangerous people](#) are prohibited from purchasing guns in California. Laws prohibiting these individuals from entering gun stores allow parents greater control over their children's exposure to guns and ensures that guns are not accessible to people who are prohibited from having them. 12 jurisdictions require firearm dealers to deny entrance to unaccompanied minors and other people who are prohibited from owning a gun.

Jurisdictions that Prohibit Unaccompanied Minors from Entering Gun Dealer Premises

- Berkeley
- Beverly Hills
- Cathedral City
- Emeryville
- Lafayette
- Marin County
- Moraga
- Oakland
- Piedmont
- Pleasanton
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County
- San Rafael
- Tiburon

Requiring Regular Inspections of Gun Dealer Premises

Permitting local law enforcement to periodically inspect gun dealers for compliance with local, state, and federal laws helps prevent gun trafficking. The following four jurisdictions require that gun dealers be inspected by the police regularly.

- Chula Vista*
- Emeryville
- San Carlos
- Union City

SUPPORT GUN SAFETY

We're in this together. To build a safer America—one where children and parents in every neighborhood can learn, play, work, and worship without fear of gun violence—we need you standing beside us in this fight.



PUBLIC PROPERTY LAWS

Regulating or Prohibiting possession of Firearms and/or Ammunition on Public Property

Laws prohibiting firearms on government property serve to keep guns out of spaces where the freedom of expression is particularly important, like polling places; near schools and other areas children frequent; and near places where disagreements are likely, such as courthouses. 143 jurisdictions regulate or prohibit the possession of firearms and/or ammunition on certain types of public property, such as in parks, recreation areas, and municipal buildings.

Jurisdictions that Prohibit Firearms on some Public Property

- Alameda County
- Albany
- Alhambra
- Anaheim
- Antioch
- Bakersfield
- Baldwin Park
- Bell
- Brentwood
- Burlingame
- Calimesa
- Calistoga
- Campbell
- Carlsbad
- Cathedral City
- Chino
- Chula Vista
- Claremont
- Clovis
- Colma
- Commerce
- Concord
- Corona
- Costa Mesa
- Covina
- Culver City
- Cupertino
- Daly City
- Diamond Bar
- ...
- Moreno Valley
- Morgan Hill
- Murrieta
- Newark
- Norwalk
- Oakland
- Oakley
- Oceanside
- Ontario
- Orange
- Orange County
- Orinda
- Palm Springs
- Palo Alto
- Paramount
- Pasadena
- Pico Rivera
- Pleasanton
- Pomona
- Redding
- Redondo Beach
- Reedley
- Rialto
- Richmond
- Riverside¹⁵
- Riverside County
- Rolling Hills Estates
- Roseville
- Sacramento
- Sacramento County

- Dublin
- Dunsmuir
- El Cajon
- El Monte
- Elk Grove
- Escondido
- Fairfield
- Fontana
- Fremont
- Fresno
- Fresno County
- Fullerton
- Garden Grove¹³
- Gardena
- Glendale
- Glendora
- Hawthorne
- Hayward
- Hercules
- Hermosa Beach
- Hillsborough¹⁴
- Hollister
- Huntington Beach
- Imperial Beach
- Inglewood
- Irvine
- Irwindale
- Jurupa Valley
- La Canada Flintridge
- La Puente
- Lafayette
- Lancaster
- Lawndale
- Long Beach
- Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County
- Los Gatos
- Madera
- Marin County
- Maywood
- Merced
- Mission Viejo
- Modesto
- Monrovia
- Montebello
- Monterey County
- Monterrey Park
- Moraga
- Salinas
- San Benito County
- San Bernardino County
- San Carlos
- San Diego
- San Diego County
- San Dimas
- San Francisco City and County
- San Gabriel
- San Joaquin County¹⁶
- San Jose
- San Mateo
- San Mateo County
- San Rafael
- Santa Ana
- Santa Barbara
- Santa Barbara County
- Santa Clara
- Santa Clara County
- Santa Clarita
- Santa Cruz
- Santa Cruz County
- Santa Fe Springs
- Santa Monica
- Saratoga
- Scotts Valley
- Solana Beach
- South Gate
- South Pasadena
- Stanislaus County
- Stockton
- Temecula
- Temple City
- Union City
- Vacaville
- Vallejo
- Ventura County
- Victorville
- Visalia
- Vista
- Walnut Creek
- West Covina
- Whittier¹⁷
- Yountville

