



INTERNET AMMUNITION SALES

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ISSUE

Is the Internet sale of ammunition regulated under federal or state law?

Federal law does not regulate Internet ammunition sales. State law does not specifically regulate such sales either. But state law generally prohibits the sale of ammunition or ammunition magazines to anyone unless the buyer presents to the seller (1) a gun permit, gun dealer permit, or long gun or handgun eligibility certificate or (2) an ammunition certificate and a driver's license, passport, or other valid government-issued identification that contains his or her photograph and date of birth ([CGS § 29-38m](#)). It also prohibits selling ammunition to anyone under age 18. The courts have not yet ruled on how these provisions would apply to Internet sales.

Federal legislation proposed in 2012 and 2013 would have effectively banned online or mail order purchase of ammunition by requiring that most transactions take place in person. But the bills did not pass (see S. 3458 and H.R. 6241, which were proposed in 2012 and H.R. 142 and S. 35, which were proposed in 2013).

The proposed legislation generally would have required:

1. anyone selling ammunition to be a licensed dealer,
2. ammunition buyers who are not licensed dealers to present photo identification,
3. ammunition dealers to maintain sales records, and
4. ammunition dealers to report to law enforcement the sale of more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition to an unlicensed person within five consecutive days.

Federal law governing ammunition is limited to (1) prohibiting sales to and purchases by certain categories of people (e.g., felons, illegal aliens, and illegal drug users) and (2) prohibiting the manufacture, importation, and sale, by any means, of armor-piercing ammunition. It requires a person to be at least age 18 to buy long gun (shotgun or rifle) ammunition and at least age 21 to buy handgun (pistol or revolver) ammunition. But if a state law or local ordinance sets a higher minimum age, the higher minimum applies (18 USC § 922(b)(1), 27 CFR § 478.99(b)).

For the text of the above mentioned federal bills visit:

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/112/hr6241/text>

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:S.3458>

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s35/text>

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/142>

For more information on Internet ammunition sales, see OLR Report 2012-R-0390 and a 2012 Congressional Report Service report titled *Internet Firearm and Ammunition Sales* at <http://fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42687.pdf>.

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