

Trump Administration's Proposed Changes to Remote Firearm Purchases and Transfers

August 6, 2026

The Trump Administration has proposed a [rule](#) that would affect how individuals can have firearms delivered to their homes through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), and a [different rule](#) that would remove certain limitations on the purchasing of firearms remotely. Currently, individuals can use USPS to mail a long gun (i.e., rifle or shotgun) to someone in the same state without going through a federally licensed firearm dealer, provided the gun is unloaded and the packaging does not indicate that it contains a gun. Using USPS to mail a long gun to someone in another state is also allowed if the sender addresses the package to themselves and mails it “in care of” a resident of the destination state. Whether mailing a firearm in- or out-of-state, individuals without a license to deal, manufacture, or import firearms must use a “USPS product or Extra Service” that provides tracking and signature capture at delivery. Presently, only Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) can mail handguns and the recipient must be another licensee.

FFLs are also permitted to sell firearms to people residing in the same state as the FFL's storefront yet do not appear in person at the storefront (otherwise known as a Non-Over-The-Counter [NOTC] firearms transaction), but only if the transfer can be conducted via a National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)-exempt transfer. A NICS-exempt transfer occurs when the transfer has been previously approved under [27 C.F.R. §479](#), the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF) has approved the transfer under [27 C.F.R. §478.150](#), or the intended purchaser can present a license or valid permit [that](#)

- allows the transferee to possess, acquire, or carry a firearm;
- was issued not more than five years earlier by the state in which the transfer is to take place; and
- the law of the state provides that such a permit or license is to be issued only after an authorized government official has verified that the information available to such official does not indicate that possession of a firearm by the transferee would be in violation of federal, state, or local law, *provided*, that the information available to such official is also available in NICS.

The Trump Administration's proposed rules would change these regulations, making the ability to purchase a firearm via a NOTC firearms transaction more widely available.

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN12725

USPS Revisions to Mailing Standards for Firearms

On April 2, 2026, in [91 Federal Register 16601](#), USPS proposed changing long-standing rules regarding the mailing of firearms.

Currently, [18 U.S.C. §1715](#) states that, “pistols, revolvers, and other firearms capable of being concealed on the person are non-mailable and shall not be deposited in or carried by the mails or delivered by any officer or employee of the Postal Service.” Regulations at [27 C.F.R. §§478.96](#) and [478.102](#) provide that only long guns can be shipped in- or out-of-state and detail the processes for a licensed dealer, manufacturer, and licensed importer to ship long guns.

The [proposed rule](#) would revise regulations in [USPS Publication 52](#) by explicitly allowing the shipment of handguns in- and out-of-state by [providing that](#) “lawful firearms, including pistols, revolvers, shotguns, and rifles, are mailable” and that nonmailable firearms are those “otherwise generally unlawful to possess ... or those that, after removal of grips, stocks, and magazines, are not detectable by metal detectors and x-ray machines.” USPS [cites](#) a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Legal Counsel Memorandum of Opinion relating to the Second Amendment as the reason for issuing regulations inconsistent with the statute and deviating from [18 U.S.C. §1715](#). Nonmailable firearms would include short-barreled shotguns, short-barreled rifles, machineguns, destructive devices, and firearms that ATF defines as “[any other weapon](#).” The proposed rule, in accordance with existing regulations, would allow non-FFL owners of firearms to mail “mailable firearms” to themselves or in the care of another person in another state for “lawful activities” and using a class of mail, product, or Extra Service that provides tracking and signature capture at delivery. Non-FFL owners of firearms are [not](#) required to conduct background checks prior to selling firearms. This would allow individuals to have a mailable firearm delivered to them by USPS without undergoing a background check.

This rule would make firearms commerce easier. Currently, [FedEx](#) and [UPS](#) allow only federally licensed dealers to ship long guns, and [DHL](#) prohibits all shipping of firearms. If the proposed rule takes effect, USPS would be the only option for mailing handguns.

For some advocacy groups, the proposed rule raises [concerns](#) that individuals could have a handgun delivered to them by USPS without undergoing a background check. Advocacy groups also [argue](#) that permitting firearms to be shipped across state lines without FFL oversight increases the risks of weapons being misdelivered, stolen, or otherwise lost.

Revising NOTC Firearms Transaction Requirements

On March 8, 2026, ATF published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) at [91 Federal Register 25216](#), which would revise NOTC firearm transaction requirements. Currently, [27 C.F.R. §478.96](#) states that NOTC firearm transactions are only allowed if they are an NICS-exempt transfer. The proposed rule would allow NOTC firearm transactions if they are approved under [27 C.F.R. §§479](#) or [478.150](#) or done by individuals [permitted](#) to purchase a firearm without undergoing a NICS background check.

ATF [proposes](#) eliminating the NICS-exempt transfer requirement and allowing background checks to be conducted somewhere other than an FFL’s place of business. ATF proposes allowing FFLs wishing to engage in NOTC sales to remotely verify transferee identity and eligibility to purchase and possess a firearm. FFLs would still need to conduct background checks to verify a purchaser’s eligibility to possess a firearm. ATF further proposes permitting NOTC firearm purchases to be shipped in accordance with existing laws regulating the shipment and delivery of firearms.

ATF [estimates](#) that this rule could benefit “3.28 million” firearm purchasers, cutting a total of “3,988,620 hours” in time travelling to and being on a licensee’s business premises, and saving “\$103.7 [million] per year.”

Author Information

Jordan B. Cohen
Analyst in Firearms Policy

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.