

Tennessee

Total prohibition

Total freedom

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Traveler's checklist:

- ***Standard firearms ownership:** unrestricted, no permit or license required
- ***Semi-auto / high capacity magazines:** no restrictions on possession or sale
- ***Machine gun ownership:** no state restrictions, compliance with federal law only
- ***Firearm law uniformity:** preemption law, cities prohibited from creating new laws
- ***Right of Self-Defense:** NRA-model castle doctrine, *stand your ground* in public areas
- ***Open carry:** prohibited unless one possesses a recognized permit to carry a handgun
- ***Concealed carry:** licenses granted on a "shall issue" basis; automatic recognition for non-residents with carry permits from any other state
- ***Vehicle carry by non-permittees:** firearms must be unloaded and in plain view or secured in commercial gun cases anywhere in the vehicle
- ***State Parks:** concealed handgun carry by recognized licensees permitted
- ***Restaurants serving alcohol:** permittees may carry while eating in dining areas – see p.3
- ***Duty to notify LEO of permit status:** upon demand of police officer
- ***Vehicle gun possession at colleges:** lawful for permittees, but code enforcement possible

Tennessee is slightly more restrictive in its treatment of firearms than some of its neighbors. But the birthplace of Alvin York has a solid tradition of private gun ownership that should provide most travelers with an enjoyable visit.

Recognized permittees: A license is required to carry a loaded handgun either openly or concealed. Such permits are issued through the Department of Public Safety to qualified residents 21 years or older for 4-year terms. Tennessee recognizes any valid, out-of-state carry permit as long as the permittee is not a resident of Tennessee and restricts his weapons' carry to handguns only. Nonresidents are not issued permits unless they are *regularly employed* in the state. Most areas off-limits to permittee carry, such as colleges, civic centers & public recreation buildings, are posted with signage. These prohibitions can include all property owned by the entity. Although "open areas" such as local parks and campgrounds are O.K. under state law, localities can still prohibit carry in these places by posting signs. Parking lots are exempt from prohibition if the permittee's firearms remain secured from view in a privately owned vehicle.

Persons without recognized permits: Non-permittees are prohibited from carrying handguns with the "intent to go armed." The actions of the person and the state of the firearms that he has in his possession define this condition. If the weapons are loaded and carried on his person, he is in violation of the law. Thus, vehicle carry of all handguns should be limited to ones that are unloaded. The weapons should be in plain view or secured in commercial gun cases. Glove compartment or console box carry is not permitted. "Unloaded" refers to handguns that are void of any ammunition in the magazines or chambers and have no loaded magazines nearby. Such weapons may be anywhere in the vehicle except concealed on or about one's person.

All Persons: Rifles and shotguns carried in a vehicle must remain unloaded and separate from ammunition unless one has a recognized carry permit. Tennessee allows permittees to possess magazine loaded, but chamber unloaded, long guns in vehicles.

Tennessee prevents localities from enacting new laws regulating the possession or transportation of firearms. But local ordinances passed before 1986 are grandfathered. Fortunately, most aspects of licensed handgun carry are regulated exclusively by the state.