



San Francisco Police Department CCW Licensing Policy

Pursuant to Penal Code section 26160, this policy is intended to provide the public with a summary of the criteria that the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) considers when reviewing applications for a license to carry a concealed weapon (CCW license).

Introduction

A CCW license authorizes the license holder to carry a pre-approved firearm concealed on their person in some situations outside their home or place of business. California Penal Code section 26155 vests the Chief of the San Francisco Police Department with the authority to approve or deny CCW licenses to applicants who reside within the City and County of San Francisco. A CCW license can be issued for up to two years, or three years if the licensee is a judge, court commissioner or magistrate. The Chief may impose further conditions or restrictions on a license as he or she deems warranted.

In California, the decision to issue a CCW license is discretionary. Penal Code section 26155 provides that the Chief "may" issue, but is not required to issue, a CCW license if certain minimum statutory criteria are satisfied. The Chief's decision to issue a CCW license will depend on the circumstances in each individual case, and there is no guarantee that an applicant will receive a CCW license even if he or she satisfies all of the criteria listed below. If the circumstances warrant, the Chief also has the discretion to waive some of the listed requirements.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a CCW license, the applicant must prove that he or she is --

1. A San Francisco resident;
2. A citizen or legal resident of the United States; and
3. At least 21 years of age at the time the application is submitted.

Good Cause for Issuance

The applicant must establish that there is good cause for the Chief of Police to issue a CCW license. In light of the fact that San Francisco is the second most densely populated urban area in the country, and weighing the defensive benefit of carrying concealed firearms in public against the risk of surprise to law enforcement, the risk of avoidable and dangerous conflict escalation in a public setting, and the risk to general public safety that discharging firearms poses to law enforcement and bystanders alike, the Chief has determined on the basis of experience and judgment that good cause to issue a CCW license to San Francisco residents will generally only exist in conditions of necessity. Accordingly, applicants should be able to supply convincing evidence of the following:

1. There is a reported, documented, presently existing, and significant risk of danger to life or of great bodily injury to the applicant and/or his or her spouse, domestic partner or dependents;
2. The danger of harm is specific to the applicant or his or her immediate family and is not generally shared by other similarly situated members of the public;
3. Existing law enforcement resources cannot adequately address the danger of harm;
4. The danger of harm cannot reasonably be avoided by alternative measures; and
5. Licensing the applicant to carry a concealed weapon is significantly likely to reduce the danger of harm.

While each of the above factors is considered in the decision making process, the Chief makes a good cause determination based on the totality of the circumstances presented in each individual case.

Good Moral Character

Once an eligible applicant makes a preliminary showing of good cause, the SFPD will conduct a background investigation to determine whether the applicant is of good moral character. To demonstrate good moral character, the applicant must, at a minimum:

1. Pass a background check performed by the California Department of Justice using the applicant's fingerprints and the information provided on the standard application form.
2. Be and remain qualified under state and federal law to possess, receive, own, and/or purchase a firearm.
3. Have no history of citations, arrests, convictions, civil lawsuits, employment discharges, license denials, license revocations or other actions indicating a possible propensity for violence, moral turpitude, drug and/or alcohol abuse, carelessness with weapons and/or dishonesty.
4. Provide positive personal character references, preferably from members of the community who are not relatives and who are aware that the applicant seeks a license to carry a concealed weapon.

The Chief's moral character determination is discretionary and based on the totality of the circumstances presented in each individual case.

Personal Suitability

The applicant must be free of any physical, psychiatric, and/or psychological conditions that might negatively impact his or her exercise of sound judgment and/or ability to handle a firearm safely. The SFPD requires applicants to successfully complete a psychological examination.

Firearms Training and Range Qualification

The applicant must establish legal ownership and registration of the weapon he or she seeks to carry concealed and successfully complete a course of firearms training of up to 16 hours, as determined by the SFPD. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate proficiency and accuracy with the weapon to be licensed at the SFPD shooting range.

Application and Licensing Fees

Application and fingerprinting fees must be paid when the application is submitted. The cost of psychological testing and firearms training is the applicant's responsibility. A licensing fee will apply when a license issues. Please consult the current fee schedule.

Further Information

Application forms, detailed application instructions, and a current fee schedule are available from the SFPD Legal Division at 850 Bryant St., Suite 575, San Francisco, CA. 94103. Applications must be submitted in person. Questions about the application process and other CCW- related inquiries should be directed to the Officer-in-Charge, SFPD Legal Division, at (415) 553-1511.