Regulating or Prohibiting Gun Shows or Events

A study by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF) found that [gun shows are the second largest source of illegally trafficked firearms](#). Laws that prevent gun sales or possession on government property reduce the number of gun shows as many gun shows are held on county fairgrounds or at other government-owned venues. By forcing gun sales into licensed dealerships, these laws can help keep guns out of the hands of prohibited persons and the illegal market. The following 10 jurisdictions regulate or prohibit the possession or sale of guns on government-owned property.

- Colma¹⁸
- Fresno County¹⁹

- Glendale
- Glendora²⁰
- Los Angeles County
- Marin County²¹
- San Diego County
- San Francisco City and County
- San Mateo County
- Santa Clara County
- Sacramento County²²
- Sonoma County²³

Prohibiting Guns at Protests or Demonstrations

Perceptions of safety are important to encouraging civic engagement and participation. The presence of firearms at gatherings where free expression is taking place is likely to intimidate some participants and chill speech. The presence of concealed firearms in large crowds or where tensions run high also presents public safety risks associated with the accidental or intentional discharge of a gun. The following jurisdictions have prohibited the carrying of guns at protests or demonstrations.

- Beverly Hills
- Covina
- Hollister
- Los Angeles
- San Carlos
- San Francisco City and County

SAFE STORAGE LAWS

Safe Storage in the Home

Safe storage laws require gun owners to store their unattended guns in residences in locked containers or with locking devices to prevent access by unauthorized users. These laws help prevent accidental shootings, suicides, and firearm thefts during home burglaries. Forty-one jurisdictions require safe storage in the home.

Jurisdictions that Require Safe Storage in the Home

- Alameda
- Belmont
- Belvedere
- Berkeley
- Burlingame
- Calabasas
- Colma
- Cudahy
- Culver City
- Del Mar
- Dublin
- Encinitas
- Foster City
- Hermosa Beach
- Hillsborough
- Los Altos Hills
- Los Angeles
- Millbrae
- Monte Sereno
- Moraga
- Orinda
- Palm Springs
- Palo Alto
- Portola Valley
- Redwood City
- San Bruno
- San Carlos
- San Diego
- San Francisco City and County
- San Jose²⁴
- San Marino
- San Mateo
- San Mateo County
- Santa Clara County
- Santa Cruz
- Saratoga
- Solana Beach
- South San Francisco
- Sunnyvale
- Tiburon²⁵

- Morgan Hill
- Oakland

Safe Storage in Vehicles

Vehicle break-ins are common in California and guns stolen from vehicles have been involved in several high profile shootings in recent years. The following two jurisdictions require owners who leave guns in their unattended vehicles to store them safely.

- Oakland
- San Francisco City and County

Firearm Loss and Theft Reporting

Closely related to safe-storage laws are laws that address what happens when a gun is stolen. Loss and theft reporting laws, in place in 19 local jurisdictions, require gun owners to inform local law enforcement when their firearm is stolen or goes missing. This serves many public

Jurisdictions that Require Reporting Loss or Theft of a Firearm

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Berkeley | • Richmond |
| • Campbell | • Sacramento |
| • Huntington Park | • San Francisco |
| • Los Altos Hills | • Santa Cruz |
| • Los Angeles | • Simi Valley |
| • Maywood | • Sunnyvale |
| • Morgan Hill | • Thousand Oaks |
| • Oakland | • Tiburon |
| • Oxnard | • West Hollywood |
| • Point Hueneme | |

GET THE FACTS

Gun violence is a complex problem, and while there's no one-size-fits-all solution, we must act. Our reports bring you the latest cutting-edge research and analysis about strategies to end our country's gun violence crisis at every level.

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