



Firearms Permit FACT SHEET

Background

The Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS or Bureau) issues Firearms Permits (also referred to as a "Firearms Qualification Card (FQ)" or "Exposed Firearms Permit") as specified in Article 4 (commencing with Section 7540) of Chapter 11.3, Article 4 (commencing with Section 7583) of Chapter 11.5 and Article 6 (commencing with Section 7596) of Chapter 11.6 of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code (BPC).

Requirements for Issuance of Initial Firearms Permit

To be eligible for a BSIS Firearms Permit, applicants must:

- be a citizen of the United States or have permanent legal alien status (BPC Sections 7542.2, 7583.23, and 7596.3); and
- be at least 21 years of age (BPC Sections 7542.2, 7583.23, and 7596.3); and
- not be banned from owning or possessing any firearm pursuant to State or Federal Law (BPC Sections 7542.3, 7583.24, 7583.25, and 7596.8); and
- be a licensed Private Investigator, Qualified Manager of a Private Investigator, Private Patrol Operator, Qualified Manager of a Private Patrol Operator, Alarm Company Operator, Qualified Manager of an Alarm Company Operator or be a registered Security Guard or Alarm Agent with BSIS (BPC Sections 7542.2, 7583.23, and 7596); and must
- complete a criminal history background check through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the California Department of Justice (DOJ) (BPC Sections 7542.2, 7583.23, 7583.24, and 7596.8); and
- complete and submit the *Firearms Permit Initial Application*¹ to the Bureau
- complete the required training courses, including passing all required examinations and qualifications (BPC Sections 7542.2, 7583.22, 7583.23, 7596 and California Code of Regulations Title 16, Division 7, Section 635); and
- pay the initial application fee² (Title 16, California Code of Regulations, Section 640).
- complete an assessment, if applicable (BPC Section 7583.47). Visit <https://www.bsis.ca.gov/firearmsassessment/> for additional information on the firearms assessment.

¹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_initial.pdf

² https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/newfees.pdf

Criminal History Background Check

Applicants for a BSIS Firearms Permit must not be prohibited from owning or possessing any firearm pursuant to State or Federal Law and must undergo a criminal history background check through the FBI and DOJ. **Applicants are responsible for paying all Live Scan, FBI and DOJ processing fees at the time of fingerprinting.** For more information on the Live Scan process and the associated fees, visit the Bureau's website³.

ALERT: Per FBI guidelines, you must submit your application to the Bureau before completing a criminal history background check. To prevent application processing delays, keep a copy of the Live Scan form, which must include the ATI number and the signature of the Live Scan Operator.

Applicants should use the appropriate Live Scan Form available on the Bureau's website as it contains the correct coding needed to ensure the Bureau receives the needed information in a timely manner. Failure to Live Scan with the correct form will delay the processing of your application. Please select the Live Scan form below based on the registration or license that you currently hold:

- Security Guard registrant: *Security Guard w/Firearm*⁴
- Private Investigator licensee: *Priv Investigator w/Fire*⁵
- Private Patrol Operator licensee: *Private Patrol Opr/Per w/Fire*⁶
- Alarm Company Employee/Alarm Agent: *Alarm Agent w/Firearm*⁷

Once you have selected the correct form, locate the nearest Live Scan site⁸.

To check on the status of your DOJ and FBI background check, please visit the Department of Justice's website⁹. Please note, you will need to provide your ATI number (located at the bottom of your completed Live Scan form) and your date of birth.

*Out-of-state applicants that do not have access to a Live Scan site may submit fingerprint hard cards. For additional information, please visit the Bureau's website¹⁰.

