

## Important Contact Information

If you believe that a person is in immediate danger of causing personal injury to himself or herself or to anyone else, you should contact your local police department.

For information on mental health treatment and substance abuse prevention and treatment throughout Connecticut visit the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) website at [www.ct.gov/dmhas](http://www.ct.gov/dmhas) and follow the link named: **Finding services in your area.**

For general information about Firearm Safety Warrants, contact:

- your local police department,
- the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection at (860) 685-8400, or
- any Geographical Area Court Clerk's Office (if a court hearing has been scheduled)

## Firearm Transfers

The owner of any firearm or ammunition that was seized (taken away) during a Firearm Safety Warrant is allowed to transfer those items to another person if the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection approves the transfer. For more information about the transfer process, you can contact the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection at (860) 685-8400.

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# Firearm Safety Warrants

**Information about warrants that allow police officers to search for and take firearms away from someone when there is an immediate risk of personal injury**



State of Connecticut Judicial Branch



## What is a Firearm Safety Warrant?

The State of Connecticut has a process for any member of the public to ask a police officer to take firearms and ammunition away from a person who is in immediate danger of causing personal injury to himself or herself or to other individuals. As part of this process, the police officer and the state's attorney may ask the court to keep the firearms and ammunition away from that person for up to one year. This process is called a Firearm Safety Warrant.

A person in immediate danger of causing this kind of harm might include:

- a friend or person who is related to you,
- a person you live with or next to,
- a person you work with, or
- a stranger to you.

If you believe that someone is in immediate danger of causing this kind of harm, you can tell any police officer, and the officer will look into whether the situation calls for a Firearm Safety Warrant.

## When Can the Police Get a Firearm Safety Warrant from the Court?

The situation may call for a Firearm Safety Warrant that allows the police officer to search for and seize (take away) any firearms and ammunition the officer finds during the search if:

- ✓ the person poses a risk of imminent personal injury (immediate danger to himself or herself or to anyone else),

- ✓ the person has one or more firearms or ammunition within the officer's jurisdiction, and
- ✓ there is no reasonable alternative (no other way) to keep the person from causing personal injury.

In order to help the police officer to decide whether the situation calls for a Firearm Safety Warrant, the officer will also look for information about whether the person has:

- committed any recent threats or acts of violence toward himself or herself or anyone else;
- committed any recent acts of cruelty to animals;
- recklessly used, displayed, or brandished (waved around) a firearm;
- any history of the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against anyone else;
- any history of involuntary confinement in a hospital for people with psychiatric disabilities; or
- any history of illegally using controlled substances or abusing alcohol.

## Where Will the Police Search?

If the police officer or the state's attorney decides that the situation calls for a Firearm Safety Warrant, and a Superior Court judge issues the warrant, a police officer may search for and seize (take away) all firearms and ammunition in the areas that the judge allows the police officer to search. Some common areas to search include:

- a house, an apartment, or other dwelling;
- a work place or place of business; and
- a car, truck, boat, or similar vessel.

## What Happens if the Police Seizes Firearms or Ammunition?

If the officer finds and seizes (takes away) any firearm or ammunition during the search, the police department will keep the seized items until the court holds a hearing to decide whether, and for how long, those items should be kept away from the person.

The person from whom any firearm or ammunition was seized during a Firearm Safety Warrant has a right to a court hearing within two weeks of the seizure. That hearing is held at the Geographical Area Court that covers the town where the police officer seized the firearm or ammunition.

At the court hearing, the judge may order the police department to return the firearms or ammunition to the owner, or the judge may order the police department to hold onto the firearms or ammunition for up to one year.

The person who asked for the Firearm Safety Warrant is usually not required to go to any court hearing about the case, but the court hearing is open to the public, and the court will tell several agencies about the hearing, including:

- ✓ the police department that seized the firearms or ammunition,
- ✓ the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and
- ✓ the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.