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# District of Columbia Firearms Registration

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General Requirements  
Guide (2016)

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Metropolitan Police Department

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

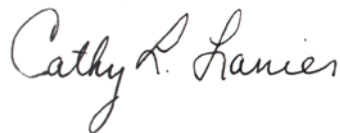
**T**he Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is the agency responsible for registering firearms in the District of Columbia. This guide provides you with the information you need to comply with the District's laws regarding legal registration of your weapon. By being familiar with the law and the process, you will be able to quickly and easily register your weapon and ensure that you are in compliance. While this document aims to provide you with what you need to legally register and possess your firearm, for further interpretation or guidance, you may wish to consult with a private attorney.

As a gun owner, you understand how important it is to be responsible and to follow a few basic rules. (1) Always treat every firearm as if it is loaded. (2) Never point a firearm in a direction that would injure a person in case of accidental discharge. (3) Keep your finger off the trigger unless you are ready to fire.

The District also encourages you to take the necessary measures to ensure that your firearm is securely stored. Too often our police officers are faced with the devastating realities of gun violence, either intentional or accidental. Having an improperly stored gun in your home can be a significant risk factor for injury and death. In fact, firearm-related injuries are a leading cause of death to children, and include deaths from unintentional injuries, homicide and suicide.

That's why MPD, with assistance from Project ChildSafe, provides a gun lock free of charge for each gun registered in the District of Columbia. The locks are simple to use and easy to install. Gun owners are strongly encouraged to use a gun lock to reduce the likelihood of accidental injury or death. In addition, it is illegal in the District of Columbia for any person to possess a firearm in the home if a minor under the age of 18 is likely to gain access to a firearm without the permission of the parent or guardian, unless the registered owner complies with the storage provisions outlined in Part III, Section 7 of this study guide.

Thank you for your cooperation and compliance with the District's laws and for your commitment to being a responsible gun owner.



Cathy L. Lanier  
Chief of Police

### **METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT FIREARMS REGISTRATION SECTION**

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## **IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER**

### **Key Terms Used in this Guide**

- D.C. Official Code: The laws of the District of Columbia. Individuals may access the current Code online at <http://dc.gov/DC/Government/DC+Courts+&+Laws/DC+Laws>.
- FFL or Federal Firearms Licensee: A business authorized by the U.S. government to sell and buy firearms.
- FRS or Firearms Registration Section: The branch of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) that registers firearms for the public.

### **Transporting a Firearm You Already Own for Registration**

When transporting your firearm in a vehicle, it must be unloaded, with neither the firearm nor any ammunition readily accessible or directly accessible from the passenger compartment of the transporting vehicle. If the vehicle does not have a compartment separate from the driver's compartment, the firearm or ammunition must be unloaded and contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console. If you are transporting your firearm in a manner other than in a vehicle, it must be unloaded, inside a locked container, and separate from any ammunition.

Whenever in possession of a firearm, a registrant shall have in his or her possession the registration certificate, or exact photocopy thereof, for such firearm, and exhibit the same upon the demand of a law enforcement officer. (D.C. Official Code §7-2502.08) If you are transporting an unregistered weapon to or from FRS in order to register it, you may only do so during regular FRS business hours (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

**Do not bring** your firearm or ammunition with you when you register your firearm. Please note that it is illegal to possess a magazine that holds more than ten rounds of ammunition in the District of Columbia.

### **Retrieving Your Firearm from a Dealer**

Under DC law, a firearms dealer cannot release a firearm to a purchaser until 10 days after the initial date of purchase. (D.C. Official Code §22-4508) A gun dealer will not release your firearm until you return with your approved registration certificate.

## ***FIREARMS REGISTRATION PROCEDURES IN BRIEF***

### **Newly Purchased Firearm**

To register a newly purchased firearm, the applicant must provide a completed MPD “Application for Firearms Registration Certificate” (or PD-219), a form in triplicate that becomes your firearms registration certificate. Part of the PD-219 must be completed by the SELLER. The seller is identified in each of the possible scenarios below.