Required Training Courses

Applicants for a BSIS Firearms Permit must complete the following training:

- **Power to Arrest**

Applicants must complete training in the power to arrest. The training may be administered by a Bureau-approved firearms or baton training facility or an organization or school approved by the Bureau. Security Guards may also obtain

³ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/index.shtml

⁴ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/guard_firearm.pdf

⁵ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/privateinvest_firearm.pdf

⁶ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/privatepatrol_firearm.pdf

⁷ http://bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/alarmagent_firearm.pdf

⁸ <https://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/locations>

⁹ <https://applicantstatus.doj.ca.gov/>

¹⁰ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/livescan/index.shtml

the training from their employing PPO or from Bureau-approved trainers. Applicants may verify a licensed PPO or training facility by accessing the Verify a License page¹¹ on the Bureau's website. To confirm if an organization or school is approved by the Bureau to administer the training, email bsis@dca.ca.gov.

- **BSIS Firearms Training and Qualifications**

Applicants must complete the Course of Firearms Training (CCR Section 635) at a Bureau-approved Firearms Training Facility, from a Bureau-approved Firearms Training Instructor and pass the written examination and range qualifications. Applicants must qualify with the caliber of weapon that will be carried while on duty. For information on Bureau-approved Firearms Training Facilities, visit the Verify a License page¹¹ available on the Bureau's website. The *BSIS Firearms Training Manual*¹² is also available on the Bureau's website.

Firearms Assessment

A BSIS Security Guard registrant seeking an initial BSIS Firearms Permit must complete an assessment for the purposes of determining whether he/she possesses, at the time of the assessment, appropriate judgment, restraint, and self-control to carry a firearm while on duty (BPC Sections 7583.23 and 7583.47).

Given that other BSIS license types (e.g., Private Investigator license, Private Patrol Operator license, Alarm Company Operator license, etc.) can be associated with the Firearms Permit, under certain circumstances an individual seeking to associate a Firearms Permit to a Security Guard registration will need to complete/pass the assessment as a condition for the association. To determine if you are required to complete the assessment, visit the Bureau's website¹³.

Submitting an Initial Application for a Firearms Permit

Before submitting your application to the Bureau, review the list of common application deficiencies¹⁴ to avoid application processing delays.

Online Application

Applicants may apply for Firearms Permit online via BreEZe. The Bureau recommends submitting your application online in BreEZe as it bypasses the Cashiering Office and can reduce application processing by up to two weeks. To create an account, pay the application fee via credit card, and submit your application online, visit BreEZe¹⁵.

IMPORTANT: Applicants are required to scan and upload, as an attachment, a completed *Firearms Permit Initial Application*¹⁶.

¹¹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/online_services/verify_license.shtml

¹² https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/firearms_manual.pdf

¹³ <https://www.bsis.ca.gov/firearmsassessment/>

¹⁴ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/application_tips.shtml

¹⁵ <https://www.breeze.ca.gov/>

¹⁶ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_initial.pdf

Paper Application

Applicants may submit their completed *Firearms Permit Initial Application*¹⁶ and application fee¹⁷ by mail to the Bureau.

Mail the completed application and fee to:

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services
P.O. Box 989002
West Sacramento, CA 95798-9002

Application Processing

Please allow the Bureau 6-8 weeks from the date your payment was cashiered before contacting the Bureau regarding the status of your application(s). Processing times may be longer depending on the time it takes for the Bureau to receive responses from the DOJ and FBI and to make the necessary determinations required by law. For the current initial application processing timeframes, please visit the Bureau's website¹⁸.

Associating Additional Qualifying License(s) to a Pre-Existing Firearms Permit

A BSIS Firearms Permit authorizes the permitholder to carry an exposed firearm while performing the duties of only those license types listed on the Firearms Permit itself. For example, a permitholder who only has a Security Guard registration listed on their Firearms Permit and who also holds a Private Investigator (PI) license cannot work while armed while carrying out the duties of a PI licensee. The Firearms Permit card must list the PI license for the permitholder to work as an armed PI licensee.

Permitholders may associate multiple qualifying license(s) at any time with the submission of the *Request to Associate BSIS Firearms Permit with Additional Qualifying License(s) and Request for Replacement Firearms Permit form*¹⁹.

For additional information regarding the process of associating additional qualifying licenses, please visit the Bureau's website²⁰.

