

FIRST EDITION • 2026

T E N N E S S E E

FIREARM LEGAL HANDBOOK

*A consolidated reference to Tennessee statutes,
carry laws & constitutional protections*

Firearm Advocacy Law



Society

Compiled by the UT Firearm Advocacy Law Society

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a clear, accurate, and accessible overview of Tennessee firearm law. It is intended to serve as a practical reference for firearm owners, students, legal professionals, and members of the public seeking to better understand their rights and responsibilities under Tennessee law.

Firearm laws are often complex, frequently misunderstood, and subject to change. In many cases, simple misunderstandings or lack of knowledge can result in serious legal consequences. This handbook seeks to reduce that complexity by presenting Tennessee firearm law in a structured, straightforward, and understandable format grounded in statutory authority.

This publication is produced by the Firearm Advocacy Law Society (FALS) as part of its mission to promote education, informed discussion, and responsible engagement with firearm law and policy. This handbook is not intended to advance political viewpoints or advocate for specific policy positions. Rather, it is designed to provide neutral, fact-based legal information so that readers may better understand applicable law and form their own informed conclusions.

This handbook is not legal advice. Firearm law often depends on specific facts and circumstances, and readers should consult a qualified attorney regarding individual legal matters. Because laws, regulations, and judicial interpretations may change, readers are encouraged to verify current law through official Tennessee and federal sources.

Ultimately, this handbook exists to increase legal awareness, reduce misinformation, and promote the safe, responsible, and lawful exercise of firearm rights in the State of Tennessee.

– Firearm Advocacy Law Society (FALS)



MISSION STATEMENT

The Firearm Advocacy Law Society exists to promote legal education, objective analysis, and informed discussion regarding firearm law, constitutional rights, regulatory frameworks, and responsible firearm ownership through scholarship, research, and public legal education.

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Daniel Lyjorn | President | Class of 2028

Catherine Forsyth | Vice President | Class of 2028

L. Preston Keim | Chief Editor | Class of 2028

Talon Sulfridge | Editor & Design | Class of 2028

Zane Snead | Editor | Class of 2028

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I — CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS & RIGHTS	5
1.1 Federal Second Amendment	5
1.2 Tennessee Constitutional Provision	5
1.3 Second Amendment Sanctuary (T.C.A. § 39-17-1370).....	5
1.4 State Preemption of Local Regulations (T.C.A. § 39-17-1314).....	6
PART II — STATUTORY DEFINITIONS & TERMS.....	6
PART III — OWNERSHIP, PURCHASE, & POSSESSION RIGHTS	8
3.1 General Right to Possess — Eligible Persons	8
3.2 Prohibited Persons — Possession Prohibited	8
State Prohibitions (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307)	8
Federal Prohibitions (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)) — Also applies in Tennessee.....	8
3.3 Minimum Age Requirements	9
3.4 Purchase & Transfer Requirements	9
From Licensed Dealers (FFLs).....	9
Private Sales (Non-FFL).....	9
Antique Firearms (T.C.A. § 39-17-1364).....	9
3.5 Safe Storage — Minors (T.C.A. § 39-17-1320)	10
PART IV — CARRYING FIREARMS.....	11
4.1 Constitutional / Permitless Carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(g)).....	11
4.2 Carry Permits	11
Enhanced Handgun Carry Permit (T.C.A. § 39-17-1351)	11
Concealed Handgun Carry Permit (T.C.A. § 39-17-1366)	11
Temporary Permit — Order of Protection Holders (T.C.A. § 39-17-1365)	11
4.3 Reciprocity (T.C.A. § 39-17-1351(r))	12
4.4 Vehicle Carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(e)).....	12
4.5 Prohibited Locations for Carry	12
4.6 Posting Requirements for Private Property Prohibition (T.C.A. § 39-17-1359).....	13
4.7 Posting Requirements for Federal Buildings (U.S.C.A. § 930)	14
PART V — PROHIBITED & RESTRICTED WEAPONS.....	14
5.1 Prohibited Weapons (T.C.A. § 39-17-1302)	14
5.2 Ammunition Restrictions (T.C.A. § 39-17-1304).....	14
5.3 Imitation Firearms (T.C.A. § 39-17-1362).....	14
5.4 Machine Guns — Federal Restrictions.....	14
PART VI — FIREARM-RELATED CRIMINAL OFFENSES.....	15
6.1 Firearm Use During Dangerous Felony (T.C.A. § 39-17-1324)	16
6.2 Enhanced Penalty — Body Armor (T.C.A. § 39-17-1323).....	16
6.3 Reckless Endangerment with Firearm (T.C.A. § 39-13-103)	16
6.4 Unlawful Photography / Surveillance near Shooting Ranges.....	16
PART VII — SELF-DEFENSE & JUSTIFICATION LAWS	16
7.1 Self-Defense (T.C.A. § 39-11-611).....	16
7.2 Castle Doctrine (T.C.A. § 39-11-611(c)).....	17
7.3 Stand Your Ground (T.C.A. § 39-11-611(b))	17
7.4 Defense of Third Person (T.C.A. § 39-11-612).....	17
7.5 Defense of Property (T.C.A. § 39-11-614 & 615)	17

7.6 Immunity from Civil Liability (T.C.A. § 39-11-622)	17
7.7 Limitations on Justification	17
PART VIII — STATUTORY DEFENSES TO WEAPONS OFFENSES	17
8.1 Defenses Under T.C.A. § 39-17-1308	17
8.2 Vehicle / Boat Carry Exception	18
PART IX — HUNTING & WILDLIFE FIREARMS REGULATIONS	18
9.1 Licensing Requirements	18
9.2 Legal Hunting Equipment & Seasons (2025–26)	19
White-Tailed Deer	19
Wild Turkey	19
Black Bear	19
Small Game & Other	19
9.3 Legal Hunting Methods — Firearms	19
9.4 Blaze Orange Requirements	19
9.5 Prohibited Hunting Activities	20
9.6 Handgun on WMAs — Concealed vs. Hunting	20
PART X — NATIONAL FIREARMS ACT (NFA) ITEMS IN TENNESSEE	20
10.1 Overview	20
10.2 SBR Process in Tennessee	20
10.3 Suppressors	21
PART XI — FIREARMS INDUSTRY PROTECTIONS	21
11.1 Limitations on civil liability actions against dealers, manufacturers, or sellers (T.C.A. § 29-42-102)	21
PART XII — RECENTLY ENACTED & PENDING LEGISLATION	22
12.1 Recently Enacted (114th GA)	22
2025 Bill Text TN S.B. 1360: Firearm Related Highlights	22
Recent Hunting Regulation Changes (2026-27)	23
12.2 Failed / Deferred Bills (TN 114th General Assembly)	23
Failed or Killed	23
PART XIII — QUICK REFERENCES & RESOURCES	24
13.1 Carry Summary Matrix	24
13.2 Key Tennessee Code Citations	25

TENNESSEE FIREARM LAW HANDBOOK

A Consolidated Reference Guide to State Firearm Laws, Regulations, and Pending Legislation

Updated June 2026 | State of Tennessee

DISCLAIMER: This handbook is compiled for reference and educational purposes only. It is not legal advice. Laws change frequently — always verify citations against the current Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) and consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation. Federal law (18 U.S.C. Chapter 44; National Firearms Act) governs in addition to state law — compliance with Tennessee law does not ensure compliance with federal law.