#### ***Rifle or Shotgun***

- Under federal law, you may purchase a rifle or shotgun in a state in which you do not live in from a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL). In this instance, the SELLER is whoever initially sells the firearm to you. You should request a PD-219 from MPD before you shop for a firearm. You may pick it up at MPD’s Firearms Registration Section (FRS), request that it be mailed to you, or download it online.
- You will complete the rest of the application and bring it to the FRS along with all other necessary materials to complete the registration process, the FFL will hold the firearm until it is approved by FRS.
- Once the application is approved (generally within one to five business days), the FRS will notify you. You can pick up your registration certificate or request that it be mailed to you. Your registration process is then complete.
- After you get the registration certificate, bring it to the dealer to pick up your rifle or shotgun.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Handgun***

- Under federal law, a handgun purchased in a state in which you do not live MUST be transferred through a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL) in your state of residence. The FFL will charge a fee for this service. A list of FFLs in the District is available from the FRS. (At the time of this publication, no FFLs in the District are providing retail sales to the public.)
- Once you purchase a firearm in another jurisdiction, the original dealer will arrange to ship the firearm to an FFL operating in DC. The DC FFL becomes the SELLER, and will provide and complete Section A of MPD’s “Application for Firearms Registration Certificate” (PD-219).
- You will complete the rest of the application and bring it to the FRS along with all other necessary materials to complete the registration process.

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<sup>1</sup> Under DC law, a firearms dealer cannot release a firearm to a purchaser until 10 days after the initial date of purchase. (D.C. Official Code §22-4508) Therefore, although MPD will process an application for registration in fewer than 10 days, the buyer cannot pick up the gun from the dealer until 10 days after initial purchase.

- Once the application is approved (generally within one to five business days), the FRS will notify you. You can pick up your registration certificate or request that it be mailed to you. Your registration process is then complete.
- After you get the registration certificate, bring it to the dealer to pick up your handgun.<sup>1</sup>

## **Previously Owned Firearm**

To register a firearm you already own, you must file an application **immediately** after the firearm is brought into the District. You can comply with this requirement by personally communicating your intent to register the firearm to the FRS before bringing the gun into the District. You must then file an application for a registration certificate within 48 hours after communicating your intent to do so.

- Please note that it is illegal to possess a magazine that holds more than ten rounds of ammunition in the District of Columbia.
- Once the application is approved (generally within one to five business days), the FRS will notify you. You can pick up your registration certificate or request that it be mailed to you. Your registration process is then complete.

## **COMPLETE FIREARMS REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

1. Complete MPD's **Application for Firearms Registration Certificate** (PD-219).
  - a. The form is available through DC FFLs, or through FRS. You can pick up a copy at the FRS office, online, or contact FRS to request that a form be mailed to you.
  - b. Fill out the "Purchaser/Owner's Name" of the form. If you are buying a new gun, the SELLER of the gun will complete Section A of the form.
  - c. The form must be signed by both the purchaser and seller in the presence of each other.
2. Bring the completed PD-219 to the FRS, along with:
  - i. If you are purchasing a firearm, the dealer cannot release the firearm to you until you have completed this process and return with a valid registration certificate, and until 10 days after the initial date of purchase.<sup>2</sup>
  - b. Photo identification
  - c. **Proof of residency** in the District of Columbia (e.g., a valid DC operator's permit, DC vehicle registration card, lease agreement for a residence in the District, the deed to your home, or other legal document showing DC residency).
  - d. Proof that you have met the District's requirement for a firearms safety training course. This requirement can be met by producing:
    - i. A certificate of completion for MPD's online Firearms Safety Training Course. There is no cost for taking this course and it should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. It can be accessed from any computer at MPD's website ([www.mpd.dc.gov/gunregistration](http://www.mpd.dc.gov/gunregistration)). If you do not have access to a computer, you may use one at the office of the Firearms Registration Section.
    - ii. Evidence that you have received firearms training in the United States military.
    - iii. A license from another state which requires firearms training equal to that provided by MPD. Examples include, but are not limited to, a license or certificate for hunting or armed service as a special police officer.
    - iv. Evidence that you have otherwise completed a firearms training or safety course conducted by a firearms instructor that, as determined by the Chief, equal to that provided by the MPD.
3. Certify, in writing, that you are not legally blind.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Under DC law, a firearms dealer cannot release a firearm to a purchaser until 10 days after the initial date of purchase. (D.C. Official Code §22-4508) Therefore, although MPD will process an application for registration in fewer than 10 days, the buyer cannot pick up the gun from the dealer until 10 days after initial purchase.

