

Have Gun Will Travel... Transporting Your Handgun Across the United States

By Suzanne Wiley published on July 9, 2015 in Consumer Information

This post is an updated version of the March 27, 2014 post titled Have Gun Will Travel... Transporting Your Handgun Across the United States.

The kids are out of school, longer days have you wistfully staring out the office window, and the summer city heat has you itching to get out-of-town. Yep, summer vacation is right around the corner. Summer is when the majority of Americans choose to take their leisure vacations. The U.S. Travel Association reports that 79% of leisure travel is taken via vehicle rather than air. Flying with handguns is a hassle. It is much more tempting to take your handgun with you if you are driving. Though we go on vacation to relax, have fun, and let our guard down just a little bit, we always need to keep safety in mind.



If you plan to be driving through many different states, know each state's laws and regulations on traveling with a firearm.

You must comply with each state's firearms transportation laws, whether you have your concealed carry license or not. If you plan to be driving across country or through many different states, you will need to know each state's laws and regulations on traveling with a firearm. Every state has a different set of laws in regard to how you may transport your guns. While traveling through heavily restricted states, the McClure-Volkmer Act of 1986, an amendment to the Gun Control Act of 1968 gives travelers a "safe passage" through restricted states if guns are unloaded and cased, or locked up, and kept inaccessible with the ammunition stored separately. Unfortunately, this law does not always protect travelers. Police pulled military veteran Lieutenant Augustine Kim over in Washington D.C. with his guns properly cased and stored, and they arrested him for four felonies. (Read the story [here](#).)

The McClure-Volkmer Act however, only protects you if you are passing through a state with minimal essential stops such as fueling up, getting food, an emergency or bathroom break. Longer stops, such as a night in a hotel, visits with friends or family, or stopping at a tourist attraction can lead you to having to comply with all of those states

firearms laws. If you decide to stay a night in California while carrying a banned gun, you will be breaking the law.

Laws frequently change. It is always your best bet to check the current laws of the states you are travelling in before heading out.

As of this writing, this is a state-by-state breakdown of the laws in each state in regards to transporting a handgun:

Alabama

Keep your handguns unloaded and cased in the trunk or locked storage area inaccessible to the driver and passengers, unless you have a permit to carry a concealed weapon in your own state. You may only carry a loaded, concealed handgun in your car if you have a permit. You may open carry in Alabama without a permit—certain restrictions apply.

Alabama recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Alaska

Alaska has Constitutional Carry. A loaded handgun may be carried concealed or open in the vehicle. You may open or conceal carry in Alaska without a permit.

Alaska recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Arizona

Arizona has Constitutional Carry. You may open or conceal a loaded handgun, even on your body anywhere in the vehicle. You may also open carry in Arizona without a permit—restrictions apply.

Arizona recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Arkansas

Act 746 changed the language of Arkansas handgun laws. There is contention whether or not the change legally allows "constitutional carry." Contact your lawyer, [Arkansas Carry](#) or your local law enforcement agency for clarification.

The law states:

A person commits the offense of carrying a weapon if he or she possesses a handgun, knife, or club on or about his or her person, in a vehicle occupied by him or her, or otherwise readily available for use with a purpose to attempt to unlawfully employ the handgun, knife, or club as a weapon against a person.

Arkansas recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

California

Handguns must be unloaded, cased and stored in the trunk.

California issues concealed carry permits on an "as needed" basis only and does not recognize any other states' permits.

Colorado

Rifles, shotguns, and handguns can be stored anywhere in the vehicle. Magazines that hold more than 15 rounds are illegal in Colorado. You may open carry in Colorado without a permit—restrictions apply. Do not open carry in Denver without a permit.

Colorado recognizes the following states' concealed carry permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

Connecticut

You may carry a handgun through Connecticut without a permit if you are passing through, competing, transporting it for repair, attending training or an organized collector's group. The handgun must be unloaded, cased and unavailable to the driver and passengers. Magazines that hold more than 10 rounds are illegal in Connecticut.

Connecticut does not recognize any states' concealed carry permits.

Delaware

You may keep a loaded handgun in the open, in the vehicle or an inaccessible location. You may open carry in Delaware without a permit, however it is highly recommended to exercise caution if you do so.

Delaware recognizes the following states' concealed carry permits: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia

District of Columbia

Guns must be unloaded, cased, and locked in the trunk. It is illegal for a handgun to be stored in the glove compartment or any console.

The District of Columbia does not recognize any states' concealed carry permits.

Florida

Firearms can be loaded and concealed as long as they are cased and inaccessible, or can be in plain view in a snapped holster.

Florida recognizes the following states' concealed carry permits: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Alaska, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, South Carolina, West Virginia, Arizona, Idaho, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Dakota, Wyoming, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, North Dakota, Tennessee, Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Ohio, Texas, Delaware, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Oklahoma and Utah.

Georgia

Handguns may be unloaded, in a case and separate from ammunition inside the vehicle, or loaded and fully visible, or loaded and stored in the glove compartment, console or any other compartment.

Georgia recognizes the following states' concealed carry permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Ohio and Wyoming.