Primary Statutory Authority:

- T.C.A. Title 39, Chapter 17, Part 13 — Weapons (core firearms law)
- T.C.A. Title 39, Chapter 11, Part 6 — Justification / Self-Defense
- T.C.A. Title 70 — Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (hunting)
- T.C.A. Title 38, Chapter 6 — Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
- U.S.C. Title 18, Chapter 44 — Federal Firearms: Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA)
- U.S.C. Title 26, Chapter 53 — National Firearms Act (NFA)

PART I — CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS & RIGHTS

1.1 Federal Second Amendment

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Key U.S. Supreme Court cases include:

- *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) — Held that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to possess firearms for lawful purposes, particularly self-defense within the home, and rejected the view that the right is limited solely to militia service.
- *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010) — Incorporated the Second Amendment against state and local governments through the Fourteenth Amendment, making Heller's individual-right interpretation fully applicable to the states.
- *NYSRPA v. Bruen* (2022) — Held that firearm regulations must be consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation and invalidated discretionary "may-issue" handgun licensing schemes.

1.2 Tennessee Constitutional Provision

Article I, Section 26 of the Tennessee Constitution provides: "That the citizens of this State have a right to keep and to bear arms for their common defense; but the Legislature shall have power, by law, to regulate the wearing of arms with a view to prevent crime."

 **NOTE:** Tennessee's constitutional provision explicitly grants the Legislature authority to regulate the wearing (carrying) of arms — broadening State regulatory authority over federally-granted rights.

1.3 Second Amendment Sanctuary (T.C.A. § 38-3-119)

Tennessee has enacted a Second Amendment sanctuary provision limiting state and local government cooperation with federal executive actions on firearms that are not grounded in an act of Congress and that infringe on rights protected by the Second Amendment or Article I, Section 26 of the Tennessee Constitution.

1.4 State Preemption of Local Regulations (T.C.A. § 39-17-1314)

Tennessee completely preempts the field of firearms and ammunition regulation. No county, city, municipality, or local government may enact any ordinance, resolution, rule, regulation, or policy that regulates the transfer, ownership, possession, carrying, or transportation of firearms, ammunition, or components of firearms more restrictively than state law. Violations of preemption allow adversely affected parties to sue and recover damages, attorney's fees, and costs.

NOTE: Local governments may still regulate discharge of firearms within their boundaries (e.g., no shooting within city limits ordinances).

PART II — STATUTORY DEFINITIONS & TERMS

Key definitions under T.C.A. § 39-17-1301 and related provisions:

Term	Definition / Citation
Firearm	Any weapon designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive, or any device readily convertible to that use. (T.C.A. § 39-11-106; 39-17-1301).
Handgun	A pistol, revolver, or other firearm of any description, loaded or unloaded, from which any shot, bullet, or other missile can be discharged, the length of the barrel of which does not exceed twelve (12) inches. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1319(a)(1)).
Rifle	A weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder; designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of an explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled barrel. (Federal — 26 U.S.C. § 5845; adopted by reference in NFA context).
Shotgun	A weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder; designed or redesigned and made to use the energy of an explosive to fire through a smooth bore either a number of projectiles or a single projectile. (Federal 26 U.S.C. § 5845).
Short-Barreled Rifle (SBR)	A rifle having one or more barrels less than sixteen (16) inches in length or an overall length of less than twenty-six (26) inches. Subject to NFA registration requirements under federal law. (26 U.S.C. § 5845(a)).
Short-Barreled Shotgun (SBS)	A shotgun having one or more barrels less than eighteen (18) inches in length or an overall length of less than twenty-six (26) inches. NFA-regulated federally.
Silencer / Suppressor	Any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm (and any component part, combination of parts, or muffler or silencer). NFA-regulated federally (26 U.S.C. § 5845(a)(7)). Tennessee does not independently prohibit silencers — NFA compliance required.
Machine Gun (MG)	Any weapon which shoots, is designed to shoot, or can be readily restored to shoot, automatically more than one shot, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger. (26 U.S.C. § 5845(b)) Federally restricted to pre-1986 registered transferable MGs for civilians. Included are parts or combinations of parts designed and intended solely for use in converting a firearm into a machine gun. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1301(10)).

Term	Definition / Citation
Destructive Device	Any explosive, incendiary, poison gas bomb, grenade, mine, or shell/missile/projectile that is designed, made or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death or substantial property damage; any firearm other than a shotgun with a bore over .50 caliber not qualifying as a sporting weapon. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1301(4)(A); 26 U.S.C. § 5845(f)).
Any Other Weapon (AOW)	NFA category: Any weapon or device capable of being concealed on the person from which a shot can be discharged by energy of an explosive; includes pen guns, wallet guns, and certain pistols with forward vertical grips. (26 U.S.C. § 5845(e)).
Restricted Firearm Ammunition	Any cartridge containing a bullet coated with a plastic substance with anything other than a lead or lead alloy core or a jacketed bullet with anything other than a lead or lead alloy core or a cartridge of which the bullet itself is wholly composed of a metal or metal alloy other than lead. This does not include shotgun shells or solid plastic bullets. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1301(12)).
Antique Firearm	Any firearm manufactured in or before 1898; any firearm with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar ignition system; or any muzzle-loading rifle, shotgun, or pistol using black powder. (18 U.S.C. § 921(a)(16); T.C.A. § 39-17-1364).
Deadly Weapon	A firearm or anything manifestly designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious bodily injury; or anything that in the manner of its use or intended use is capable of causing death or serious bodily injury. (T.C.A. § 39-11-106(a)(5)).
Prohibited Weapon	Specific weapons prohibited under T.C.A. § 39-17-1302, including machine guns, short-barreled rifles/shotguns (without NFA compliance), silencers (without NFA compliance), explosive bombs, and switchblade knives.
Imitation Firearm	Any object that substantially duplicates or is reasonably perceived to be an actual firearm, unless clearly marked with an orange barrel tip or manufactured with non-realistic colors. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1362).
Adjudicated as a Mental Defective	A determination by a court, board, commission, or other lawful authority that a person, as a result of marked subnormal intelligence or mental illness, is a danger to self/others, or lacks the mental capacity to contract or manage his/her own affairs. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1301).
Unloaded (for transport)	A firearm that does not have ammunition in the chamber, cylinder, clip, or magazine, and no clip or magazine is in the immediate vicinity of the weapon. (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307).
Firearm Safe	A locking container or other enclosure, excluding glass-faced containers, equipped with a padlock, key lock, combination lock, or other locking device that is designed and intended for the secure storage of one (1) or more firearms. (T.C.A. § 67-6-358(b)(1)).
Firearm Safety Device	A device that, when installed on a firearm is designed to prevent the firearm from being operating without first deactivating the device; or a device to be equipped or installed on a firearm that is designed to prevent the operation of the firearm by anyone who does not have authorized access to the firearm. (T.C.A. § 67-6-258(b)(2)(A)-(B)).
FFL	Federal Firearms License that allows individuals or businesses to manufacture, sell, import, or transfer firearms and ammunitions.
NICS	National Instant Criminal Background Check System

