

State and Federal Laws on Ammunition Record-keeping Requirements

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Issue

Are there any state or federal laws requiring ammunition sellers to keep records of ammunition sales?

Summary

Neither federal nor Connecticut state law require ammunition sellers to keep records of ammunition sales. We identified at least four jurisdictions (California, New Jersey, New York, and the District of Columbia) that have ammunition purchase record-keeping requirements. These requirements generally (1) require sellers to maintain electronic databases on ammunition sales, (2) establish the specific information sellers must collect on each purchase, and (3) require sellers to allow reasonable access to the records by law enforcement.

Relatedly, in September 2022, the International Standards Organization (ISO), an organization responsible for setting rules in the financial services industry, created a [new merchant category code](#) for firearm and ammunition sellers. This code separately designates sales made at firearm and ammunition stores from those made at retail and sporting goods stores. Shortly after ISO's announcement, several major credit card companies, including Visa, Mastercard, and American Express, [announced plans](#) to adopt the new merchant category code for cards they issue.

Federal Law

Federal law generally does not require ammunition sellers to maintain sales records. The Gun Control Act of 1968 [originally required](#) ammunition sellers to maintain sales records for most types of ammunition. However, the Firearms Owners' Protection Act of 1986 amended the Gun Control Act, eliminating ammunition-related record keeping provisions [for most forms of ammunition](#). Today, ammunition sellers are required to keep records of the name, age, and residence of all purchasers of armor-piercing ammunition ([18 U.S.C. §§ 922-923](#)).

State & District of Columbia Law

California

California law requires ammunition sellers to record ammunition sales at the time of sale on a prescribed form distributed by the state Department of Justice (DOJ). Ammunition sellers must record the following information:

1. date of the sale or transfer;
2. brand, type, and amount of ammunition sold or transferred;
3. the purchaser's or transferee's full name, signature, residential address, telephone number, date of birth, and driver's license (or other identification number) and the state in which it was issued; and
4. name of the salesperson who processed the sale or transfer ([Cal. Penal Code § 30352\(a\)](#)).

Ammunition sellers must electronically submit the above information for all sales and transfers of ammunition ownership. The state DOJ retains this information in an Ammunition Purchase Records File database and the information remains confidential. A purchaser's or transferee's information may be used only for law enforcement, research, and statistical purposes ([Cal. Penal Code § 30352\(b\)](#)).

District of Columbia

District of Columbia law requires ammunition sellers to maintain records of all transactions involving the sale and transfer of ammunition. These records include the (1) brand and number of rounds of each caliber or gauge; (2) name, address, and dealer's license number (if any) of the person or organization to whom ammunition is sold or transferred; (3) consideration for the sale and transfer; and (4) date and time of sale or transfer. If the purchaser or transferee is not a licensee, the seller must also record the registration certificate number of the firearm for which the ammunition was sold or transferred.

Furthermore, District of Columbia police officers may, on demand, access ammunition sellers' records. Finally, all transfers must be made in person, and the purchaser is required to sign a receipt which is maintained by the dealer for one year ([D.C. Code Ann. §§ 7-2504.01 – 7-2504.08, 7-2505.02](#)).

New Jersey

New Jersey law provides that each ammunition seller must maintain a permanent ammunition sales record for certain forms of ammunition. Ammunition sellers are not required to maintain records for the sale of shotgun or rifle ammunition, but they must record ammunition intended for use in any other firearm, ammunition that is interchangeable between rifles and handguns, and hollow-nosed or dum-dum ammunition ([N.J. Admin. Code § 13:54-3.14](#)).

Sellers must keep handgun ammunition sales records in electronic form and record the (1) transaction date; (2) ammunition type, caliber, or gauge; (3) quantity sold; (4) purchaser's name and address, and (5) additional information the state police superintendent deems necessary. Like the District of Columbia's law, New Jersey requires handgun ammunition sales records to be made available for inspection at all reasonable times by any law enforcement officer. Moreover, ammunition sellers must electronically report all handgun ammunition sales to the state police superintendent ([N.J. Stat. Ann. §§ 2C:58-2](#)).

Sellers must also keep a permanent record of ammunition acquisitions and dispositions in bound form. These records must consist of invoices or other commercial records that show the manufacturer's name; the ammunition type, caliber, or gauge; the quantity purchased or transferred; each acquisition date; from whom the ammunition was received; and identification used to establish the purchaser's identity. Sellers must maintain in the records in chronological order by acquisition date at their business location ([N.J. Admin. Code § 13:54-3.14](#)).

New York

New York law requires ammunition sellers to keep electronic records of every purchase or transfer in a manner the state police superintendent approves. At the time of any ammunition sale or transfer, the seller must collect and enter into their records the date, name, age, occupation, and residence of any purchaser or transferee. Furthermore, the seller must also record the quantity of ammunition purchased, the ammunition caliber, and the manufacturer's name and serial number (or other distinguishing number or identification mark if there is no serial number). Ammunition sales records are to be maintained in a statewide database ([N.Y. Penal Law § 400.03](#)).

The statewide ammunition record-keeping database was originally signed into law in 2013. However, in 2015, governor Cuomo and the state senate reached an [agreement](#) to suspend the statewide database from taking effect. Various news reports in 2021 indicated the database was still inactive, even after governor Cuomo left office. Subsequently, in 2022, governor Hochul signed legislation to create a statewide ammunition database. The legislation went into effect in September 2022 ([N.Y. Senate Bill S.51001](#)).

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