



HOW TO BUY A GUN and HOW TO DO IT ONLINE

Buying a gun online is not only easy, but more often than not cheaper. Before even thinking about buying a gun you have to ask yourself the following questions and if you don't understand or recognize the terms used in this article, I recommend taking a basic firearms class to familiarize yourself with a gun, its parts and how it operates. Before handling ANY gun, assume it's loaded until inspected and cleared. ***SAFETY FIRST***

1) **Can you legally own a firearm?** A background check is done on every buyer. While some states you can walk into a gas station and buy a firearm, you will still have to pass a background check. There are a bunch of questions that are asked on your application. To keep this as short as possible I will say if you are not a felon, have valid state identification and are basically not a criminal you are probably eligible. Your state may require additional licensing such as a FOID card. In Illinois no individual can own, buy or possess any firearm or ammunition without one.

2) **Are you old enough?** You must be **18 years or older to purchase a rifle or shotgun** and **21 or over to purchase a handgun**.

3) **Is the firearm you are interested in purchasing legal in your state?** Illinois has tons of restrictions now that limit the purchase type based on the PICA assault weapons ban. Those restrictions can all be found on my home page. Most revolvers, shotguns, bolt action rifles and pistols without a threaded barrel **ARE** acceptable in Illinois. Rifles however come in many shapes, sizes, colors, flavors and those by far have the biggest challenge of being legal in Illinois. But again, that's a whole nother story but descriptions with pictures are in the AWB link.

4) **What will I be using the firearm for?** Obviously, there are a hundred different scenarios that would require a firearm. Home defense, conceal carry, target practice, law enforcement, critter control, even just collecting antiques and more. But the type you choose will narrow it down a lot.

4) **What type of gun should I get?** Based on what you'll be using it for will dictate what kind of firearm you will buy. Most situations will have you choose a **Handgun, Rifle or shotgun**. For the purpose of this article, we will choose a handgun. Handguns are broken down in simplest of terms in to two categories. Revolvers, which are the easiest to recognize as the Wild West style with a revolving cylinder and a pistol which is more modern and semi automatic with removable magazines. They each have their own benefits which we aren't going to go in to here.

6) **What size gun should I get?** While handguns, rifles and shotguns come in bunches of sizes we will continue on the handgun premise. Pistols are typically broken down into 3 categories. Compact, sub-compact and full size. (These definitions are basic for conversation purposes) A compact pistol has a shorter barrel (3" - 3.75") with a smaller handle. It will generally fit your shooting hand of 2 1/2 fingers of coverage. Commonly used for conceal carry for size and the ability to hide in a purse or waistband. Subcompact is a touch larger with a barrel size (3.75" - 4.25") with grip room enough for a tight 3 average sized fingers. All around carry, target self defense and not too big in a holster or waistband. A full size is what it sounds like. Typically, from a (4.25" - 5.5") barrel and will comfortably fit all fingers on most hands. This will generally be your range pistol, competition shooting or even open carry in a holster. It will usually give the best feeling of control, least amount of recoil and best overall accuracy.

7) **What caliber do I need?** Again depending on your purpose there are over 30 different size bullets or cartridges. In continuing with our theme of pistols, a sub-compact size we will choose the most common a 9mm. There are different versions and sizes of 9mm but (for conversational purposes) it will commonly be a 9mm Luger or 9 x 19 sized ammunition. Other common calibers are 22, 380, 40, 45.

8) Now that you've narrowed down what type and size you want **there's really no substitute for actually holding or shooting the gun**. Most gun shops and ranges have rental guns you can go and try and look at. Get a feel of what you like and how it performs. Don't be afraid to try 3 or four different guns. Be prepared to have to buy the ammo from the store you're renting the gun at. They don't want cheap ammo being run through their property. Talk to your friends that have guns and go to the range for an hour and see what theirs feel like and ask their opinion.

9) Now that you know what gun you want you can browse just about any online gun store. Find the make, model and caliber you want. Even if it says "in stock" many dealers mean (in stock at their distributor). Which is a stretch of the availability. Instead of them shipping out right away, they may have to wait to get it in house from their distributor. So it's worth a call and find out before your waiting 2 weeks to realize they still haven't shipped it. I get many calls and emails from customers asking if I've received their weapon yet and those times more then not my reply is "no, I haven't been updated with any tracking information yet" for the customer only to find out - "the seller meant in stock at the warehouse" and now they aren't happy and wished they would have went with me to begin with. I don't stock any firearms, but my main distributors are all next day shipped and 1 to 2 days actual shipping times away. So i'll have 99% of the firearms I order in 3,4 days of an order being placed. My shipping charges are flat rate so there's no confusion and I will not drag you on about it.