PART III — OWNERSHIP, MANUFACTURE, PURCHASE & POSSESSION RIGHTS

3.1 General Right to Possess — Eligible Persons

Tennessee residents, who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents and who are not within a prohibited category (see Section 3.2), generally have the right to purchase, own, possess, and use firearms. Tennessee does not require:

- Registration of firearms
- A waiting period for firearm purchases (state law)
- Background checks for private-party sales (only FFLs must use NICS)
- A permit or license to own a firearm

⚠ NOTE: Federal law (18 U.S.C. § 922) imposes background check requirements through licensed dealers (FFLs) and separately prohibits certain persons from possessing firearms, regardless of state law.

3.2 Prohibited Persons — Possession Prohibited

State Prohibitions (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307)

The following persons are prohibited from possessing firearms under Tennessee law:

- Convicted of a felony crime of violence or attempt — Class B Felony (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(b))
- Convicted of a felony drug offense — Class C Felony (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(b))
- Convicted of any felony (possession of handgun, specifically) — Class E Felony (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(c)) unless civil rights restored
- Convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence (18 U.S.C. § 921) — Class A Misdemeanor (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(f))
- Subject to a qualifying domestic violence protective order — Class A Misdemeanor (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(f))
- Adjudicated as a mental defective or judicially committed to a mental institution — Class A Misdemeanor for carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(i))
- Convicted of stalking (T.C.A. § 39-17-315) — Class B Misdemeanor for carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(h))
- Two or more DUI convictions within 10 years, or one DUI within 5 years — Class B Misdemeanor for carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(h))
- Under 18 years of age (handgun possession, with exceptions) (T.C.A. § 39-17-1319)

⚠ NOTE: Civil rights restoration orders, under T.C.A. Title 40, Chapter 29, may restore some firearm rights. The restoration order must not specifically prohibit firearm possession.

Federal Prohibitions (18 U.S.C. § 922(g)) — Also Apply in Tennessee

Federal law independently prohibits possession by:

- Any person convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than one year
- Fugitives from justice
- Unlawful users of or addicted to controlled substances
- Persons adjudicated as mentally defective or committed to a mental institution
- Illegal aliens / persons unlawfully present in the United States
- Persons who have renounced U.S. citizenship

Federal Prohibitions Cont.

- Persons subject to certain domestic violence restraining orders
- Persons convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence
- Persons under indictment for a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than one year (felonies)

3.3 Minimum Age Requirements

- Age 18: Minimum age to purchase a long gun (rifle/shotgun) from an FFL under federal law
- Age 21: Minimum age to purchase a handgun and handgun ammunition from an FFL under federal law
- Age 21: Minimum age for permitless carry of a handgun under Tennessee constitutional carry (effective July 1, 2021), but if a person can meet requirements under T.C.A. § 39-17-1307 (i.e., active duty, honorably discharged, or retired military veteran), then minimum age is 18 years old
- Age 18: Minimum age to obtain a Concealed Handgun Carry Permit (SB1318/HB1332 — signed into law as Public Chapter 356 in May 2025)
- Age 18: Minimum age to obtain an Enhanced Handgun Carry Permit (T.C.A. § 39-17-1351) — Must still meet all requirements under T.C.A. § 39-17-1307 (i.e., active duty, honorably discharged, or retired military veteran), otherwise 21 years of age

 **NOTE:** As of May 2025, Gov. Lee signed SB1318/HB1332 (PC 356) clarifying that the minimum age for a Concealed Handgun Carry Permit is 18 years.

3.4 Purchase & Transfer Requirements

From Licensed Dealers (FFLs)

- Federal NICS background check required for all transfers by licensed dealers
- For purchasers under 21 years of age, sellers have legal responsibility to complete an enhanced background check. (Unique NCIS identification number provided, valid photo I.D. checked, and three (3) business days elapse w/o notification of issue, or where a possibly disqualifying juvenile record is flagged, ten (10) business days elapsed w/o determination that the transfer would be unlawful) (18 U.S.C.A. § 922(t))
- ATF Form 4473 must be completed by purchaser
- Dealers prohibited from transferring firearms to persons that they have reason to believe are prohibited persons
- No state-level waiting period

Private Sales (Non-FFL)

- Tennessee does not require background checks for private sales between individuals
- Sellers may not knowingly transfer to prohibited persons (T.C.A. § 39-17-1316 — prohibition on sales to prohibited persons applies to all sellers)
- Prohibited transfers include: Persons convicted of stalking, persons addicted to alcohol, persons ineligible under 18 U.S.C. § 922 (under 18 years of age), persons judicially committed to mental institution, or persons adjudicated as mentally defective

Antique Firearms (T.C.A. § 39-17-1364)

- Antique firearms and certain replica firearms may be purchased by mail/common carrier without FFL transfer
- Antique firearms are generally exempt from NICS checks and prohibited person restrictions

3.5 Safe Storage — Minors (T.C.A. § 39-17-1320)

It is an offense to provide a handgun to a juvenile (under 18) except in specific circumstances:

- Parent or guardian instructing the juvenile in use
- Hunting pursuant to a valid Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) license
- At a TWRA-authorized shooting range
- Organized competition or performance by a 501(c)(3) organization
- On real property under control of a supervising adult with parental permission
- At the juvenile's residence, with parental permission, and justified in using self-defense

*T.C.A. § 39-17-1312 makes it an offense for a person 18 or older, including parents or guardians, to knowingly permit a minor or student to possess a firearm illegally.

 **NOTE:** Tennessee does not have a general mandatory safe storage law. However, knowingly providing a handgun to a prohibited juvenile constitutes a criminal offense. Moreover, the section below indicates legislative intent that firearms be stored safely, holding open the possibility of legal action.

3.6 Free Firearm Locks (T.C.A. § 39-17-1328)

The Department of Safety shall provide free firearm locks to a Tennessee resident upon the resident's request. The Department of Safety shall prominently display, on the department's website, instructions for requesting free firearm locks.

