

Firearms in Forests and Parks

"Can I possess/carry my handgun/rifle/shotgun openly/loaded/concealed/otherwise when I am hiking/camping/hunting/other in the forest/park/campground/wilderness in California?"

First, it is very important to understand that there are many different types of "forests" and "parks" and they are all run by different government agencies with different restrictions.

Here is a list of the most common types of parks, forests, and public lands, and their respective firearms restrictions:

- [National Parks](#), Federal, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior - [firearms now permitted](#) but CA law severely restricts - see *1
- [National Forests](#), Federal, US Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture - [firearms and shooting welcomed](#) but CA state law applies - see *2
- [BLM Land](#), Federal, Bureau of Land Management, US Department of the Interior - [firearms and shooting permitted](#) but CA state law applies - see *2
- [State Parks](#), State, California Department of Parks and Recreation - firearms prohibited - see *3
- Regional Parks, some are county owned ([example](#)), some are city owned - firearms often prohibited per local ordinance [findlaw.com](#) [municode.com](#)

*1 - National Parks Details:

- *1 - The firearms prohibition in NPs and NWRs was lifted on 2/22/10.
- *1 - UOC of handguns is not legal in NPs effective 1/1/12 as a result of AB144 (PC 26350)
- *1 - LOC, UOC, UCC, and LCC are all legal in one's campsite. (PC 26055, 26383, & 25605)
- *1 - Since NPs can be near/within urban areas, school zones can be an issue. Unlocked firearms are not allowed within 1000 feet of a K-12 school.
- *1 - CA CCW/LTC permit holders may LCC anywhere in NPs except in federal facilities (buildings with federal employees and no-firearms signs posted).

*2 - National Forest and BLM Details:

- *2 - LOC and UOC are legal everywhere except "prohibited areas" (areas where shooting is prohibited)
- *2 - LOC, UOC, UCC, and LCC are all legal in one's campsite. (PC 26055, 26383, & 25605)
- *2 - Shooting is prohibited within 150 yards of any residence, building, campsite, or developed site ("prohibited areas")
- *2 - Shooting is prohibited on or across a road or body of water ("prohibited areas")
- *2 - consensus opinion is that UOC of handguns is now illegal in "prohibited areas" of NF/BLM (AB144 / PC 26350) [not all agree \(PC 26388\)](#)
- *2 - Forest administrators [have the authority to prohibit shooting](#) in other areas of the NF but must post this information ("prohibited areas")
- *2 - **IMPORTANT NOTICE** - some NFs are now banning shooting almost entirely (Angeles NF, San Bernardino NF, and Los Padres NF)
- *2 - BLM administrators may post [closures and restrictions](#) regarding firearms use
- *2 - LCC is legal for licensed hunters/fishermen, *while hunting/fishing*, but only where shooting is not prohibited (PC 25640)
- *2 - UCC is legal for licensed hunters/fishermen *while hunting/fishing* and *while traveling to/from* hunting/fishing expeditions (PC 25640)
- *2 - UOC is legal for licensed hunters *while hunting* and *while traveling to/from* hunting expeditions (PC 26366)
- *2 - CA CCW/LTC permit holders may LCC in NF/BLM

*3 - State Parks Details:

- *3 - firearms permitted in vehicles and temporary lodgings when unloaded and "packed, cased or stored in a manner that will prevent their ready use"
- *3 - CA CCW/LTC permit holders [may apparently LCC](#) firearms in California State Parks

Acronyms used in this thread:

- UOC** - unloaded open carry
- LOC** - loaded open carry
- UCC** - unloaded concealed carry
- LCC** - loaded concealed carry
- LUCC** - locked unloaded concealed carry (locked in a fully enclosed case)

Additional types of public lands:

- [Wilderness Areas](#), Federal, within or part of a National Park - firearms now permitted but CA law severely restricts *1
- [Wilderness Areas](#), Federal, within or part of a National Forest - [shooting](#) and/or [possession](#) sometimes prohibited, check with local ranger station
- [National Monuments](#), Federal, various agencies but usually the NPS - firearms now permitted but CA law severely restricts *1
- [National Wildlife Refuges](#), Federal, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of the Interior - firearms now permitted but CA law restricts *1
- US Army Corp of Engineers Recreation Areas ([SE](#), [Sac](#), [LA](#)) - **UPDATE: firearms prohibition ruled unconstitutional**, firearms currently permitted
- [DFG Wildlife Areas and Reserves](#), State, California Department of Fish & Game - firearms restrictions vary (usually very prohibitive)
- [Demonstration State Forests](#), State, California Dept of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF / CAL Fire) - firearms permitted, some restrictions - ([details](#))
- [PG&E Recreation Areas](#) - no official restrictions, generally the same as neighboring federal lands, state laws apply ([details](#))
- Private lands and privately owned campgrounds - firearms either permitted or restricted by the owner
- Open Space Districts (a form of CA [Special District](#)) - unknown, TBD
- [Land Trusts](#) - unknown, TBD

This document and much more information is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/fifap>