

U.S. Grand Lodge O.T.O.

Policy Memorandum: Revision to Firearms Policy

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

U.S. Grand Lodge's policy on firearms at official functions and events has been revised to bring it into conformance with current laws, and to accommodate the legitimate needs of members who hold licenses to carry a concealed weapon for self-protection. Here is the old language, as set forth in the Camp, Oasis, and Lodge Master's Handbook and the Minerval Guide:

[Firearms are prohibited at O.T.O. functions and events unless carried by a law enforcement officer or licensed security guard in the performance of his or her duty.]

The revised language is as follows:

[Firearms are prohibited within O.T.O. initiation facilities during initiation rituals, and Local Body Masters shall provide due notice of this prohibition to all attendees, in conformance with applicable laws.

Firearms are also prohibited at all other O.T.O. functions and events except as provided for, and in strict compliance with, applicable federal, state and local laws and ordinances. For interpretation of applicable laws and ordinances pertaining to firearms, the location of any O.T.O. ritual, including the Gnostic Mass and other E.G.C. rituals, shall be considered a "place of worship." Local Body Masters may, at their sole discretion, prohibit firearms at any O.T.O. event under their control, providing they give due notice in conformance with applicable laws.]

State and local laws regarding licenses to carry firearms vary widely (the following website contains a comprehensive listing of state and federal gun laws: <http://www.atf.treas.gov/firearms/statelaws/22edition.htm>), but they *typically* include provisions that: require the weapon to remain concealed; prohibit the consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants; require the weapon to remain under the direct control of its owner at all times; and prohibit weapons in churches and other places of worship. Report of failure to comply with all applicable laws will typically result in revocation of a license.

Local body officers should familiarize themselves with the applicable laws, but the burden of proof of legal compliance shall always be on the individual carrying the weapon. Failure to provide satisfactory evidence of legal compliance to a local body officer on request shall be grounds for ejection from the O.T.O. function or event, and also possibly for disciplinary action and reporting to the appropriate authorities.

If any individual brandishes or unnecessarily displays a firearm at an O.T.O. event, or consumes alcohol while in known possession of a firearm, or exhibits signs of inebriation

while in known possession of a firearm, or threatens to make violent use of a firearm in his or her possession, or is discovered to be in possession of a firearm after due notice that firearms are prohibited at the event, then the Local Body Master shall immediately either eject that individual from the event or terminate the event; and shall file a report of the event with an Executive Officer within 48 hours.

Local Body Masters shall require O.T.O. event attendees in possession of firearms to maintain direct control over their firearms at all times. If a firearm must be separated from its owner at an O.T.O. event, the firearm shall be securely locked within a vehicle, or within a NRA-approved, locked storage container, such that it is accessible only to the owner.

Notwithstanding any of the above, Local Body Masters retain the responsibility to ensure the safety of all persons attending O.T.O. events under their control, and Local Body Masters have the authority to prohibit the presence of firearms at any such event at their sole discretion. In most states, this may be done by posting a notice prohibiting firearms at the event, or by verbally notifying all attendees in advance that firearms are prohibited at the event. Note that some states have specific requirements regarding the size and wording of posted notices.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,
Sabazius X°
National Grand Master General