3.7 Tennessee Firearms Freedom Act (T.C.A. § 4-54-104)

A personal firearm, a firearm accessory, or ammunition that is manufactured commercially or privately in this state and that *remains* within the borders of this state is not subject to federal law or federal regulation, including registration, under the authority of congress to regulate interstate commerce . . . This section applies to a firearm, firearm accessory or ammunition that is manufactured in this state from basic materials and that can be manufactured without the inclusion of any significant parts imported into this state. Generic and insignificant parts that have other manufacturing or consumer product applications are not firearms, firearms accessories or ammunition, and their importation into this state and incorporation into a firearm, a firearm accessory or ammunition manufactured in this state does not subject the firearm, firearm accessory or ammunition to federal regulation . . . The authority of congress to regulate interstate commerce in basic materials does not include authority to regulate firearms, firearms accessories and ammunition made in this state from those materials. Firearms accessories that are imported into this state from another state and that are subject to federal regulation as being in interstate commerce do not subject a firearm to federal regulation under interstate commerce because they are attached to or used in conjunction with a firearm in this state. (T.C.A. § 4-54-104) (citation modified).

This does not apply to:

- Firearms that cannot be carried and used by one (1) person;
- Firearms with a bore diameter greater than one and one-half inches (1 ½") and that uses smokeless powder, not black powder, as a propellant;
- Ammunition with a projectile that explodes using an explosion of chemical energy after the projectile leaves the firearm; or
- A firearm that discharges two (2) or more projectiles with one (1) activation of the trigger or other firing device.

A firearm manufactured or sold in this state under this chapter must have the words "Made in Tennessee" clearly stamped on a central metallic part, such as the receiver or frame. (T.C.A. § 4-54-106).

PART IV — CARRYING FIREARMS

4.1 Constitutional / Permitless Carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(g))

Effective July 1, 2021, Tennessee became a constitutional carry state. Eligible persons may carry a handgun — openly or concealed — without a permit. Requirements for permitless carry:

- Must be 21 years of age or older; or at least 18 years of age and an honorably discharged veteran, reservist who completed basic training, or an active duty service member or reservist who completed basic training
- Must not be prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law
- Must be in a location where carrying is not otherwise prohibited

 *NOTE: Constitutional carry applies to handguns only. Rifles and shotguns in public remain subject to the "intent to go armed" analysis and applicable restrictions.*

4.2 Carry Permits

Enhanced Handgun Carry Permit (EHCP) (T.C.A. § 39-17-1351)

- Age 18+ (U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident)
- Complete an approved firearms training course (live fire and classroom instruction required), unless exempted
- Pass NICS background check through TBI
- Application through Tennessee Department of Safety (Must be issued within 90 days of receiving a complete application)
- Provides broadest reciprocity with other states
- Standard EHCP valid for eight (8) years; \$50 renewal fee but no additional safety course.
- Lifetime permit option available (\$300 fee, does not expire, and is subject to criminal history checks every five (5) years.
- Entitles the owner to carry any handgun they legally possess and must be kept in the holder's immediate possession when carrying in an otherwise prohibited location without the permit status

Concealed Handgun Carry Permit (T.C.A. § 39-17-1366)

- Age 18+ (as of May 2025 per SB1318/HB1332 - PC 356)
- Fewer training requirements than Enhanced permit, still need to complete a firearms safety or training course within one (1) year prior to the application for the permit, unless exempted
- Recognized in fewer states for reciprocity
- Requires in-person application to the department
- Need ID or any proof showing person's residency and identity, \$65 application and processing fee
- Required to keep the permit on your person at all times when carrying a concealed handgun that would be prohibited, if not for the permit

Temporary Permit — Order of Protection Holders (T.C.A. § 39-17-1365)

- Persons granted a domestic violence order of protection may apply for a temporary handgun carry permit
- Issued for the duration of the order of protection pending full permit application
- Holder must carry both the permit and a copy of the protective order at all times when carrying
- Same standard of eligibility as the EHCP requirements

4.3 Reciprocity (T.C.A. § 39-17-1351(r))

Tennessee honors carry permits issued by other states, if those states honor Tennessee permits (reciprocity agreement or statute). Persons carrying under another state's permit in Tennessee must also comply with all Tennessee laws governing where and how firearms may be carried. As of 2025, Tennessee updated reciprocity provisions — always verify the current reciprocity list with the Department of Safety.

- This only authorizes an out-of-state permit holder to carry a handgun.
- If the out-of-state holder moves to Tennessee, they must obtain a Tennessee permit within six (6) months, at which point their out-of-state permit would no longer be facially valid.

4.4 Vehicle Carry (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(e))

A person who is not a prohibited person, and who is in lawful possession of a motor vehicle or boat, may carry or possess a firearm, loaded firearm, or firearm ammunition in that vehicle without a permit.

Exceptions:

- Does not apply if the vehicle is owned/leased by a government or private entity that has adopted a written policy prohibiting firearms in the vehicle
- Does not apply if the person is prohibited from possession

⚠ NOTE: This vehicle carry exception is separate from the "parking lot storage" law (T.C.A. § 39-17-1313), which prohibits employers from preventing permit holders from keeping a firearm in their locked vehicle in parking lots, provided the firearm is kept from ordinary observation and locked in a container within the vehicle.

4.5 Prohibited Locations for Carry

Even with a permit or under constitutional carry, firearms are prohibited in the following locations:

Location	Statutory Authority	Exception Notes
Courts / Judicial Proceedings	T.C.A. § 39-17-1306 — prohibited at all times in any room where judicial proceedings are in progress	LEO/military/penal guard/bailiffs/marshall or other court officers allowed if it is actual discharge of official duties. This section does not apply to those directed by a court to bring the weapon for purposes of providing evidence.
Schools (K–12)	T.C.A. § 39-17-1309 — offense to possess or carry on school property 18 U.S.C. § 922(q) — unlawful for an individual to bring a firearm that has moved in or affects interstate commerce	Authorized school employees with written authorization from the principal or chief administrator (2024 law) / Military, National Guard, LEO, or ROTC in discharge of official duties.
School Buses	T.C.A. § 39-17-1309	Law enforcement
Colleges / Universities	T.C.A. § 39-17-1309	Institutional policy governs; nonstudent adult exception for vehicles; ROTC who are required to carry in the discharge of official duties.

Location	Statutory Authority	Exception Notes
Airports (Sterile Area)	Federal TSA regulations; T.C.A. § 39-17-1359	<i>Posted areas; TSA security checkpoints; law enforcement</i>
Law Enforcement Facilities	T.C.A. § 39-17-1359(g)	<i>Absolute prohibition in buildings housing law enforcement agencies</i>
Head Start Facilities	T.C.A. § 39-17-1359(g)(1)(F)	<i>Absolute prohibition</i>
Posted Private Property	T.C.A. § 39-17-1359	<i>Property owner may post prohibition; violation is criminal trespass if warned to leave; must post in conspicuous location</i>
Posted Government Property	T.C.A. § 39-17-1359	<i>Government entities may prohibit; must comply with posting requirements; vehicle storage exception may apply</i>
While Under Influence	T.C.A. § 39-17-1321	<i>Possession of handgun under influence of alcohol — Class A Misdemeanor; also triggers permit suspension</i>
Federal Buildings / Post Offices	18 U.S.C. § 930	<i>Federal law applies regardless of state permit. This includes any federal judicial building. LEOs and federal officials excepted.</i>
Parks / Recreation (Public)	T.C.A. § 39-17-1311 — offense to carry weapon prohibited under § 39-17-1302; handgun carry generally permitted, unless posted	<i>Permit holders and constitutional carry generally permitted, unless posted</i>

⚠ **NOTE:** The 2024 legislature made it easier to arm teachers in K-12 schools. Written authorization from the principal (or chief administrator) allows certain school employees to carry. School systems must adopt a policy and training program.