10) So now you know what gun you want, you know where you're getting it from, they have and can ship it out. **BUT HOLD ON** they can't ship it to you. It has to be shipped to a licensed FFL, Federal Firearms Licensee.... *That's me!* Weapons being shipped have to go from a (dealer, store, distributor or FFL) to FFL then transferred to the customer. When you're making your purchase there will usually be a drop down box for who you want to select as your FFL. It generally sorts by zip code and in most cases displays the cost of the transfer. If you don't see us listed please contact us and we will send them a copy of our license directly. Some places charge more for a long gun vs a handgun (NOT ME) but you can choose whoever you want. Some FFL dealers require you to call and get permission to use them, some have their license on file with that company already and some will require you to contact the ffl after the sale and have the FFL license sent over to the seller. Really not a big deal and is easier than you think. For me, I have my customers after making a purchase forward me the original email receipt from the seller. I'll know if I have my license on file with that company, if I don't, I will reply back to that company with your receipt and include my license acknowledging I will accept the gun to transfer to you. If you read step one on my page, you may not even need to talk to me til the transfer takes place.

11) Everything is paid for now what? Now you wait until the seller sends you the tracking information. You forward that email to your FFL so there's no surprises headed his/her way. You don't need call them; trust me they got the email you sent. Time to wait.... handguns are shipped by air and most rifles are shipped ground so take that time into consideration. While all states require a background check not all require a waiting period. In IL there's a mandatory 3 day waiting period from the time you purchase the gun. 72 hours must pass from the time the sale or agreement of the sale has been made. So settle down there cowboy it's coming. Other states have similar if not longer waiting periods.

12) After the FFL receives your firearm, we need time to do our own paperwork and log it in to our system. There's usually a 1 day time frame from when it's received and logged to be available for the background check. Then the FFL will email, text or call you to let you know the firearm is ready and you will need to come in and do some paperwork. You don't need to call and tell them you got a notification from the tracking and the gun is there.... We already know!

13) You're headed to the FFL what do you need? You need to bring a valid government id, (and in some cases a firearms owner's card - state specific). You will also need **BY LAW** a lock or locking storage device for your pistol. Legally you can't leave that premises without it, many new pistols come with one. Look at the contents of your firearm online and see if it's supposed to have one. If not, you can buy one beforehand or ask the FFL if they can sell you one (mine are \$20). Bring your form of payment and please be on time.

14) You're there, provide your identification and payment. You can smile and be cordial but it's not the time for a long conversation. Despite what you think there isn't a whole lot of profit in the transfer process. Building a long-term relationship with return customers is very important. Small talk and chatting is ok but there are probably other customers booked behind you and needs to get you started.

15) You're going to have to fill out an ATF FORM 4473 background check application. Read everything very carefully and try not to mess up. You don't get to erase or start a new form if you screw up. Corrections have to be properly made in a specific process. So do everyone a favor and don't rush. Answer all questions truthfully and to the best of your knowledge. You can ask how a question is interpreted but the FFL cannot and will not tell you what to answer or write down.

16) After you've completed the application the FFL will submit it, usually electronically and to the governing agency. Some applications go to the state, some go to the ATF (varies by state). Within minutes they will have a response. There are 3 ways it can go. **One**, you're approved. We'll bring you your gun and you'll be on your way. You should verify the serial number on the gun matches the serial number on the 4473, but it's probably been verified twice already. **Two**, you're denied - which means something is wrong and you'll have 30 days to clear it up with the authorities or another background check will need to be made or the FFL will ship it back to the seller and you will be charged for it. **Three**, the result will come back as pending. **This is very very very common** with handguns, and it means it's delayed, and the government is reviewing your history. If this happens you get to shake hands and part ways for now. The gun will stay with the FFL until he receives a decision. It usually takes from 1 to 3 days; you don't need to call the FFL we will call you when we see a change in your status. If after a week goes by and you haven't heard from us go ahead and shoot us an email or text and follow up. If approved, the FFL will let you know and you can come back again, show your identification again, then one final signature and date and you're good to go. The FFL can in **NO WAY SHAPE OR FORM** speed up or influence the state. It's completely out of our hands and we are bound by law to abide by the decision that was issued. Don't bother asking us to bend, fudge, change, alter or look the other way on any of the laws or procedures. It's not worth risking their license or life for any applicant.

Guns can be a hobby or an investment, but they aren't cheap. So do your research before throwing money around. I hope this gives you a better understanding of what it takes to buy a gun and the steps needed to put it in your hands. The specifics of types, sizes and calibers are just basic references. Everyone will have their own opinions on what's best, cheapest, shoots straightest, easiest to carry etc etc etc. Do your own research, get on some forums, ask questions and check out reviews. You're buying a firearm, not a lego set. Make sure you lock it up and keep it out of the hands of children and unauthorized users. Leaving it open unaccompanied for even a minute could mean the matter of life or death.

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