

Transporting Firearms in Motor Vehicles

General Limits on Transporting Firearms within a Motor Vehicle

[Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.045](#), prohibits transporting a firearm in a motor vehicle unless the firearm is unloaded and either (1) fully secured in a gun case expressly made for that purpose, where the case is zipped, snapped, buckled, tied, or otherwise fastened, or (2) in the closed trunk of the motor vehicle. Minnesota law does not require that the gun case be locked.

Exception for Handguns with Permit to Carry

The law provides an exception for a handgun being carried under the terms of a valid permit to carry (i.e., in accordance with [Minnesota Statutes, section 624.714](#)). A person with a valid permit to carry a pistol may transport one or more pistols in a motor vehicle whether as a driver or a passenger, irrespective of whether the handgun is cased or uncased, is loaded or unloaded, or is concealed or being carried openly, and whether it is kept on the person or elsewhere in the vehicle, and whether the person is inside or outside the vehicle. When the handgun is left stored in any condition within a vehicle, “constructive possession” applies.

Disabled Hunter Exception

None of the restrictions in [Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.045](#), regarding the transportation of firearms, apply to a disabled person if:

- the person possesses a permit for disabled hunters issued under [Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.055](#), subdivision 3; and
- the firearm is not loaded in the chamber until the vehicle is stationary, or is a hinge-action firearm with the action open until the vehicle is stationary.

A 2009 law repealed a third condition that required the disabled person to be participating in a hunt sponsored by a nonprofit organization or to be hunting on land owned or leased by the disabled person. ([Laws 2009, ch. 176](#), art. 2, § 39)

Exception for Longguns When Hunting or at a Shooting Range

In 2009, the law was amended to also allow an uncased, unloaded rifle or shotgun to be transported in a motor vehicle, without any requirement for a permit to carry a pistol, in the following situations:

- while at a shooting range, as defined under [Minnesota Statutes, section 87A.01](#), subdivision 3, where the person has received permission from the lawful owner or possessor of the range to discharge firearms
- while lawfully hunting on private or public land, including possessing a valid hunting license (if required)
- while traveling to or from a site where the person intends to hunt lawfully that day or has hunted lawfully that day

The rifle or shotgun, whether cased or uncased, must still remain unloaded while being transported in a motor vehicle in these situations. ([Laws 2009, ch. 176](#), art. 2, § 40) The original 2009 law required that the rifle or shotgun remain cased

when the vehicle was within any area where the discharge of a firearm is prohibited by ordinance. In 2011 the law was amended to repeal that requirement. ([Laws 2011, 1st spec. sess., ch. 2](#), art. 5, § 41.)

Limitations on Hunting and Shooting Range Exception

There are some limitations to the exceptions for transporting firearms for hunting and while on a shooting range. A rifle or shotgun must be unloaded and either cased or in a closed trunk while being transported in a motor vehicle:

- within Anoka, Hennepin, and Ramsey counties;
- within the boundary of a city with a population of 2,500 or more;
- on school grounds; and
- as regulated under statutes governing game refuges, shining of artificial lights, and use of night vision devices.

Penalty for a Violation

A violation of Minnesota’s firearms transportation law is a misdemeanor, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

Firearms Ineligibility Not Affected

A person’s status under federal and Minnesota law as a firearms-prohibited person, if applicable, is not affected by the new or the previous firearms transportation law. A firearms-prohibited person continues to be prohibited from possessing any firearm in any manner, including for the purpose of transporting it.

Key Definitions in Game and Fish Law

For purposes of [Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.045](#), and other game and fish laws, certain key terms are defined as follows:

- “Motor vehicle” means a self-propelled vehicle, or a vehicle propelled or drawn by a self-propelled vehicle, that is operated on a highway, on a railroad track, on the ground, in the water, or in the air ([Minn. Stat. § 97A.015](#), subd. 32)
- “Hunting” means “taking” birds or mammals. “Taking” is further defined as pursuing, shooting, killing, capturing, trapping, snaring, angling, spearing, or netting wild animals, or placing, setting, drawing, or using a net, trap, or other device to take wild animals. Taking includes attempting to take wild animals and assisting another person in taking wild animals. ([Minn. Stat. § 97A.015](#), subds. 26 and 47)
- “Possession” means both actual and constructive possession and control of the things referred to. ([Minn. Stat. § 97A.015](#), subd. 36)

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