4.6 Posting Requirements for Private Property Prohibition (T.C.A. § 39-17-1359)

For a firearms prohibition on private or government property to be enforceable as a criminal matter against permit holders, the property owner must post notice in a conspicuous manner at each public entrance. The notice must clearly state that carrying of weapons is prohibited. If a permit holder is discovered carrying on posted property, they must be asked to leave — refusal constitutes criminal trespass rather than a weapons offense per se.

⚠ **NOTE:** A property owner who prohibits carry but fails to properly post is not civilly or criminally liable for injuries resulting from a permitted carrier on the property (T.C.A. § 39-17-1325 — immunity provision).

4.7 Posting Requirements for Federal Buildings (18 U.S.C.A. § 930)

Notice of any carry prohibitions must be posted at each public entrance, and no conviction may occur without posted notice, unless the person had actual notice.

PART V — PROHIBITED & RESTRICTED WEAPONS

5.1 Prohibited Weapons (T.C.A. § 39-17-1302)

(a) It is an offense to intentionally or knowingly possess, manufacture, transport, repair, or sell the following weapons:

1. An explosive or explosive weapon;
2. A device principally designed, made, or adapted for delivery of an explosive weapon;
3. A machinegun;
4. Hoax device;
5. Knuckles; or
6. Any other implement for inflicting serious bodily injury or death that has no common lawful purpose

(b) It is a defense to prosecution under this section that the person's conduct:

- Pursuant to official duty or part of a lawful business transaction with Federal or State military organizations, governmental law enforcement agencies or correctional facilities.
- Incidental in lawful use of an explosive related to a lawful industrial or commercial enterprise.
- Incidental in using the weapon lawfully in a dramatic performance or scientific research.
- Incidental in displaying the weapon in a public museum or exhibition.
- Licensed by the state of Tennessee following licensing regulation for scientific research or transfer to a Federal or State military organizations, or governmental law enforcement agencies or correctional facilities.

5.2 Ammunition Restrictions (T.C.A. § 39-17-1304)

It is unlawful to possess or carry a firearm with prohibited ammunition with the intent to use it in the commission of a crime. Where such possession is considered a separate and distinct felony.

- Such possession is a Class E felony.

Restrictions exist on bullets designed to explode or penetrate body armor.

- Exceptions only exist for State and Federal military units / personnel.

5.3 Imitation Firearms (T.C.A. § 39-17-1362)

It is a Class B misdemeanor to display an imitation firearm in a public place in a threatening manner. An imitation firearm that is designed primarily as a toy and clearly distinguishable as a toy is generally exempt.

5.4 Machine Guns — Federal Restrictions

Under the Hughes Amendment (18 U.S.C. § 922(o)), civilians may not possess machine guns manufactured after May 19, 1986, except for licensed dealers and manufacturers (SOT/Class III). Pre-1986 registered machine guns may be transferred to civilians through the ATF Form 4 process with a \$200 tax.

PART VI — FIREARM-RELATED CRIMINAL OFFENSES

T.C.A. Citation	Offense Description	Classification
§ 39-17-1302	Possessing/manufacturing/selling a prohibited weapon (MG, SBR, SBS, suppressor without NFA compliance, explosive weapon, etc.)	<i>Class A Misdemeanor under (a)(6)-(7); Class E felony under (a)(2); Class C felony under (a)(3) or (5); Class B felony under (a)(1)</i>
§ 39-17-1303	Unlawful sale, loan, or gift of a firearm to a minor or prohibited person	<i>Class A Misdemeanor</i>
§ 39-17-1306	Carrying a weapon during judicial proceedings	<i>Class E Felony</i>
§ 39-17-1307(b)	Unlawful possession by convicted violent felon or drug felon	<i>Class B Felony (violent); Class C Felony (drug)</i>
§ 39-17-1307(c)	Felon in possession of handgun	<i>Class E Felony</i>
§ 39-17-1307(f)	Possession by person subject to DV protective order or DV misdemeanor conviction	<i>Class A Misdemeanor</i>
§ 39-17-1307(h)	Carry by person convicted of stalking, DUI (2x/10yr or 1x/5yr), or adjudicated mental defective	<i>Class B Misdemeanor</i>
§ 39-17-1309	Carrying weapon on school property (without authorization)	<i>Class E Felony under (b)(3); Class B misdemeanor under (c)(2)</i>
§ 39-17-1310	Affirmative defense: authorized school employee with written authorization	<i>N/A — Defense only</i>
§ 39-17-1316	Sale of a dangerous weapon to a prohibited person (i.e., felon, mental defective, stalker, substance abuser, etc.)	<i>Class A Misdemeanor</i>
§ 39-17-1319	Juvenile (under 18) possession of a handgun (unlawfully)	<i>Delinquent Act; community service; driving privilege suspension</i>
§ 39-17-1320	Providing a handgun to a juvenile (without exception)	<i>Class A Misdemeanor under (a); Class D felony under (b)</i>
§ 39-17-1321	Possession of handgun while under influence of alcohol or controlled substance	<i>Class A Misdemeanor; permit suspension</i>
§ 39-17-1323	Commission of certain offenses while wearing body armor	<i>Class E Felony</i>
§ 39-17-1324	Possessing a firearm during commission or attempt of a dangerous felony	<i>Class D Felony under (a); Class C Felony under (b)</i>
§ 39-17-1359	Carry in prohibited location (after notice to leave — trespass component)	<i>Criminal Trespass (Class B Misdemeanor), if refuse to leave</i>
§ 39-17-1362	Displaying imitation firearm in threatening manner in public	<i>Class B Misdemeanor</i>

6.1 Possessing a Firearm During Dangerous Felony (T.C.A. § 39-17-1324)

Any person who possesses a firearm, or antique firearm, during the commission of, or attempt to commit, a dangerous felony commits a Class C/D felony. The sentence imposed must be served consecutively to the sentence for the dangerous felony itself. "Dangerous felony" is specifically defined in the statute and includes murder, robbery, burglary, kidnapping, rape, carjacking, and other violent offenses.

6.2 Commission of Certain Offenses While Wearing Body Armor (T.C.A. § 39-17-1323)

If a person commits one of the specified offenses, such as crimes involving violence, burglary, and felony offenses involving controlled substances, while wearing a bullet-proof vest or other body armor, the offense classification is elevated to the next higher classification.

