

Guns on Campus: Overview

Most colleges and universities have policies that prohibit or severely restrict the possession of firearms on campus.

Twenty one states prohibit carrying concealed weapons on college campuses by state law:

California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming

Twenty three states leave the decision to prohibit carrying concealed weapons on college campuses up to the individual college or university:

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Four states have passed laws to allow persons with a permit to carry concealed weapons to carry on college campuses:

Utah (2004) – state law prohibits a state-supported college or university from regulating guns in any way on its property.

Wisconsin (2011) – state law allows conceal carry licensees to carry on college campuses. However colleges and universities can prohibit weapons in buildings if signs are posted at every entrance. All state-supported colleges and universities have put up signs.

Mississippi (2011) – state law removed college campuses from list of places where conceal carry licensees are prohibited from carrying concealed weapons. However, legislation failed to amend another section of state law that prohibits possession of firearms on “educational property.” Final outcome is not settled.

Arkansas (2012) – state law allows faculty and staff members who possess a permit to carry concealed weapons to carry on college campuses, unless the governing board of each institution decides to prohibit guns on campus annually.

Court rulings in two states have overturned long standing policy of prohibiting firearms on college campuses:

Oregon (2011) – Oregon Court of Appeals overturned the Oregon University System’s ban of guns on campus, allowing conceal carry licensees to carry concealed weapons on campus. University officials have adopted a policy that allows them to prohibit guns from university buildings.

Colorado (2012) – Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the University of Colorado’s policy of prohibiting firearms on campus violated the state’s conceal carry law. University of Colorado must now allow conceal carry licensees to carry concealed weapons on campus.