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 7-1009(1), the term "blind person" means, and the term "blind" refers to, a person who is totally blind, has impaired vision of not more than 20/200 visual acuity in the better eye and for whom vision cannot be improved to better than 20/200, or who has loss of vision due wholly or in part to impairment of field vision or to other factors which affect the usefulness of vision to a like degree. Pursuant to DC Municipal Regulations §24-2310.5, if FRS determines there are reasonable grounds to believe that the certification is not accurate, FRS may require the applicant to obtain a certification from a licensed optometrist that the applicant meets the vision requirement.

4. Pay the appropriate fees (see chart on the following page).
5. Be fingerprinted for your background check.
6. If you are applying for a business bring a business license and proof of occupancy

The FRS will notify you once the application is approved (generally within one to five business days). You can pick up your registration certificate or request that it be mailed to you. If you are registering:

1. A firearm that you already own, your registration process is complete.
2. A firearm that you have just purchased, your registration process is complete, and you must bring your certificate to the dealer to retrieve the gun.

### District Government Fee Schedule

Application	\$13
Fingerprinting / FBI Background Check	\$35
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48</b>

- Fees must be paid at the time of application, and can be paid only by **cash, money order, or by visa/mastercard credit card.**
- Checks and Money orders should be made payable to “DC Treasurer.”

In addition to the fees charged by the government, under federal law, anyone purchasing a handgun outside of the District will need to transfer the firearm through a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL). At the time of the printing of this guide, the current charge is \$125 per firearm. Please check with the FFL to verify current charges.



# **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FIREARMS REGISTRATION**

## **I. Firearms Eligible for Registration**

In general, rifles, shotguns, revolvers, and handguns may be registered in the District of Columbia. Per D.C. Official Code § 7-2502.02, registration of the following firearms is prohibited:

1. Sawed-off shotguns
2. Machine guns
3. Short-barreled rifles
4. An unsafe handgun prohibited under D.C. Official Code § 7-2505.04
5. An assault weapon; or
6. A .50 BMG rifle

For definitions of and more information about these prohibitions, please see the MPD publication, “Firearms Eligible for Registration,” which is available at FRS or at [www.mpdcd.c.gov/gunregistration](http://www.mpdcd.c.gov/gunregistration).

## **II. Registrant Eligibility**

Registration eligibility is summarized below. For complete details, please refer to D.C. Official Code §7-2502.03. To obtain a registration certificate, an applicant or registrant must:

1. Be 21 years of age or older. (Applicants between the age of 18 and 21 may qualify to register a long gun<sup>4</sup> if they have a notarized statement from their parent or guardian stating that the parent or guardian assumes civil liability for all damages resulting from the applicant’s use of the firearm. This special registration, however, will expire on the applicant’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.)
2. Not stand convicted of certain weapons offenses, or a felony in this or any other jurisdiction (which includes all crimes punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year).
3. Not be under indictment for a crime of violence or a weapons offense.
4. Within the previous five years:
  - a. Not stand convicted: (1) of a narcotics or dangerous drug offense; (2) under D.C. Official Code § 22-404 (assaults and threats) or § 22-407 (threats to do bodily harm), or a violation of a similar statute in another jurisdiction; (3) of two or more violations of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs; (4) of an intrafamily offense punishable as a misdemeanor; or (5) of a misdemeanor involving certain firearms violations.
  - b. Not have been acquitted of any criminal charge by reason of insanity or adjudicated a chronic alcoholic by any court.
  - c. Not have been voluntarily or involuntarily committed to any mental hospital or institution.
  - d. Not have a history of violent behavior.