6.3 Reckless Endangerment with Firearm (T.C.A. § 39-13-103)

Reckless endangerment is when a person commits an offense that recklessly places another person in imminent danger of death or serious bodily harm. When committed with a deadly weapon (including a firearm) it is elevated from a Class A Misdemeanor to a Class C/D/E Felony.

6.4 "Range Protection Act" (T.C.A. § 39-17-316)

This provision protects shooting ranges from certain civil and criminal liability and nuisance claims when in compliance with applicable noise control laws/regulations at the time the range began operation.

Ranges in operation before surrounding development changes, generally cannot be shut down as nuisances based solely on changed conditions.

PART VII — SELF-DEFENSE (T.C.A. § 39-11-611) & JUSTIFICATION LAWS

7.1 Stand Your Ground (T.C.A. § 39-11-611(b))

A person who is not engaged in unlawful conduct and is in a place where the person has a right to be, has no duty to retreat before threatening or using force against another person if:

- The person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect against the other person's use, or attempted use, of unlawful force

A person who is not engaged in unlawful conduct, and is in a place where the person has a right to be, has no duty to retreat before threatening or using force intended or likely to cause death, or serious bodily injury, if:

- The person has a reasonable belief that there is an imminent danger of death, serious bodily injury, or grave sexual abuse.
- The danger creating such belief is real, or honestly believed to be real at the time, and is founded upon reasonable grounds.

Use of deadly force is justified only when the person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to prevent death or serious bodily injury to the person or another, or to prevent the commission of a felony, involving risk of death or serious bodily injury.

7.2 Castle Doctrine (T.C.A. § 39-11-611(c))

Any person using force intended or likely to cause death or serious bodily injury within a residence, business, dwelling, or vehicle is presumed to have held a reasonable belief of imminent death or serious bodily injury to self, family, members of the household, invited guest, when that force is used against another person, who unlawfully and forcibly enters or has unlawfully and forcibly entered the residence, business, dwelling, or vehicle, and the person using defensive force knew or had reason to believe that an unlawful and forcible entry occurred.

NOTE: Tennessee's Castle Doctrine creates a rebuttable presumption of reasonableness — it does not grant absolute immunity in all circumstances.

7.3 Defense of Third Person (T.C.A. § 39-11-612)

A person is justified in threatening or using force to protect a third person using the same standards as self-defense — the person must reasonably believe the third person would be justified in using such force in their own self-defense.

7.4 Protection of Property (T.C.A. § 39-11-614 & 615)

A person may use force to prevent or terminate criminal interference – and dispossession – with real or personal property in the person's lawful possession, or the lawful possession of a third person.

Deadly force to protect property alone (without threat to persons) is not justified under Tennessee law.

7.5 Immunity from Civil Liability (T.C.A. § 39-11-622)

A person who uses force in self-defense, defense of others, or defense of home, in compliance with T.C.A. §§ 39-11-611, 39-11-612, is immune from civil liability for damages arising from the use of force. This immunity can be raised as a defense in civil proceedings. The court may award attorney fees and costs to a defendant who prevails on this immunity defense.

7.6 Limitations on Justification

Self-defense and related justifications are NOT available to:

- Persons who provoked the confrontation with purpose to cause death or serious bodily injury (though may regain justification by clearly withdrawing)
- Persons engaged in the commission of a felony at the time of the use of force.
- Persons who use force against law enforcement officers acting in their lawful duty, and the person knew (or reasonably should have known) the officer was acting in an official capacity.

PART VIII — STATUTORY DEFENSES TO WEAPONS OFFENSES

8.1 Defenses Under T.C.A. § 39-17-1308

It is a defense to a charge of unlawful carrying or possession of a weapon (T.C.A. § 39-17-1307) if the possession or carrying was:

- Of an unloaded firearm not concealed on or about the person, and the ammunition for the weapon was not in the immediate vicinity of the person or weapon;
- By a person authorized to possess/carry under the following statutes: T.C.A. §§ 39-17-1315, 39-17-1351, 39-17-1366 (permit holders)
- At the person's; place of residence, business or premises

Defenses Cont.

- Incident to lawful hunting, trapping, fishing, camping, sport shooting or other lawful activity
- By a person possessing a rifle or shotgun while engaged in lawful protection of livestock from predatory animals

These defenses are NOT available to persons described in § 39-17-1307(b)(1) (persons with prior felony convictions disqualifying them from possession).

| 8.2 Vehicle / Boat Carry Exception

Under T.C.A. § 39-17-1307(e), a person who is not a prohibited person, and is in lawful possession of a motor vehicle or boat, may carry or possess a loaded firearm and ammunition in that vehicle. This is an exception to the general carrying offense, not a permit-based defense.

PART IX — HUNTING & WILDLIFE FIREARMS REGULATIONS

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) regulates hunting under T.C.A., Title 70. Hunting regulations are set by the Tennessee Fish & Wildlife Commission and published annually in the Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide. Always consult the current TWRA guide for the most up-to-date season dates and restrictions.

| 9.1 Licensing Requirements

A valid Tennessee hunting license is generally required for any person who takes, or attempts to take, wildlife in Tennessee, unless a statutory exemption applies. Licenses are typically valid for 365 days from date of purchase, and may be obtained through TWRA-authorized agents or the state licensing portal.

- **Resident Licensing Requirements:**

Tennessee residents generally must possess a valid hunting license to lawfully take wildlife unless a statutory exemption applies. Residency is typically established through a valid Tennessee driver's license or state-issued identification, or by demonstrating at least ninety (90) consecutive days of Tennessee residency with the intent to make Tennessee a permanent home.

Resident licensing is also available to qualifying active-duty military personnel stationed in Tennessee and certain students enrolled in Tennessee educational institutions. Additional supplemental licenses may be required depending on the species pursued and method of take, including big game, waterfowl, and quota-based hunts.

- **Nonresident Licensing Requirements:**

Nonresidents hunting in Tennessee must obtain the applicable nonresident hunting license and any required supplemental permits before engaging in hunting activity within the state. License type and duration vary based on residency status, species sought, and whether the hunt involves small game, big game, waterfowl, or quota-controlled wildlife.

Nonresident youth hunters may qualify for reduced-cost licensing categories, while children under twelve (12) are generally exempt from licensure requirements. All nonresident hunters remain subject to Tennessee's annual TWRA regulations governing seasons, legal methods of take, permit requirements, and reporting obligations.