Idaho



Many states require ammo be kept separate from firearms in the vehicle.

If you do not have a permit to carry, loaded guns in the vehicle must be in plain view. If concealed in the glove box, your firearm must be unloaded. You may open carry without a permit in Idaho. Outside city limits, you may conceal carry without a permit if you are engaging in a firearm-related activity.

Idaho recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Illinois

Firearms must be unloaded, enclosed in a case designed to transport firearms and directly inaccessible.

Illinois does not recognize any other states' permits.

Indiana

Handguns must be unloaded in a case stored in the trunk, unless you have a permit to carry in your state. If you hold a permit to conceal carry in your home state, you may carry a concealed handgun in the vehicle.

Indiana recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Iowa

Handguns must be unloaded, cased and inaccessible.

Iowa recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Kansas

Kansas is a Constitutional Carry state. Your gun may be loaded or unloaded, concealed or in plain view while driving through Kansas.

Kansas recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Kentucky

Loaded handguns may be concealed in your vehicle if they are kept in the glove box, center console or other compartment that was "originally installed in the motor vehicle by its manufacturer." You may open carry in Kentucky without a permit—some restrictions apply.

Kentucky recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Louisiana

Loaded handguns may be transported anywhere in your vehicle. You may open carry without a permit in Louisiana.

Louisiana recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Maine

If your handgun is inside the vehicle, it must remain unloaded and kept in plain view, or cased and put in the trunk or another inaccessible area. You may carry in Maine openly without a permit.

Maine recognizes the following states' permits: Delaware, South Dakota, Louisiana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Arkansas, Pennsylvania and Michigan

Maryland

Guns must be unloaded, cased and stored in an inaccessible area.

Maryland does not recognize any other states' permit.

Massachusetts

Guns must be unloaded, cased and stored in an inaccessible area. Massachusetts has strict gun laws and is a state that will most likely enforce the just "passing through" provision.

Massachusetts does not recognize any other states' permit.

Michigan

You may only transport loaded handguns through Michigan if you hold a license to carry from your home state. If you do not have a permit, keep the gun unloaded, locked in a case and inaccessible. You may carry openly in Michigan without a permit.

Michigan recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Minnesota

All guns must be unloaded and securely cased.

Minnesota recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arkansas, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming

Mississippi

A loaded and concealed handgun may be carried anywhere in the vehicle. Open carry of a handgun without a permit is legal in Mississippi. Mississippi has a limited permitless carry law. Off-body carry without a permit is legal. Disabled vets, active duty military and retired law enforcement may carry concealed without a permit.

Mississippi recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Missouri

A loaded and concealed handgun may be carried anywhere in the vehicle—even on your body. Open carry is generally legal in Missouri without a permit; however, certain cities restrict the practice. Check with the town or city you are in.

Missouri recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

Montana

All guns may be loaded and transported anywhere in the vehicle, even on your body. You may conceal carry in Montana without a permit if you are outside city boundaries, hiking or camping. You may open carry in Montana without a permit.

Montana recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, New York City, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Nebraska

Depending on where you are in Nebraska, a loaded handgun may be in open view if you do not hold a license to conceal carry. It is best to keep all guns unloaded and stored in the trunk while driving through Nebraska. You may open carry in Nebraska without a permit, however certain areas restrict it. Check with the local laws before carrying.

Nebraska recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Nevada

Loaded handguns must be in plain sight or in the glove box but not concealed on your body. You may carry in Nevada openly without a permit.

Nevada recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi Enhanced Permit, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

New Hampshire

Loaded handguns are not allowed in the vehicle unless you have a concealed carry permit. You may open carry a loaded handgun in New Hampshire without a permit.

New Hampshire recognizes the following states' permits, only if you are a resident of that state: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, West Virginia and Wyoming

New Jersey

New Jersey has very strict firearms laws. The transportation of firearms is generally illegal in New Jersey unless you have a permit to carry issued from New Jersey. It is best to leave firearms at home if you plan to drive through New Jersey.

New Jersey does not recognize any other states' permit.

New Mexico

Transportation of firearms in the vehicle is unrestricted. You may conceal or have in plain view a loaded or unloaded handgun. You may carry openly in New Mexico without a permit. Do not carry in an establishment that sells or serves alcohol.

New Mexico recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho Enhanced Permit, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming

New York

New York has very strict firearms laws. All guns must be unloaded, cased and stored in an inaccessible location. If stopped, you might have to prove you are not staying in New York if you are transporting a handgun.

New York does not recognize any other states' permit.

North Carolina

As long as it is in plain sight, you can keep a loaded handgun inside the vehicle. Otherwise, a loaded handgun cannot be concealed or readily accessible inside your vehicle. You can open carry in North Carolina without a permit—restricted areas apply.

North Carolina recognizes all other states' concealed carry permits.

North Dakota

Handguns inside the vehicle must be unloaded and in plain sight or properly cased and secured. You may only openly carry a loaded handgun without a permit if you are engaged in target shooting, hunting or camping.