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<sup>4</sup> Federal law prohibits an FFL from selling or delivering firearms other than shotguns or rifles (e.g., handguns) or ammunition for those firearms to any person the dealer knows or has reasonable cause to believe is under 21.

- e. Not have been the respondent in an intrafamily proceeding in which a civil protection order or a foreign protection order was issued against the applicant.
- 5. Not appear to suffer from a physical defect which would make it unsafe to possess and use a firearm safely and responsibly.
- 6. Not have been found negligent in any firearm mishap causing death or injury to another human being.
- 7. Not otherwise be ineligible to possess a firearm under D.C. Official Code § 22-4503.

### **III. Duties and Responsibilities of the Registrant**

- 1. Registered Firearms and Registration Certificate
  - a. Registrants must file a police report at a police district station or at FRS immediately upon discovery of loss, theft, or destruction of a registration certificate or registered firearm.
  - b. Registrants must notify FRS of:
    - i. Any change of name or address that differs from the one recorded on the original certificate.
    - ii. Any sale, transfer or other disposition of a registered firearm.
- 2. The registration certificate must be returned to MPD immediately when the registered firearm has been lost, stolen, destroyed, sold, transferred, or otherwise disposed of.
- 3. The registrant must have the registration certificate in his or her possession whenever he has possession of the firearm, and show it to a member of MPD or other law enforcement officer upon demand.
- 4. A violation of any of the above-listed duties may result in:
  - a. First violation: a civil fine of \$100
  - b. Second violation: a civil fine of \$500, revocation of the registration of the applicable firearm, and a 5-year prohibition on subsequent registrations
  - c. Third violation: a civil fine of \$500, revocation of the registration of the applicable firearm, and permanent prohibition on subsequent registrations
- 5. Firearms or ammunition may not be loaned, borrowed, given, or rented to or from another person.
- 6. Individuals can only sell a firearm to a licensed dealer in the District of Columbia. Firearms may not be pawned.
- 7. Storage of firearms:
  - a. Policy: It is recommended that each registrant keep any firearm in his or her possession unloaded and either disassembled or secured by a trigger lock, gun safe, locked box, or other secure device.
  - b. Criminal Offense: The law requires that no person shall store or keep any loaded firearm on any premises under his control if he knows or reasonably should know that a minor under the age of 18 is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the parent or guardian of the minor unless such person:

- i. Keeps the firearm in a securely locked box, secured container, or in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure; or
- ii. Carries the firearm on his person or within such close proximity that he can readily retrieve and use it as if he carried it on his person.
- iii. If the firearm is stored at a place of business, it shall be stored in a gun safe, locked box, or other secure device affixed to the property.

c. Penalties:

- i. A person who violates subsection (b) of this section is guilty of criminally negligent storage of a firearm and, except as provided in paragraph (ii) of this subsection, shall be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned not more than 180 days, or both.
- ii. A person who violates subsection (b) of this section and the minor causes injury or death to themselves or another shall be fined not more than \$5,000, imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.
- iii. The provisions of paragraphs (i) and (ii) of this subsection shall not apply if the minor obtains the firearm as a result of an unlawful entry or burglary to any premises by any person.

8. It is a criminal offense to discharge a firearm in the District of Columbia without first obtaining a special written permit from the Chief of Police authorizing the discharge.

#### IV. Carrying Firearms

In general, carrying a firearm in the District is prohibited.

**D.C. Official Code § 22-4504. Carrying concealed weapons; possession of weapons during commission of crime of violence; penalty**

(a) No person shall carry within the District of Columbia either openly or concealed on or about their person, a pistol, or any deadly or dangerous weapon capable of being so concealed. Whoever violates this section shall be punished as provided in § 22-4515, except that:

(1) A person who violates this section by carrying a pistol or any deadly or dangerous weapon, in a place other than the person's dwelling place, place of business, or on other land possessed by the person, shall be fined not more than \$ 5,000 or imprisoned for not more than 5 years, or both; or

(2) If the violation of this section occurs after a person has been convicted in the District of Columbia of a violation of this section or of a felony, either in the District of Columbia or another jurisdiction, the person shall be fined not more than \$ 10,000 or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.

