



# Firearms Use

## Stanislaus National Forest

Welcome to the Stanislaus National Forest. These public lands are enjoyed by tens of thousands of people each year in a variety of activities. Regulations for safe shooting are to provide for safety, protection, and enjoyment of all forest visitors and for the natural surroundings.

### Regulations

As a recreation shooter using the Federal Lands, it is your responsibility to conduct your sport safely. You must be aware of and comply with all state, county, and federal laws pertaining to the possession and transportation of firearms and do it without damage to other forest users and the natural environment.

The following actions are **PROHIBITED under Federal regulations** :

- Discharging a firearm or any other implement capable of taking human life, causing injury or damaging property; 36CFR261.10(d)
  1. In or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site or other occupied area; or
  2. Across or on any Forest System road, or a body of water adjacent thereto, or in any manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result in such discharge;
  3. Into or within any cave.
- Shooting in an area that has been closed to the use of firearms.
- Damaging any natural feature or property of the United States. 36CFR261.9(a) (includes trees)
- Firing any tracer bullet or incendiary ammunition. 36CFR261.5(b)
- Failing to dispose of all garbage (this includes spent cartridges and targets). 36CFR261.11(d)
- Using explosives, fireworks or operating an engine without an appropriate spark arrestor. Exploding targets (binary explosives) falls under this prohibition. 36CFR261.52(b) Regional Order 22-02

### Definition

The California Penal Code 12001 defines firearms as "rifles, shotguns, revolvers, pistols or any other device designed to be used as a weapon from which a projectile is expelled by the force of any explosion or other form of combustion."

### Where Can I Use My Firearm?

Visitors are free to scout the public lands under our jurisdiction to find suitable sites for plinking. It is your responsibility to be aware of the location of private property within forest boundaries and to not trespass. Permission from the private landowner must be obtained to cross private lands to access public lands. Refer to the Stanislaus National Forest recreation map to determine surrounding trails, roads, and campgrounds prior to shooting. Maps can be obtained at Forest Service offices and online.

### Things To Know

- **Current Road Information:** From Dec. 15 to April 15 most Forest roads are closed to vehicle travel. Obtain a motor vehicle use map from a local office.
- **Safe Shooting Area:** A good shooting area has legal access, an effective backstop that absorbs bullets without producing ricochets, an unobstructed view so that no one can wander into the line of fire without being seen, and no nearby buildings, especially campgrounds and camping areas.
- **Targets:** You must provide your own targets, preferably paper targets only. It is illegal to deface or destroy trees, signs, outbuildings, or other objects on federal lands.
- **Clean up after yourself** (and others if you can). Pack home and remove ALL target materials, shells, clay pigeons, and boxes.

## Be Legal

All shooters are expected to follow the principles of firearms safety, and to obey California State laws on the use of firearms.

California Firearms Laws Summary can be found on the web at: <http://oag.ca.gov/firearms>.

## Hunting

- **Know and follow** all California Department of Fish and Wildlife rules and regulations. You can check online at: [www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov) for hunting and fishing information and related State regulations.
- **Special Restricted Areas:** you may not carry an intact firearm in a state game refuge. The nearest refuge is between the North and Middle forks of the Stanislaus River. Firearms must be broken down, with the trigger assembly removed from the housing, and kept separate from the ammunition (Cal. Fish & G. Code § 10506).
- **Your valid California hunting license and appropriate tags must be in possession** when hunting on National Forest lands and you should be prepared to show them upon request.
- **California Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
1416 9th Street, 12th Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-0411 [www.wildlife.ca.gov](http://www.wildlife.ca.gov)

**Thank you for your help in making forest visits enjoyable and safe!** Plan ahead by obtaining a National Forest map or asking questions at one of the following offices:

### Contact Us:

<b>Supervisor's Office</b> 19777 Greenley Road Sonora, CA 95370 (209) 532-3671	<b>Groveland Ranger District - Highway 120 Corridor</b> 24545 Highway 120 Groveland, CA 95321 (209) 962-7825
<b>Summit Mi-Wok District Highway 108 Corridor</b> 1 Pinecrest Lake Rd Pinecrest, CA 95364 (209) 965-3434	<b>Calaveras Ranger District - Highway 4 Corridor</b> 5519 Highway 4 Hathaway Pines, CA 95223 (209) 795-1381

Most offices are open Monday through Friday, call or visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/stanislaus> for current open hours.

## State Law Applies on National Forest Lands

A few of the related State Firearms laws are listed below. The local Sheriff's Office is the best place to ask questions regarding these laws. (**CAPC** = California Penal Code).

- **CAPC 25400: Concealed Carry.** It is illegal for any person to carry a handgun concealed upon his or her person or concealed in a vehicle without a license issued pursuant to CAPC 26150. A firearm locked in a motor vehicle's trunk or in a locked container carried in the vehicle other than in the utility or glove compartment is not considered concealed within the meaning of the CAPC 25400; neither is a firearm carried within a locked container directly to or from a motor vehicle for any lawful purpose (CAPC 25610).
  - ◇ The prohibition from carrying a concealed handgun does not apply to licensed hunters or fishermen **while engaged in hunting or fishing**, or while going to or returning from the hunting expedition (CAPC 25640). Notwithstanding this exception for hunters or fishermen, these individuals may not carry or transport loaded firearms when going to or from the expedition. The **unloaded firearms should be transported in the trunk of the vehicle or in a locked container other than the utility or glove compartment** (CAPC 25610).
- **CAPC 25850: Open carry of a loaded firearm in public.** It is illegal to carry a loaded firearm on one's person or in a vehicle while in any public place, on any public street, or in any place where it is unlawful to discharge a firearm. (Note: does not apply to any person while hunting in an area where possession and hunting is otherwise lawful or while practice shooting at target ranges (CAPC 26005, 26040).
- **CAPC 26350: Open carry of an unloaded handgun in public.** It is generally illegal for any person to carry upon his or her person or in a vehicle, an exposed and unloaded handgun while in or on:
  - ◇ A public place or public street in an incorporated city or city and county; or
  - ◇ A public street in a prohibited area of an unincorporated city or city and county.
- **CAPC 30500-30530: Assault Weapons.** These penal code sections define the regulations that govern the possession, manufacture and use of assault weapons. These regulations and prohibitions apply on National Forest lands.