North Dakota recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

Ohio

Handguns must be unloaded and in plain sight inside the vehicle or locked in a case. Unless you have a permit to conceal, you may not have a loaded firearm in your car. You may open carry in Ohio without a permit.

Ohio recognizes all states' permits.

Oklahoma

All guns inside the vehicle must be unloaded in plain view or cased unless you have a concealed carry permit. If you choose to case your firearm, the case must be visible.

Oklahoma recognizes all states' permits.

Oregon

You may carry a loaded firearm in the car as long as it is not concealed or readily accessible. Each city in Oregon has different laws regarding carrying a loaded firearm in a vehicle.

Oregon does not recognize any other states' permit.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is a restricted state. All firearms must be unloaded, cased, and stored in an inaccessible location. Pennsylvania is also one of those states that you must be just "passing through" while transporting your firearms. In most places, open carry is legal without a permit, but don't open carry in Philadelphia.

Pennsylvania recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota Class 1 Permit, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming and Arizona, Florida, Maine, Utah, Virginia for residents of those states only.

Rhode Island

For just "passing through" purposes, you may transport your firearm unloaded, cased and stored in an inaccessible location. Keep ammunition separate in a locked container.

Rhode Island does not recognize any other states' permit.

South Carolina

It is legal to keep a loaded handgun in the glove box, console or trunk of the vehicle.

South Carolina recognizes the following states' permits, only if you are a resident of that state: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho Enhanced Permit, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming

South Dakota

As long as they are in plain sight, you can have loaded handgun inside the vehicle. Concealed, unloaded handguns are legal if enclosed in a space such as the glove box, center console or trunk. You may open carry in South Dakota without a permit.

South Dakota recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, New York City, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

Tennessee

A loaded firearm can be carried anywhere in your vehicle without a permit, open or concealed, just not on your body.

Tennessee recognizes all states' permits.

Texas

A loaded handgun may be concealed anywhere in the vehicle.

Texas recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, New York City, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio permits issued or renewed on or after March 23, 2015, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming

Utah

A loaded handgun can be transported either concealed or in plain view in the vehicle.

Utah recognizes all states' permits.

Vermont

Vermont has Constitutional Carry. Handguns may be loaded and concealed in the vehicle without having a permit.

Vermont does not need to recognize any other states' permits. You may carry a handgun in Vermont concealed or open without a permit.

Virginia

Loaded handguns in the vehicle must be in plain sight or in a closed container such as the glove box. Open carry without a permit is legal in Virginia. However, in urban areas you cannot carry a centerfire handgun that holds more than 20 rounds.

Virginia recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Idaho Enhanced Permit, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

Washington

You may not carry a loaded firearm in your vehicle without a concealed carry license or permit. All firearms need to be unloaded and cased. You may open carry in Washington without a permit with restrictions. You may conceal carry without a permit if you are hunting, fishing, camping or target shooting.

Washington recognizes the following states' permits: Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, North Carolina, North Dakota (Class 1 Permit), Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah and Idaho Enhanced Permit only

West Virginia

A loaded handgun must be in plain view. You may open carry without a permit in West Virginia.

West Virginia recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wyoming

Wisconsin

No concealed firearms allowed inside the vehicle. Wisconsin has strict regulations as to what is considered concealed. It is best to keep handguns loaded or unloaded in an inaccessible place. You may open carry in Wisconsin without a permit.

Wisconsin recognizes the following states' permits: Alaska (permits issued or renewed after January 14, 2013), Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri (permits issued or renewed on or after August 28, 2013), Montana, Nebraska, Nevada (permits issued or renewed on or after July 1, 2001), New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio (permits issued or renewed on or after March 23, 2015), Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virgin Islands, Virginia (non-resident permit only), Washington, West Virginia (permits issued after June 8, 2012) and Wyoming

Wyoming

Loaded handguns can be carried in your car as long as it is visible and not on your body. You may open carry a handgun in Wyoming without a permit.

Wyoming recognizes the following states' permits: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin

If you are going to take a road trip across many states, pre-plan your route so you know how to transport your firearms legally. In addition, since laws change frequently, it is best to double-check the current law in the state you will be visiting as to whether or not you may carry your firearm or if you will need to keep it locked up in the hotel safe.

The NRA has a complete “right to carry reciprocity and recognition” [map](#) that I highly suggest you look at before heading out with your firearm on your vacation. If you plan on flying this summer, read “[How to Survive Flying in the Not-So-Friendly Skies.](#)”

If you know a state law that needs updating from the above information, please tell us in the comment section and provide a link to the changed law.

NOTE: This post was last updated on August 13, 2015 to reflect recent changes in Minnesota, Nevada, North Dakota and West Virginia and Nevada.



*Introduced to shooting at young age by her older brother, Suzanne Wiley took to the shooting sports and developed a deep love for it over the years. Today, she enjoys plinking with her S&W M&P 15-22, loves revolvers, the 1911, short-barreled AR-15s, and shooting full auto when she gets the chance. Suzanne specializes in writing for the female shooter, beginner shooter, and the modern-day prepper. Suzanne is a staff writer for **Cheaper Than Dirt!***

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