



Maryland State Police
Licensing Division
ADVISORY
LD-FRS-14-002 - REVISED



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Short-Barreled Shotguns and Short-Barreled Rifles

This Advisory is being published in response to a number of inquiries received by the Firearms Registration Unit. Citizens and firearms dealers alike have questioned whether or not short-barreled rifles or short-barreled shotguns are regulated in Maryland.

I. Definitions

Maryland Law, Criminal Law Article ("CR").§ 4-201(f), defines "short-barreled rifle" as a rifle that has:

1. One or more barrels with one or both measuring less than 16 inches long; OR
2. Has an overall length of less than 26 inches AND was manufactured from a rifle either by alteration or modification.

CR § 4-201(g) defines "short-barreled shotgun" as a shotgun that has:

1. One or more barrels with one or both measuring less than 18 inches long; OR
2. Has an overall length of less than 26 inches AND was manufactured from a shotgun either by alteration or modification.

II. Possession

Maryland's Public Safety Article § 5-203 specifically addresses the possession of short-barreled rifles or short-barreled shotguns. A person may not possess a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun in Maryland unless the person,

1. While on official business is
 - a. A member of the law enforcement
 - b. A member of the armed forces
 - c. A warden or correctional officer
 - d. A sheriff or deputy sheriff; OR
2. Is a citizen who has registered with the federal government the short-barreled shotgun or short-barreled rifle in accordance with federal law.

III. Possession of "Copycat" weapon

A short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun that meets the definition of "copycat weapon" set forth in CR § 4-301(e) (for example, "a semi-automatic centerfire rifle that has an overall length of less than 29 inches" or "a semi-automatic shotgun that has a folding stock") is an "assault weapon" and subject to the restrictions on transportation, possession, sale and receipt set forth in Title 4, Subtitle 3, of the Criminal Law Article.

IV. Wear Carry or Transport

CR § 4-201 (c) (2) defines "handgun" to include a short-barreled shotgun and a short-barreled rifle. As such, short-barreled rifles and short-barreled shotguns are subject to the same wear, carry and transport restrictions, under CR § 4-203, as pistols. Accordingly, a person may not wear, carry or transport a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun unless the person has a valid Maryland Handgun Carry Permit or one of the other exceptions set forth in CR § 4-203(b) applies.

V. Transfer

Public Safety Article ("PS") § 5-101(r) defines "regulated firearm" to include a "handgun" which is defined in § 5-101(n)(1) to mean "a firearm with a barrel less than 16 inches in length." Therefore, if a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun has a barrel length of less than 16 inches, the firearm is a "handgun" and subject to the application, background check and other requirements relating to the transfer of "regulated firearms" under Public Safety Article Title 5, Subtitle 1 .

VI. Approval for Sale or Manufacture by Handgun Roster Board

Additionally, because PS 5-401(c) uses the definition of "handgun" from CR 4-201, a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun must be approved by the Handgun Roster Board before it may be manufactured for distribution or sale or sold or offered for sale in Maryland.

The revision was made in Section VI Approval for Sale or Manufacture by Handgun Roster Board and consisted ONLY of the removal of a comma in the last sentence located between the phrase "distribution or sale" and "or sold or offered for sale in Maryland."