Adding Caliber(s) to a Pre-Existing Firearms Permit

A BSIS Firearms Permit authorizes the permitholder to carry an exposed firearm only of the caliber(s) listed on the firearms permit card itself. Permitholders may add caliber(s) to a pre-existing Firearms Permit at any point during the current term of the permit with submission of the *Add Caliber form*²¹. If permitholders include payment of \$25 with the application, a replacement firearms permit will be issued with the approved added

¹⁷ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/newfees.pdf

¹⁸ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/app_timelines.shtml

¹⁹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_assoc_form.pdf

²⁰ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_assoc_info.pdf

²¹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/proficiency_cert.pdf

calibers. **NOTE:** Permitholders may not carry, while on duty, a firearm with a caliber that they have not yet qualified to carry and which does not appear on the face of their Firearms Permit (BPC Sections 7542.12, 7583.37, 7597.3, and CCR Section 632).

Requirements to Add Caliber(s):

- Current and valid BSIS Firearms Permit,
- Completion of at least 8 hours of classroom instruction in the carrying and use of a firearm,
- Completion and passage of the BSIS written firearm exam with a minimum score of 85%,
- Successful completion of range training,
- Submission of completed *Add Caliber* form²²

Qualifying on the Range After Adding Caliber(s)

Once a caliber(s) is added to your firearms permit, you must thereafter qualify on that caliber(s) during each subsequent qualification that you complete to renew your permit with that caliber. **NOTE:** All subsequent qualifications completed must comply with the qualification schedule based on your date of last renewal.

For example, if you submit the *Add Caliber* form²² between the 1st and 2nd qualifications and the Bureau approves your request, you must qualify with the added caliber(s) at the time of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th qualifications to renew your permit with the approved added calibers.

Renewing a Firearms Permit

A BSIS Firearms Permit expires two years from the date of issuance. Approximately 90 days prior to the Firearms Permit's expiration date, a renewal reminder will be mailed to the permitholder's address of record. Please note, the renewal reminder is not a Firearms Permit renewal application and cannot be used to renew the Firearms Permit.

IMPORTANT: By law, a Firearms Permit may not be renewed after expiration. If you allow your BSIS Firearms Permit to expire, you must apply for a new Firearms Permit.

By law, a complete firearms renewal application and payment must be submitted to the Bureau at least 60 days prior to the Firearms Permit's expiration date. Failing to submit a complete renewal application and payment at least 60 days before expiration may result in the Firearms Permit not being renewed before expiration of the current permit's term. Please note, the Bureau is unable to process applications submitted more than 3 months prior to expiration and will therefore be returned to the permitholder.

To renew the permit, the applicant must:

- have completed four range qualifications as follows: two range qualifications during each twelve-month period of the current permit's two-year term with no two range qualifications completed closer than four months apart. Also, only one qualification in each twelve-month period may be completed by firearm simulator, and only a simulator that complies with the requirements below may be used for a qualification:

²² https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/proficiency_cert.pdf

Firearms Simulator Requirement: The firearm simulator MUST meet all the following requirements: 1) provide a realistic imitation of the operation of an actual firearm including the weight, recoil, action, flash, and sound of a firearm at discharge, 2) have the ability to match the caliber of the actual firearm the individual is qualifying to carry, and 3) simulate the loading and reloading of an actual firearm. (Title 16, Division 7, Section 631 of CA Code of Regulations).

The range qualifications must be completed at a Bureau-certified Firearms Training Facility and from a Bureau-approved Firearms Training Instructor. All range qualifications must be certified by a Bureau-certified Firearms Training Facility on the *Firearms Permit Renewal Application*²³. Applicants must also;

- have completed the two-hour review training course in the use of force and de-escalation of force before each of the four range qualifications; and
- pass the written Firearms Examination with a score of 85% or greater. The law does not specify during which qualification the permit holder must complete the exam. The Bureau recommends that the permit holder take the exam in the second twelve-month period of their current permit term.
- complete and submit the *Firearms Permit Renewal Application*²³,
- complete and submit the *Firearms Qualification Applicant* form (BCIA 4040)²⁴
- submit payment of the Firearms Permit renewal fee²⁵ and the \$38 FEA fee.

