

This FAQ is only intended to provide general information about the changes involving open carry and campus carry. The laws pertaining to firearms in Texas can be complex, so make sure that you have a thorough understanding of what is allowed by both Texas and federal law.

1. How did the gun laws change in Texas?

In June of 2015, the Texas legislature passed “an open carry bill” which allows citizens to carry a holstered handgun, either openly or concealed, as long as they have a valid handgun license. If a license holder is openly carrying a handgun, it must be in either a belt or shoulder holster.

Also, a “campus carry” bill was passed which will allow license holders to carry a **concealed** handgun on college campuses. Open carry will be prohibited on all campuses. Private institutions have the ability to opt-out of campus carry and public institutions have the ability to designate certain areas as a weapons free zone. Campuses are currently in the process of drafting these restrictions.

2. When do the changes become effective?

Open carry became effective on January 1, 2016. Campus carry becomes effective on August 1, 2016 for regular universities and colleges and on August 1, 2017 for junior colleges.

3. Who can carry a handgun in a public place?

Generally, a person with a valid License to Carry (LTC) is allowed to carry either openly or concealed in a public place. A person must be 21 years old, submit an application to the State, go through a background check, and take a class in order to qualify for a license. A person who has a concealed handgun license will automatically qualify to carry openly on January 1, 2016.

4. Where can a license holder carry a handgun?

Generally, a license holder will be able to carry a handgun in all public places except for places that prohibit carrying by either proper notice or by law.

5. Where or under what conditions are license holders prohibited from carrying a handgun?

License holders are prohibited from carrying:

1) on the **physical premises of a school or educational institution**, any grounds or building on which an activity sponsored by a school or educational institution is being conducted, or in a passenger transportation vehicle of a school or educational institution, whether the school or educational institution is public or private, unless pursuant to written regulations or written authorization of the institution;

2) on the premises of a **polling place** on the day of an election or while early voting is in progress;

3) on the premises of any **government court or offices utilized by the court**, unless pursuant to written regulations or written authorization of the court;

4) on the premises of a **racetrack**;

5) into a secured area of an **airport**;

6) within 1,000 feet of a premises, the location of which is designated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice as a **place of execution** on a day that a sentence of death is set to be imposed on the designated premises and the person received notice that doing so is prohibited;

7) on the premises of a business that is licensed by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and that derives **51 percent or more of its business from the sale of alcohol**;

8) if the license holder is given written or verbal notice pursuant to Penal Code Section 30.06 that concealed carrying is prohibited, on the premises where a **high school, collegiate, or professional sporting event** is taking place, unless the handgun is used for the event;

9) on the premises of a correctional facility;

10) if the license holder is given written or verbal notice pursuant to Penal Code Section 30.06 and/or 30.07 that carrying is prohibited, on the premises of a **state-licensed hospital or nursing home**, unless the administration has granted written permission to the license holder;

11) if the license holder is given written or verbal notice pursuant to Penal Code Section 30.06 and/or 30.07 that carrying is prohibited, in an **amusement park**;

12) if the license holder is given written or verbal notice pursuant to Penal Code Section 30.06 and/or 30.07 that carrying is prohibited, on the premises of a **church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship**;

13) anytime the handgun is **not in a belt or shoulder holster or properly concealed**;

14) if the license holder is **intoxicated**; or

15) if the license holder is given written or verbal notice pursuant to Penal Code Section 30.06 and/or 30.07 that carrying is prohibited, into an **open meeting of a governmental entity**.

6. Where can a license holder carry a handgun on city property?

Generally, a license holder can carry in city facilities or on city property. But, license holders cannot carry at public meetings where notice is posted (such as City Council meetings), facilities where school-sponsored educational events are being conducted, facilities where a school or professional sporting events is taking place, municipal court and related offices, correctional facilities or in the secure non-public areas of a city building or office.

7. Can private property owners prohibit citizens from carrying a firearm on their property?

Yes. Businesses, religious institutions, or other private property owners have the ability to prohibit license holders from carrying a handgun either concealed, openly, or both by providing notice. Notice can be provided either orally, on a card or other document, or by posting a sign at the entrances. Written notice must meet the requirements found in sections [30.06](#) and [30.07](#) of the Texas Penal Code.

8. Can citizens carry a long gun such as a rifle or shotgun in public?

Yes. The ability to carry a long gun in public has always been legal in Texas so the new open carry law does not affect a person's ability to carry a long gun.

9. Should I call the police if I see someone with a firearm?

Police departments expect an increase in calls from citizens who see a person openly carrying a handgun. Now that open carry is legal in Texas, officers may be limited in their response depending on the circumstances.

However, call 911 anytime you feel threatened, see somebody acting suspiciously, or believe someone is committing or about to commit a crime. Officers will take appropriate enforcement action if they determine the person is involved in some type of criminal activity.