(a-1) Except as otherwise permitted by law, no person shall carry within the District of Columbia a rifle or shotgun. A person who violates this subsection shall be subject to the criminal penalties set forth in subsection (a)(1) and (2) of this section.

However, there are exceptions for legally registered firearms.

**D.C. Official Code § 22-4504.01. Authority to carry firearm in certain places and for certain purposes.**

Notwithstanding any other law, a person holding a valid registration for a firearm may carry the firearm:

- (1) Within the registrant's home;
- (2) While it is being used for lawful recreational purposes;
- (3) While it is kept at the registrant's place of business; or
- (4) While it is being transported for a lawful purpose as expressly authorized by District or federal statute and in accordance with the requirements of that statute.

## VI. Transporting Firearms

District transport law:

**§ 22-4504.02. Lawful transportation of firearms.**

(a) Any person who is not otherwise prohibited by the law from transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm shall be permitted to transport a firearm for any lawful purpose from any place where he may lawfully possess and carry the firearm [see § 22-4504.01, above] to any other place where he may lawfully possess and carry the firearm if the firearm is transported in accordance with this section.

(b) (1) If the transportation of the firearm is by a vehicle, the firearm shall be unloaded, and neither the firearm nor any ammunition being transported shall be readily accessible or directly accessible from the passenger compartment of the transporting vehicle.

(2) If the transporting vehicle does not have a compartment separate from the driver's compartment, the firearm or ammunition shall be contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console, and the firearm shall be unloaded.

(c) If the transportation of the firearm is in a manner other than in a vehicle, the firearm shall be:

- (1) Unloaded;
- (2) Inside a locked container; and
- (3) Separate from any ammunition.

Federal transport law:

**U.S. Code Title 18, Part I, Chapter 44, 926a "Interstate Transportation of Firearms";**

Notwithstanding any other provision of any law or any rule or regulation of a State or any political subdivision thereof, any person who is not otherwise prohibited by this chapter from transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm shall be entitled to transport a firearm for any lawful purpose from any place where he may lawfully possess and carry such firearm to any other place where he may lawfully possess and carry such firearm if, during such transportation the firearm is unloaded, and neither the firearm nor any ammunition being transported is readily accessible or is directly accessible from the

passenger compartment of such transporting vehicle: Provided, That in the case of a vehicle without a compartment separate from the driver's compartment the firearm or ammunition shall be contained in a locked container other than the glove compartment or console.

## **VII. Revocation of Registration Certificate**

Registration will be revoked if:

1. Information furnished in the application for registration proves to be intentionally false.
2. The registered firearm becomes unregistrable under Part I: Firearms Approved for Registration.
3. The registrant becomes ineligible under the requirements in Part II, "Registrant Eligibility."

## **VIII. Procedures for Denial or Revocation**

1. If an application for registration is denied or a registration certificate is revoked, the applicant or registrant will be notified by mail. The applicant or registrant will have 15 days from the receipt of such notification to appeal to the Metropolitan Police Department with further evidence for consideration. If the applicant does not respond within the required 15 days, the denial or revocation will become final.
2. After having been notified of a final unfavorable decision, the applicant or registrant must peacefully surrender his firearm to FRS as detailed in Part IX: Voluntary Surrender of Firearms, Destructive Devices, or Ammunition, remove the firearm from the District, or otherwise lawfully dispose of the firearm.

## **IX. Possession and Sale of Ammunition**

1. In general, a person shall not possess ammunition within the District unless:
  - a. He is a licensed dealer.
  - b. He is a holder of a valid registration certificate for a firearm.
  - c. He holds an ammunition collector's certificate effective prior to September 25, 1976.
  - d. He temporarily possesses ammunition while participating in a firearms training and safety class conducted by a firearms instructor.
2. No person shall possess restricted ammunition, defined as any projectile core which may be used in a handgun and which is constructed entirely (excluding traces of other substances) from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium; or a full jacketed projectile larger than .22 caliber designed and intended for use in a handgun and whose jacket has a weight of more than 25 percent of the total weight of the projectile, or .50 caliber BMG ammunition.(D.C .Official Code § 7-2501.01 (13a))
3. No person in the District shall possess, sell, or transfer any large capacity ammunition feeding device regardless of whether the device is attached to a firearm. A "large capacity ammunition feeding device" means a magazine, belt, drum, feed strip, or similar device that has a capacity of, or that can be readily restored or converted to accept, more than 10 rounds

of ammunition. This does not include an attached tubular device designed to accept, and capable of operating only with, .22 caliber rimfire ammunition.

