MARYLAND STATE POLICE

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ADVISORY

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Maryland Guidance for National Firearms Act Updates

The Maryland State Police (MSP) has reviewed the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) open letter issued October 9, 2026, regarding updated guidance on the making and transfer of National Firearms Act (NFA) firearms.

The ATF's open letter does **not** change Maryland's requirements for NFA firearms. As stated in the open letter, the federal injunction and ATF enforcement policy do not affect state or local laws governing NFA firearms.

Maryland Public Safety § 5-203 provides that a person may not possess a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun unless it **"has been registered with the federal government in accordance with federal law."** The statute further provides that, in a prosecution, the defendant bears the burden of proving lawful registration.

Accordingly, persons seeking to make, acquire, or transfer a short-barreled rifle or short-barreled shotgun in Maryland must continue to comply with all applicable federal and Maryland requirements. The appropriate federal NFA application (ATF Form 1 or Form 4) must be submitted to and approved by the ATF before completing the applicable federal Form 4473 and Maryland 77R processes.

The ATF's updated guidance does not eliminate or supersede Maryland's requirements.

If you need further assistance or have additional questions, you may contact the Licensing Division at msp.firearmsregistration@maryland.gov. Regulated Firearms Dealers may contact us using the LiveHelp feature within the Licensing Portal.

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