9.2 Legal Hunting Equipment & Types of License

Species	License Requirements	Obtained By	Authorized Weapons
White-Tailed Deer	Supplemental Big Game License (method-specific)	Purchased through TWRA licensing system	Archery equipment, approved muzzleloaders, centerfire rifles, and shotguns during designated seasons
Wild Turkey	Supplemental Big Game License	Purchased through TWRA licensing system	Shotguns, archery equipment, and other TWRA-approved seasonal methods
Black Bear	Quota permit	Draw / lottery application through TWRA	TWRA-approved firearms and archery equipment during designated quota hunts
Elk	Elk quota permit	Draw / lottery application through TWRA	TWRA-approved centerfire rifles, muzzleloaders, and archery equipment as specified by permit
Small Game (Squirrel, Rabbit, Quail)	General Hunting License	Purchased through TWRA licensing system	Rimfire rifles, shotguns, archery equipment, and airguns where permitted
Waterfowl	Hunting License + Waterfowl Supplemental + Federal Duck Stamp	Purchased through TWRA and federal licensing systems	Shotguns, meeting federal migratory bird restrictions

⚠ NOTE: Exact season dates, unit restrictions, and annual equipment limitations are established by TWRA proclamation and should be verified through the current Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide.

9.3 Legal Hunting Methods — Firearms

- General Firearms Deer Season: Centerfire rifles, shotguns, and other TWRA-authorized firearms may be used during designated general firearms deer seasons.
- Muzzleloader Season: Muzzleloading firearms incapable of being loaded from the breech; and includes lawful archery equipment, where designated.
- Handguns: Persons may lawfully carry a handgun for defensive purposes on TWRA-managed lands and private property where otherwise lawful; possession does not independently authorize hunting with that handgun, unless specifically permitted by TWRA regulation.
- Air Guns: May be used for certain lawful hunting activities as authorized by current TWRA regulation, subject to caliber and seasonal restrictions.

⚠ NOTE: During a deer archery-only season, a fall turkey hunter may not simultaneously possess both archery equipment and shotguns/rifles.

9.4 Blaze Orange Requirements

Hunters participating in designated firearms deer seasons are generally required to wear visible fluorescent orange (“blaze orange”) on the head and upper body as required by current Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency regulations.

Blaze Orange Cont.

Exceptions may apply for certain hunting methods, species-specific seasons, and other circumstances established by annual TWRA proclamation. Hunters should always verify current blaze orange requirements through the Tennessee Hunting and Trapping Guide.

9.5 Prohibited Hunting Activities

- Hunting from motorized vehicles or watercraft in motion
- Using artificial lights or other prohibited methods for taking wildlife except where expressly authorized by TWRA regulation
- Hunting across public roads or rights-of-way
- Taking, killing, harming, or possessing, endangered species, or other protected species
- Possessing, transporting, or retaining wildlife in violation of applicable TWRA regulations
- Hunting without landowner permission on private land; written permission required on "Hunting By Written Permission Only" posted property (T.C.A. § 70-4-106)

9.6 Handgun on WMAs — Defensive Carry vs. Hunting

Under T.C.A. § 70-4-103(b), a person may lawfully carry a handgun for defensive purposes while hunting, subject to otherwise applicable Tennessee firearm possession laws under T.C.A., Title 39. Lawful defensive possession of a handgun does not, by itself, constitute hunting with a handgun during archery-only or other weapon-restricted seasons. A handgun may only be used as a hunting implement where expressly authorized by current TWRA regulation.

PART X — NATIONAL FIREARMS ACT (NFA) ITEMS IN TENNESSEE

10.1 Overview

Tennessee does not independently prohibit NFA-regulated items if the owner is in compliance with federal NFA requirements (26 U.S.C. §§ 5801-5872). The following NFA items may be owned in Tennessee with proper federal registration:

- Suppressors / Silencers (Form 4 transfer or Form 1 manufacture)
- Short-Barreled Rifles — SBR (Form 4/1)
- Short-Barreled Shotguns — SBS (Form 4/1Q)
- Machine Guns — pre-1986 registered transferable only (civilians); \$200 tax
- Destructive Devices (DDs) (Form 4; \$200 tax)
- Any Other Weapons (AOWs) (Form 4 transfer \$5 tax; Form 1 manufacture \$200 tax)

10.2 SBR/S Process in Tennessee

- Tennessee residents may Form 1 (make) or Form 4 (transfer) an SBR/S through ATF eForms
- If living in a trust or legal entity: ensure trust/entity is properly structured
- Responsible persons must submit fingerprints and photos with ATF Form 23 (responsible person questionnaire) upon transfer or manufacture
- Chief Law Enforcement Officer (CLEO) notification required for both individual and trust application. CLEO approval is not required
- Tennessee does not require separate state registration after federal approval

SBR Process Cont.

- Owners should maintain accessible copies of approved ATF registration documentation and be prepared to produce proof of lawful registration, if requested by law enforcement (digital copies generally allowed).

10.3 Suppressors

Tennessee does not have a state-level suppressor ban. A suppressor, lawfully owned under NFA (Form 4/1 approved) may be:

- Used for hunting where otherwise legal — Tennessee permits suppressor use during hunting seasons
- Used at shooting ranges
- Transported in vehicle (NFA approval document must be accessible)

10.4 Interstate Travel

Interstate transport of certain NFA items, including short-barreled rifles, short-barreled shotguns, machine guns, and destructive devices, generally requires prior ATF approval through Form 5320.20. Suppressors and most AOWs generally do not require advance transport approval, though destination-state law must always be verified.

PART XI — FIREARMS INDUSTRY PROTECTIONS

11.1 29-42-102. Limitations on civil liability actions against dealers, manufacturers, or sellers.

Under this provision, civil liability actions against firearm dealers, manufacturers, and sellers are broadly prohibited, with six narrow exceptions where suit is permitted:

- (1) the defendant was directly involved in the underlying crime;
- (2) a transferor was convicted under 18 U.S.C. § 924(h) (knowing transfer of a firearm for use in a violent or drug trafficking crime) and the plaintiff was directly harmed by that conduct;
- (3) the seller committed negligent entrustment by providing a firearm to someone the seller knew or should have known posed an unreasonable risk of harm;
- (4) the defendant intentionally violated a state or federal statute applicable to the sale or marketing of firearms — such as falsifying or omitting required federal records — and that violation was the sole proximate cause of the plaintiff's harm;
- (5) the action sounds in breach of contract or warranty arising from the purchase; or
- (6) the action seeks damages for death, physical injury, or property damage caused directly by a design or manufacturing defect when the firearm was used as intended or in a reasonably foreseeable manner, provided the discharge was not itself a volitional criminal act, which the statute treats as the sole proximate cause breaking the chain of liability.

The provision further establishes as state public policy that, to protect the constitutional right to keep and bear arms and maintain a robust firearms marketplace, courts may not impose liability based on third-party criminal misuse, public nuisance, market share liability, or other legal theories not otherwise recognized under state law.

PART XII — RECENT CHANGES TO FIREARMS LEGISLATION

 **NOTE:** This section reflects the status of legislation as of June 2026. Always verify current legislative status at wapp.capitol.tn.gov (TN General Assembly) and legiscan.com/TN.

