

# A Quick Guide to Gun Regulations at Petrified Forest National Park

Congress approved a new law that allows possession of loaded firearms in national parks starting Feb. 22, 2010. That means people can openly carry\* legal handguns, rifles, and shotguns and concealed firearms in Arizona with a permit.

Although this law changes firearm regulations in national parks, there are still many important restrictions on the transportation and use of firearms under state and federal laws:

- Although it is now legal to carry loaded firearms in national parks, the new federal law does not change existing laws and regulations that prohibit the use of firearms in national parks. Hunting is illegal in Petrified Forest National Park. Target practice is also banned.
- For national security reasons, firearms cannot be carried into federal facilities within national parks. Notice of this rule will be clearly displayed outside all federal facilities. If you are unsure if a park building is a federal facility, look for a sign or ask a park ranger. At Petrified Forest National Park the

federal facilities include Rainbow Forest Museum, Painted Desert Inn National Historic Landmark, and Painted Desert Visitor Center and Headquarters.

- A permit is required to carry concealed weapons in Arizona. Some concealed-weapons permits are recognized in multiple states, but many are not. It is the gun owner's responsibility to know and understand the laws. Visit [http://www.azdps.gov/Services/Concealed\\_Weapons/Reciprocity/](http://www.azdps.gov/Services/Concealed_Weapons/Reciprocity/) for more information.
- It is illegal in Arizona and most states to carry a firearm while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- State laws governing minimum age for possession of firearms vary widely. In most states, you must be at least 18 years old—as it is in Arizona. It is the responsibility of those with firearms to understand these laws for the state and park in which they carry firearms.
- Other weapons such as bows, swords, and pellet or BB guns are not affected by the new law and remain prohibited

- by the National Park Service. *Carry* means that a person can openly carry a firearm in a belt holster that is wholly or partially visible or carried in luggage. It does not mean in this context to “carry in your hands.”



National Park Service law enforcement rangers are trained to explain and enforce firearms laws. But firearm owners are legally responsible for understanding federal, state and local laws, which vary widely from state to state. It also is the owner's responsibility to ensure that firearms are stored safely.

## Visit State Websites for More Information

Use the search function with related words, such as: *firearms, concealed, permitted.*

<http://az.gov/>

[http://www.azdps.gov/Services/Concealed\\_Weapons/](http://www.azdps.gov/Services/Concealed_Weapons/)

*For videos that demonstrate how to avoid animal attacks, visit*

[www.nps.gov/yell/photosmultimedia/safetyvideos.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yell/photosmultimedia/safetyvideos.htm)  
*or ask a park ranger for advice and assistance.*

## What the New Law Says

The new law allowing firearms in national parks was created as part of the Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure Act of 2009, which was approved by Congress and President Barack Obama. It took effect Feb. 22, 2010. Here is the partial text of Section 512, Protecting Americans from Violent Crimes:

**“Protecting the Right of Individuals To Bear arms in Units of the National Park System and the National Wildlife Refuge System—**The Secretary of the Interior shall not promulgate or enforce any regulation that prohibits an individual from possessing a firearm including an assembled or functional firearm in any unit of the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge



Park visitor overlooking the Painted Desert

System if—(1) the individual is not otherwise prohibited by law from possessing the firearm; and (2) the possession of the firearm is in compliance with the law of the State in which the unit of the National Park System or the National Wildlife Refuge System is located.”

## What to Do If You Feel Threatened

If you feel threatened by someone with a firearm, please contact the nearest park ranger or park office for help. **In case of emergency, call 928 524-9726.**

If you have questions or need more information about this issue, contact the Intermountain Region of the Park Service at [IMR\\_Guns\\_In\\_Parks@nps.gov](mailto:IMR_Guns_In_Parks@nps.gov) or for questions particular to Petrified Forest National Park call 928-524-6228.



Park visitors on a Ranger Program

National Park Service  
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