



COVIDStat Morning Call Firearm RFI's Dissemination Report

Regional Operations and Intelligence Center Section (ROIC) Partner Engagement Unit ~ ROIC202003-04774F10
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New Jersey State Police Firearms Investigation Unit 24 March 2020 Guidance and Information

1. **Q: Our concern regarding firearms is due to the lack of gun stores open, do they have the possibility of expiring before the store reopen? This is for permit as well as initial FID. (We are seeing a spike in initial cards).**

Handgun Purchase Permits are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance and may be extended for an additional 90 days, not to exceed 180 days from the date of issuance. Although we fully expect background investigation and processing times to be significantly delayed due to the COVID-19 response, we should not prohibit residents from applying through the Firearms Application and Registration System (FARS). Residents may or may not be effected by closures and permit expirations, explain the current situation regarding the closures and allow them to make their own decision on when to apply.

2. **Q: Do we have to ink index finger on back of FID Card?**
3. **Q: Is the fingerprint required on the back of FID card?**
4. **Q: Can we issue the ID cards without a fingerprint on ID Card, to limit exposure?**
5. **Q: If we are continuing to do them, how do we deal with signatures on the permits, getting the money, and getting them the permits/cards?**
6. **Q: We have several approved applications ready to go. Can we use a disposable inking pad/device for the identification card and just have the officer witness the applicant place their finger on the card?**

Use your discretion on whether to apply the fingerprint is on the back of the Firearms Purchaser Identification Card at issuance. It is reasonable to issue the card without a fingerprint to conform with social distancing. You may also allow an applicant to apply their own fingerprint and sign the documents in the presence of a representative of your department. We advise retail firearms dealers to use common sense while reviewing issued FPIC's during the sale of firearms. We will ensure dealers are aware of the situation to account for all circumstances based on the dates of issuance. Fees may be collected by any means accepted by your Municipality. Use your discretion in accordance with municipal policy and CDC recommendations to collect payment and distribute permits.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION NOTICE: This product contains LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE information for situational awareness; it does not establish probable cause to arrest or detain a subject. Recipients should not share any portion of this product outside the law enforcement community, such as the media, the public, or other personnel who do not have a valid need-to-know.

7. Q: Can we suspend new firearm applications until the Pandemic is over?

No, Governor Murphy's intent is to keep as many government functions available as possible. The application process is completely web based and already limits interactions while still providing a comprehensive background investigation. We will continue to accept new applications with the understanding that the process is going to be significantly delayed due to the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

It is important to note that initial applications will be indefinitely delayed due to the closure of the contracted fingerprint sites. This portion of the background process will continue as soon as non-essential businesses are allowed to reopen.

- 8. Q: I have applications I approved, but not issued. My records bureau is closed. What is the best course of action?**
- 9. Q: Can we suspend the processing of firearm permit applications due to:**
- HQ closed to public
 - Limited to no trained personnel available
- 10. Q: We are seeing a huge uptick in Firearm Apps. With businesses shut down and the inability to confirm employment of applicants and with firearms retailers closed, are we able to push pause with regards to processing apps?**
- 11. Q: Should we continue to work on the ones already in the queue?**
- 12. Q: Are will still proceeding with business as usual until we receive further guidance?**

Our intent is to process as much as we can during this public health emergency. However, certain aspects of the process will be limited or suspended completely. If you do not have the capability to complete certain portions of the process, please inform your residents of the limitation. Our message should include the expectation that when feasible we will continue normal operation.

- 13. Q: Can we mail out FIDs without applicant's signature & fingerprint on the card? Similarly, with pistol permits, can we mail out permits without the applicant's signature?**
- 14. Q: My building is closed for pickup of permits due to the COVID-19 Crisis can we get an official waiver on the time frame for permits and FID?**
- 15. Q: The Township closed down the municipal building to the public, therefore we cannot personally deliver the permits nor can we fingerprint.**

It is reasonable and acceptable to provide residents with their Firearms Purchaser Identification Card and/or Handgun Purchase Permits via Certified Mail if your department has that capability. This exception would be reasonable under the current circumstances, normal operations would continue after this emergency subsides. Waivers will not be officially provided; however, we should provide the applicants with realistic expectations to include a delayed process. Fingerprinting is facilitated through a commercial vendor, which has been deemed nonessential. Fingerprinting will resume when feasible; however, applications should not be restricted due to a vendor closure. Explain the current situation and allow the applicant to make an informed decision.

16. Q: When will NICs be back up and running?

17. Q: Is NIC still down? If it is then wouldn't sales technically not be possible? Are we just generating permits that cannot be used?

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System is facilitated through the New Jersey State Police. Although currently suspended pursuant to executive order 107, there is no expiration for Firearms Purchaser Identification Cards. Handgun Purchase permits can be valid for a total of 180 days. The applicant should be provided relevant information and allowed to determine when to apply. NICS exempted transactions are not prohibited by executive order 107 and still require state issued permits.

18. Q: What parts of the FARS application has been suspended, i.e. 212A, NICS checks?

The FARS application is currently functioning with limited capability. 212A and mental health checks are experiencing delays. The fingerprinting vendor has been deemed nonessential and will not accept future appointments until further notice. NICS availability does not affect a FARS application.

19. Q: Are firearm shops allowed to be open?

Currently the retail of firearms has been deemed nonessential. However, some retail firearm storefronts may provide essential products authorized by the Governor to remain open. These businesses will be evaluated based on each individual circumstance.

20. Q: Why can't current firearm ID holders apply for new permits? We have numerous applications in various state of completion. Will they be processed during this outage?

All applications will be processed with an expected delay due to the COVID-19 response and recovery.

21. Q: With the new updated executive order in place, which closes firearm stores, will there be some extension for handgun permits that are in circulation?

Handgun purchase permits will not be extended past the 180 days from the date of issuance. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for transactions initiated before executive order 107 became effective. The Firearms Investigation Unit and the respective retail firearms dealer will handle those exceptions.

If you have further questions, please send them via email to FirearmsInvestUnit@gw.njsp.org and we will respond within three business days.