12.1 Recently Enacted (114th GA)

2025 Bill Text TN S.B. 1360, Public Chapter 329: Firearm Related Highlights

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 29-42-101, is amended by deleting subdivisions (1) and (2) and substituting:

(1) "Ammunition" means loaded firearm ammunition, an ammunition or cartridge case, primer, bullet, or propellant designed for use in a firearm;

(2) "Dealer" means a person who is licensed to engage in business as a dealer in this state in accordance with Section 39-17-1316 and 18 U.S.C. Section 923;

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 29-42-101, is amended by deleting subdivision (5) and substituting:

(5) "Firearm" has the same meaning as defined under Section 39-11-106, 18 U.S.C. Section 921(a)(3), and 26 U.S.C. Section 5845(a);

SECTION 8. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 29-42-101, is amended by deleting subdivision (10)(C) and substituting:

(C) A firearm or ammunition part or component; and

SECTION 9. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 29-42-101(10), is amended by adding the following as new subdivisions:

() Antique firearms, as defined in Section 39-11-106;

() Body armor;

() Devices that assist in increasing the rapidity with which a user may discharge a semiautomatic firearm;

() Firearm magazines, clips, or other devices that store ammunition in a ready state to be loaded into a firearm;

() Firearm silencers, mufflers, or other devices designed and intended to reduce the audible report of a firearm;

() Knives, saps, and other bladed or blunt-impact defensive weapons;

() Optical devices, lights, lasers, sights, or scopes used or intended to be used while attached to or in conjunction with a firearm, including those which allow the user to see in low light or no light conditions or to view the thermal spectrum;

() Other accessories or products used or intended to be used in association or conjunction with a qualified product;

Public Chapter 329 Cont.

() Tasers, stun guns, pepper spray, and other defensive weapons which utilize electricity or capsaicinoids;

SECTION 17. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 39-17-1314, is amended by deleting subdivision (b)(2) and substituting:

(2) The discharge of firearms within the boundaries of the applicable city, county, town, municipality, or metropolitan government, to the extent that such regulation is expressly authorized by state law;

Recent Hunting Regulation Changes: (2026-27)

The Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission approved several firearm and hunting-related regulation changes for the 2026–27 hunting season during its April 2026 meeting.

Straight-Wall Cartridge Season:

The Commission approved a new 7-day straight-wall cartridge hunting season, on private lands only.

2026 season dates: November 14–20

- Applies only during a designated portion of muzzleloader season
- Muzzleloader bag limits apply
- Rifles must:
 - Be single-shot
 - Use straight-wall centerfire cartridges
 - Be .35 caliber or larger

Examples of approved cartridges include:

- .45-70 Government
- .450 Bushmaster
- .350 Legend

*Shotgun shells are not included within the definition of straight-wall cartridges.

Turkey Season Changes:

Beginning in 2027, Tennessee's spring turkey season will begin one week earlier, starting on April 3, 2027. The youth hunt will occur the weekend prior.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Changes:

The Commission also modified portions of the CWD management regulations, including:

- Removal of Wayne and Lewis Counties from the CWD Management Zone
- Prohibition on baiting and feeding in certain CWD-positive counties east of the management zone
- Continued allowance for transportation of carcasses out of affected counties for processing and taxidermy purposes

SOURCE: *Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission April 2026 Meeting*

| 12.2 Failed / Deferred Bills (TN 114th General Assembly)**Failed or Killed:**

- **SB1227/HB1189:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 7; Title 8; Title 10; Title 33; Title 36; Title 37; Title 38; Title 39; Title 40; Title 49; Title 50; Title 57; Title 67; Title 68 and Title 70, relative to firearms

Failed or Killed Cont.

- **SB914/HB883:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, relative to firearms
- **SB819/HB554:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 54, relative to the Tennessee Firearms Freedom Act
- **SB824/HB985:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 17, Part 13, relative to firearms
- **SB441/HB478:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 39, Chapter 17, Part 13, relative to firearms
- **SB474/HB387:** AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63 and Title 68, relative to healthcare providers (inquiring as to the patient's ownership, possession of, or access to firearm ammunition or accessories)

PART XIII — QUICK REFERENCES & RESOURCES**13.1 Carry Summary Matrix**

Scenario	Allowed?	Permit Required?	Notes
Carry handgun in public (18+, not prohibited)	YES	NO (permitless)	<i>Constitutional carry since 7/1/2021</i>
Carry long gun in public (not concealed)	YES (Generally)	NO	<i>Tennessee generally does not prohibit open carry of long guns but, "Intent to go armed" (T.C.A. 39-17-1307) and disorderly conduct statutes.</i>
Carry in vehicle (not prohibited, lawful possession)	YES	NO	<i>Motor vehicle exception § 39-17-1307(e)</i>
Carry in school building	NO (generally)	N/A	<i>Exception: authorized school employee with written principal approval</i>
Carry in courthouse / judicial proceedings	NO	N/A	<i>Absolute prohibition § 39-17-1306</i>
Carry in posted private business	NO	N/A	<i>Property owner prohibition; leave if asked</i>
Carry under influence of alcohol	NO	N/A	<i>Class A misdemeanor; permit suspension</i>
Carry while hunting (sidearm)	YES	Per carry law	<i>Does not authorize hunting with sidearm unless compliant</i>
Possess NFA item (suppressor, SBR) with ATF approval	YES	Federal Form 4/1	<i>Keep approval docs with item(s), digital docs typically sufficient.</i>
Out-of-state resident carry (permit state)	YES (reciprocity)	Home state permit	<i>Must comply with TN law; verify reciprocity</i>

13.2 Key Tennessee Code Citations

- T.C.A. § 39-17-1301 — Part Definitions
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1302 — Prohibited Weapons
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1303 — Unlawful Sale/Loan/Gift of Firearm
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1304 — Ammunition Restrictions
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1306 — Weapons in Judicial Proceedings
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1307 — Unlawful Carrying or Possession
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1308 — Defenses to Weapons Offenses
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1309 — Weapons on School Property
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1311 — Weapons on Public Parks/Recreation
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1313 — Parking Lot Storage Law
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1314 — State Preemption
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1316 — Sales of Dangerous Weapons
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1319 — Juvenile Handgun Possession
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1320 — Providing Handguns to Juveniles
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1321 — Handgun While Under Influence
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1324 — Firearm During Dangerous Felony
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1351 — Enhanced Handgun Carry Permit
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1359 — Prohibition at Certain Locations / Posting
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1362 — Imitation Firearms
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1364 — Antique Firearms
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1366 — Concealed Handgun Carry Permit
- T.C.A. § 39-17-1370 — Second Amendment Sanctuary
- T.C.A. §§ 39-11-611 to 622 — Justification / Self-Defense
- T.C.A. Title 70 — Tennessee Wildlife Resources / Hunting

* FINAL DISCLAIMER *

Nothing in this publication constitutes legal advice. Where statutory text is summarized, the latest applicable Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) sections, as amended, control. This document is a reference tool only. Readers should consult licensed Tennessee counsel for any and all inquiries regarding the latest law and for individual, case-specific questions.



END OF HANDBOOK

Tennessee Firearm Law Handbook — Compiled June 2026