



Firearms

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Pursuant to the university's authority to manage its affairs and control its property and in recognition of its obligation to provide policies that support a safe environment for its students, employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors, the university prohibits individuals from possessing or using firearms on university-owned or -controlled property, except as described in Section 5 of this University Policy.

2. Reason for Policy

- 2.1. By Oregon law, the Board is charged with the responsibility to establish policies and standards that govern Oregon State University. In order to achieve the university's teaching, research, and public service missions, the Board strives to provide an environment where all persons are protected from violence and threats when on university-owned or -controlled property. Accordingly, the Board has directed the university to regulate the possession and use of firearms by members of the university community and by others when on university-owned and -controlled property.

3. Scope & Audience

- 3.1. This university policy applies to university employees, students, contractors, volunteers, visitors and anyone on university-owned or -controlled property.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Board.** The university's Board of Trustees.
- 4.2. **Firearm.** A gun, whether loaded or unloaded, that discharges shot or a projectile by means of an explosive, a gas, compressed air, or mechanical force. By way of example and without limitation, firearms include shotguns, rifles, handguns, pellet guns, BB guns, flare guns, Airsoft-type guns, and other similar devices.

5. Responsibilities & Procedures

- 5.1. **Prohibition.** Except as allowed under Section 5.2, the university prohibits the possession and use of firearms on university-owned or -controlled property.

- 5.2. **Exceptions.** Notwithstanding the general prohibition on the use and possession of firearms on university-owned or-controlled property, the following categories of individuals may use and possess firearms on university-owned or-controlled property to the extent set forth in Section 5.2 and provided each such individual is otherwise authorized by law to do so:
- 5.2.1. Law enforcement officers. Police and peace officers, both on- and off- duty, acting in the course and scope of their official duties or as otherwise authorized by law.
 - 5.2.2. Security personnel. Security personnel under contract with the university while acting in the course and scope of their official duties and in compliance with a safety protocol approved by the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee, provided such use and possession is explicitly authorized by the contract and such contract provision has been approved by the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee.
 - 5.2.3. United States Armed Forces.
 - a. Active and reserve military. An active or reserve member of the military forces of this state or the United States when engaged in the performance of duty.
 - b. Military training. Students, employees, and visitors while participating in a university recognized or U.S. sanctioned military training including, but not limited to Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs.
 - 5.2.4. Academic research. Employees acting within the scope of an academic research plan that has been approved, in writing, by their dean and the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee, and that includes safety and training protocols. Before approving the plan, the dean and the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee must be satisfied that
 - a. The plan minimizes the presence of firearms on university-owned or -controlled property to the extent reasonably possible, and
 - b. That there is an established need to possess or use the firearm for or in support of such academic research.
 - 5.2.5. University-sanctioned target shooting events. Participants in university-sanctioned target shooting events, during such events, including, but not limited to, the Oregon 4-H Shooting Sports Program, so long as:

- a. There are established eligibility requirements for participation in and safety protocols for each event that have been approved, in writing, by the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee;
 - b. The eligibility requirements and safety protocols are enforced by the unit or program responsible for the event;
 - c. The firearms remain unloaded except when necessary for the event; and
 - d. The firearms used belong to the program sponsoring the event.
 - i. Participants in the Oregon 4-H Shooting Sports Program may use personally owned firearms during target shooting events if those participants comply with all Program protocols, and local, state, and federal laws.
- 5.2.6. University-sanctioned hunting on university lands. Individuals who have been awarded hunting permits through procedures established by the College of Forestry or the College of Agricultural Sciences may use and possess firearms on university lands while hunting in conformance with the permit.
- 5.2.7. Authorized under ORS 166.370(3)(j). Members of the general public as authorized under ORS 166.370(3)(j).
- 5.2.8. Non-enumerated exceptions. The Vice President for Finance and Administration or their designee in consultation with the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police may permit other temporary exceptions not listed in this policy if in the best interest of the university. A request for an exception under this section must be made in writing. Any such approved use must have a safety protocol that is approved by the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police or their designee.
- 5.2.9. Revocation of permissions. The Vice President for Finance and Administration or their designee, in consultation with the Associate Vice President for Public Safety/Chief of Police, may revoke permission for the otherwise allowable possession or use of a firearm on university-owned or -controlled property if in the best interest of the university and to the extent not prohibited by law.
- 5.3. **No Affirmative Defense for Concealed Carry Licensees.** Pursuant to the authority granted in ORS 166.377, the affirmative defense described in ORS 166.370(3)(g), concerning persons licensed to carry a concealed handgun under ORS 166.291 and 166.292, does not apply to the possession of firearms on the grounds controlled by the university. In furtherance of this policy, the university will
- 5.3.1. Post a clearly visible sign at all normal points of entry to university-owned or -controlled property, providing notice of this provision and indicating that the

affirmative defense described in ORS 166.370 (3)(g) does not apply to the property identified pursuant to Section 5.3.2.

- 5.3.2. Post a notice on the university's website identifying all university owned or controlled property subject to this provision

6. Related Policies, Procedures, or Information

- 6.1. *Question: What about NERF blasters or other soft-projectile toys?* Answer: NERF blasters and other soft-projectile toys are not considered firearms pursuant to this policy. However, their use may be limited or prohibited by other university policies or unit rules.
- 6.2. *Question: What does "affirmative defense" mean in Section 5.3?* Answer: An affirmative defense is a defense in which a defendant introduces evidence, which, if found to be credible, will negate criminal liability or civil liability, even if it is proven that the defendant committed the alleged acts. (Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, available at https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/affirmative_defense (last accessed July 7, 2023)). In practical terms, the removal of the affirmative defense by this policy means that, unless another exception applies, it is unlawful to possess or use a firearm on the grounds controlled by the university, even if you have a concealed carry permit.
- 6.3. University Standard on Weapons and Destructive Devices:
<https://policy.oregonstate.edu/policy/weapons-and-destructive-devices>.

History

Adopted: Oregon State University adopted University Policy *Firearms* (unnumbered) from Oregon University System Policy *Firearms* (approved by the State Board of Higher Education, March 2, 2012) on July 1, 2014.

Revised: University Policy *Firearms* was revised and renumbered as University Policy 07-315 *Firearms* on September 24, 2023, with revisions having been endorsed by the Board of Trustees on August 25, 2023. Housekeeping amendments were made on January 21, 2026.

Next scheduled review date: September 2028.

Contacts

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Available online at: <https://policy.oregonstate.edu/policy/firearms>