



Guidelines for New Gun Owners

Buying your first gun can make even the most confident person a little uneasy. How do you know what you need? How do you know if you will be able to be proficient with your new purchase? How do I defend my family and be a responsible gun owner? CRPA is here to help.

If you are thinking of becoming a gun owner for the first time here are some helpful tips:

- 1) Do a little research before going to your local gun shop. You do not have to know everything, but you should understand basics like the difference in a long gun and a handgun. The knowledgeable salespeople at the gun store will help you but understanding some of the terms they are using will help you feel more comfortable.
- 2) Take a friend who is a gunowner with you to the store. There are more friends that own guns than you think. They can help you decipher all of the information and make a good decision as to what is right for you. Don't have anyone? CRPA has local chapters and we can hook you up with a great person that could help you figure it all out.
- 3) You will need to take a small test to get a California Firearm Safety Certificate (FSC). You can get a [study guide](#) or [webinar](#) to review the information before going to the gun shop. If you cannot pass the test, you will not be allowed to purchase a firearm.
- 4) Once you pass your FSC test, you will be able to purchase a firearm.

Tips for Purchasing Your First Gun

- 1) You will need certain documentation (no exceptions): Proof of residency (utility bill, lease, property deed, or government issued ID-Please note that utility bills must be from government agency and not a cell phone or other private company), Proof of age (must be 21 years old), valid California Driver's License and preferably a REAL ID with the star and bear in the corner (if you do not have a real ID you will need additional identification such as a passport or military identification)
- 2) The salesperson may show you several options based on whether you want a handgun or a long gun (rifle/shotgun). You should hold the firearm and make sure that the weight and grip feel comfortable in your hands. You should NEVER point the firearm at anyone in the store while inspecting it. If you want to dry fire (pull the trigger and see the action without ammunition being in the firearm) you should point it to the designated place in the store. Usually this is up towards a particular area, but you can ask the salesperson.
- 3) Once you choose the firearm that is right for you and your needs, you will submit your information for a background check. The gun shop will complete the sale and will hold your firearm for 10 days while the background check is being conducted. Gun stores will not release a firearm before the 10-day waiting period. You will have a time when you are told to come back to the store to take possession of your firearm.
- 4) Being a responsible gun owner means keeping your firearm out of the hands of others who may be prohibited (minors or those who have been deemed prohibited) and making sure that you get the proper training. You should **go to the range regularly**. Most ranges have Range Safety Officers who are happy to help you and make sure you know how to safely operate your firearm. **Take training courses**. CRPA offers many training courses for beginners up to advanced. It is fun, you meet people just like yourself, and you learn a valuable skill set. For more information on training please visit <https://crpa.org/programs/firearm-safety-programs/>