



Guns and Schools in Missouri

MSBA has received many questions lately regarding weapons and schools. The school district may authorize adults to carry weapons on school property in some circumstances, though in most cases school districts choose to ban weapons unless they carried by law enforcement. Before making any decisions to reverse current practices, MSBA strongly recommends that school boards consult the district's private attorney, the district's insurance carrier, the district staff and other stakeholders.

Students

State law requires districts to have a policy prohibiting students from bringing weapons onto district property or to school activities. *§160.261, RSMo. and MSBA Policy JFCJ*. Students may participate in district-sponsored activities that involve firearms but are still prohibited from carrying any firearm capable of lethal use onto district property, district transportation or to a school-sponsored activity. *§571.030.7, RSMo*. In these cases, adults transport the firearms.

Adults

Most school districts currently prohibit adults other than law enforcement from bringing weapons onto school property under MSBA Policy ECA. However, that policy can be revised to allow any non-student with a conceal carry permit to bring a weapon onto school property. In addition, a weapon can be openly carried onto school property or to school activities by an adult if it is:

- a. Non-functioning and the ammunition is not readily accessible; or
- b. Carried onto school property while transporting a student to and from school; or
- c. Possessed by an adult for the purpose of facilitating a school-sanctioned firearm safety event.
See §571.030, RSMo.

Employees in General

The district may allow employees to carry weapons to the same extent as other adults by revising Policy ECA. However, most districts prefer to hire trained employees for security purposes and only allow those employees to be armed.

a. Hiring Security Guards or School Resource Officers

Many districts currently employ or jointly employ one or more law enforcement officers to serve as school resource officers in the district. These are typically commissioned officers who are currently employed by or retired from the county or city in which the district is located and may carry weapons onto school grounds. §571.030.2, RSMo. Some districts also contract for or employ trained persons to serve as security guards. Policy ECA currently recognizes these practices.

b. Employees as School Protection Officers

A school protection officer (SPO) is a teacher or administrator who has been designated by the district to carry a concealed weapon or self-defense spray as part of the district's security plan. State statute requires the district to first have a public hearing on whether the Board should designate SPOs at all. §160.665, RSMo. Only then can the district consider which employees to appoint to this position, and that decision is made in closed session. SPOs must have a conceal and carry permit and complete 112 hours of training as approved by the Missouri Peace Officer Standards and Training Program (POST).

MSBA has a second version of Policy ECA that recognizes the use of SPOs and an administrative procedure, ECA-AP2, that outlines the duties of an SPO and the district process for designating an employee as an SPO.

For more information on this and other issues of school safety, member districts may contact the School Laws Department or the MSBA Center for Education Safety at (800) 221-6722.