## **X. Responsibility of Estate Executors or Administrators**

The executor of or administrator of an estate containing a firearm shall notify the FRS within 30 days of his appointment. Until the lawful disposition of such firearm, the executor or administrator shall be charged with the duties and responsibilities as described in Part IV, "Duties and Responsibilities of the Registrant."

## **XI. Voluntary Surrender of Firearms, Destructive Devices, or Ammunition**

If a person or organization within the District voluntarily and peaceably delivers and abandons to the Chief of Police any firearm, destructive device or ammunition at any time, such delivery shall preclude the arrest and prosecution of such person on a charge of violating any provision of this section with respect to the firearm, destructive device, or ammunition voluntarily delivered. Delivery under this section may be made at any police district, station, or central headquarters, or by summoning a police officer to the person's residence or place of business. Every firearm and destructive device to be delivered and abandoned to the Chief under this section shall be unloaded and securely wrapped in a package, and, in the case of delivery to a police facility, the package shall be carried in open view. No person who delivers and abandons a firearm, destructive device, or ammunition under this section, shall be required to furnish identification, photographs or fingerprints. No amount of money shall be paid for any firearm, destructive device, or ammunition delivered and abandoned under this section. (D.C. Official Code § 7-2507.05 (a))

## **XII. General Penalties**

Pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 7-2507.06, any person who violates certain provisions of Firearms Control Regulations Act, as amended, shall, upon conviction, be fined not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned for not more than one year, or both, except that:

(1) A person who knowingly or intentionally sells, transfers, or distributes a firearm, destructive device, or ammunition to a person under 18 years of age shall be fined not more than \$ 10,000 or imprisoned for not more than 10 years, or both.

(2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, any person who is convicted a second time for possessing an unregistered firearm shall be fined not more than \$ 5,000 or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both.

(B) A person who in the person's dwelling place, place of business, or on other land possessed by the person, possesses a pistol, or firearm that could otherwise be registered, shall be fined not more than \$ 1,000 or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both.

(3) A person convicted of knowingly possessing restricted pistol bullets in violation of [§ 7-2506.01\(3\)](#) may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not to exceed 10 years and shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a mandatory-minimum term of not less than 1 year and shall not be released from prison or granted probation or suspension of

| sentence prior to serving the mandatory-minimum sentence, and, in addition, may be  
| fined an amount not to exceed \$ 10,000.

Additional penalties may apply.

## **About This Guide**

The Firearms Control Regulations Act of 1975 (or “the Act”) requires that firearms be registered with the Metropolitan Police Department. Subsequent legislation amends the Act, changing the laws and procedures governing firearms registration. This guide is intended to help provide a clearer understanding of this legislation, the process for registering a firearm, and your duties and responsibilities as a firearms owner in the District of Columbia. Specific questions may be directed to the Firearms Registration Section.

While this document and the members of the FRS aim to provide you with what you need to legally register and possess your firearm, for further interpretation or guidance, you may wish to consult with a private attorney.

### **Firearms Registration Section**

Hours: Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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Email: [gru.adminbox@dc.gov](mailto:gru.adminbox@dc.gov)

For updates, please check our website:

**[www.mpdc.dc.gov/gunregistration](http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/gunregistration)**

Additional information about the firearms registration process and the applicable laws is available at this website. Other materials include links to recent legislation, frequently asked questions, data on crimes committed with guns, and gun safety information.

Issue Date: April 15, 2016

Contents of this document are subject to change. Updated materials will be made available to reflect revisions to the District’s law as necessary.