Suggested Range Qualification Schedule

As a courtesy, the table below provides suggested range qualification schedules for the renewal of a Firearms Permit. Adherence is not a mandatory provision for renewal, but a suggestion by the Bureau of typical schedules that satisfy the requirements for renewal and allow for timely renewal of the permit. To use the table, first check the expiration date on your firearms permit, find your permit's expiration month on the table, and follow the schedule detailed in the row. Each schedule provides sufficient time to submit your firearms permit renewal application at least 60 days before expiration, as required by law.

Expiration Month	1st Range Qualification	2nd Range Qualification	3rd Range Qualification	4th Range Qualification
January (Jan)	May – Jun	Oct – Nov	Apr – May	Sept – Oct
February (Feb)	Jun – Jul	Nov – Dec	May – Jun	Oct – Nov
March (Mar)	Jul – Aug	Dec – Jan	Jun – Jul	Nov – Dec
April (Apr)	Aug – Sept	Jan – Feb	Jul – Aug	Dec – Jan
May (May)	Sept – Oct	Feb – Mar	Aug – Sept	Jan – Feb
June (Jun)	Oct – Nov	Mar – Apr	Sept – Oct	Feb – Mar
July (Jul)	Nov – Dec	Apr – May	Oct – Nov	Mar – Apr
August (Aug)	Dec – Jan	May – Jun	Nov – Dec	Apr – May
September (Sept)	Jan – Feb	Jun – Jul	Dec – Jan	May – Jun
October (Oct)	Feb – Mar	Jul – Aug	Jan – Feb	Jun – Jul
November (Nov)	Mar – Apr	Aug – Sept	Feb – Mar	Jul – Aug
December (Dec)	Apr – May	Sept – Oct	Mar – Apr	Aug – Sept

²³ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_renewal.pdf

²⁴ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/firearms_qualification.pdf

²⁵ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/newfees.pdf

Submitting a Renewal Application for a Firearms Permit

Online Application

Applicants may apply for Firearms Permit online via BreEZe. The Bureau recommends submitting your application online in BreEZe as it bypasses the Cashiering Office and can reduce application processing by up to two weeks. To create an account, pay the application fee²⁶ via credit card, and submit your application online, visit BreEZe²⁷.

IMPORTANT: Applicants are required to scan and upload, as an attachment, supplemental documents as a part of their online application. The supplemental documents must contain the following:

- The four (4) Certification of Firearms Range Qualification/Review Course Training pages provided to them by a BSIS Certified Firearms Instructor. These Certification pages can be found on pages 3-6 of the *Firearms Permit Renewal Application*²⁸
- The Department of Justice *Firearms Qualification Applicant* form (BCIA 4040)²⁹

Paper Application

Applicants may submit their completed *Firearms Permit Renewal Application*²⁸, *Firearms Qualification Applicant* form²⁹, and renewal fee²⁶ by mail to the Bureau.

Mail the renewal application, *Firearms Qualification Applicant* form, and fee to:

Bureau of Security and Investigative Services
P.O. Box 989002
West Sacramento, CA 95798-9002

Peace Officer Exemptions

For additional information on licensing exemptions for peace officers, please visit the Bureau's website³⁰.

Additional Information

All BSIS Firearms Permitholders are responsible for understanding all prohibitions, violations, and the proper incident reporting requirements outlined in the BSIS *Firearms Training Manual*³¹.

²⁶ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/newfees.pdf

²⁷ <https://www.breeze.ca.gov/>

²⁸ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/fq_renewal.pdf

²⁹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/firearms_qualification.pdf

³⁰ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/consumers/faqs/po_faq.shtml

³¹ https://www.bsis.ca.gov/forms_pubs/firearms_manual.pdf