

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 180

(Senators West and Carozza)

Judicial Proceedings

Judiciary

Public Safety - Handgun Permits - Expiration and Renewal Periods for Retired Law Enforcement Officer

This bill alters the expiration and renewal periods for a handgun permit issued to a retired law enforcement officer who retired in good standing from service with a law enforcement agency of the State or a county or municipal corporation of the State. Under the bill, the handgun permit expires on the last day of the holder’s birth month following five years after the date the permit is issued and may be renewed for successive periods of five years each if, at the time of an application for renewal, the applicant possesses the qualifications for the issuance of a permit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$170,000 in FY 2026 only for one-time computer programming changes. As retired law enforcement officers of the State or a county or municipal corporation of the State are not charged fees for initial or renewal applications for a handgun permit, revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	170,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$170,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, a handgun permit expires on the last day of the holder's birth month following two years after the date the permit is issued; however, the Secretary may establish an alternative expiration date for a permit to coincide with the expiration of a private detective license, a security guard certification, or a special police officer commission. A permit may be renewed for successive periods of three years each if, at the time of an application for renewal, the applicant possesses the qualifications for the issuance of a permit and pays the renewal fee.

A handgun permit application costs \$125; two years after the initial permit and every three years thereafter, a \$75 renewal fee is due; however, the Secretary may not charge a fee to a retired law enforcement officer of the State or a county or municipal corporation of the State. The applicant must pay for fingerprint-based federal and State criminal history background checks for an initial application. A person who applies for a renewal of a handgun permit is not required to be fingerprinted unless the Secretary requires a set of the person's fingerprints to resolve a question of the person's identity.

Existing statutory requirements and background relating to the issuance of handgun permits are summarized in the **Appendix – Handgun Permit Requirements – Current Law/Background**.

State Expenditures: The Department of State Police advises that the handgun permit system for initial applications and renewals is automated and needs to be reprogrammed to accommodate the bill's changes. Accordingly, general fund expenditures increase by approximately \$170,000 in fiscal 2026 only for programming changes.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 102 and HB 329 of 2024 and SB 825 and HB 589 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: HB 171 (Delegate Valentine) - Judiciary.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 13, 2025
js/lgc Third Reader - January 31, 2025

Analysis by: Shirleen M. E. Pilgrim

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510

Appendix

Handgun Permit Requirements – Current Law/Background

Generally, with certain exceptions, to be issued a handgun permit by the Secretary of State Police, an applicant (1) must be at least age 21 years or a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, the National Guard, or the uniformed services; (2) must not have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for which a sentence of imprisonment for more than one year has been imposed or, if convicted, must have been pardoned or been granted relief under federal law; (3) must not have been convicted of a controlled dangerous substance violation and must not presently be an addict, a habitual user of a controlled dangerous substance, or an alcoholic; (4) must not be on supervised probation for conviction of a crime punishable by imprisonment for one year or more, a violation of § 21-902(b) or (c) of the Transportation Article (driving while under the influence or driving while impaired), or violating a protective order under § 4-509 of the Family Law Article (failure to comply with interim or final protective order); (5) must not suffer from a mental disorder and have a history of violent behavior against the person or another; (6) must not have been involuntarily admitted for more than 30 consecutive days to a facility that provides treatment or other services for mental disorders; (7) must not be a respondent against whom a current non *ex parte* civil protective order has been entered under § 4-506 of the Family Law Article, a current extreme risk protective order has been entered under § 5-601 of the Public Safety Article, or any other type of current court order has been entered prohibiting the person from purchasing or possessing firearms; (8) must not exhibit a propensity for violence or instability, which may reasonably render possession of a handgun a danger to the applicant or another; (9) must have successfully completed, prior to application and each renewal, a specified firearms training course approved by the Secretary; (10) if younger than 30, must not have been committed to a facility for juveniles for longer than one year or adjudicated delinquent for a crime of violence, a felony, or misdemeanor that carries a statutory penalty of more than two years; and (11) must not otherwise be prohibited by State or federal law from possessing a handgun.

The Secretary may not issue a handgun permit to a person who has been convicted on or after October 1, 2023, of a second or subsequent violation of § 4-104 of the Criminal Law Article (child access to firearms) or has been convicted on or after October 1, 2023, of a violation of that provision if the violation resulted in the use of a loaded firearm by a minor causing death or serious bodily injury to the minor or another person. The Secretary also may not issue a handgun permit to a person who has been convicted on or after October 1, 2023, of a violation of § 4-104 of the Criminal Law Article for five years following the date of the conviction.

A handgun permit applicant must successfully complete, prior to the application and each renewal, a firearms training course approved by the Secretary that includes (1) for an initial application, a minimum of 16 hours of instruction by a qualified handgun instructor, or 8 hours of instruction for a renewal application; (2) classroom instruction on State and federal firearm laws, home firearm safety, handgun mechanisms and operations, conflict de-escalation and resolution, anger management, and suicide prevention; and (3) a firearm qualification component that includes live-fire shooting exercise on a firing range and requires the applicant to demonstrate safe handling of a handgun and shooting proficiency with a handgun.

An applicant for a permit is not required to complete a certified firearms training course if the applicant:

- is a law enforcement officer or a person who is retired in good standing from service with a law enforcement agency of the United States, the State, or any local law enforcement agency in the State;
- is a member, retired member, or honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard;
- is a qualified handgun instructor; or
- has completed a firearms training course approved by the Secretary.

A handgun permit application costs \$125; two years after the initial permit and every three years thereafter, a \$75 renewal fee is due. In addition, the applicant must pay for fingerprint-based federal and State criminal history background checks for an initial application. A person who applies for a renewal of a handgun permit is not required to be fingerprinted unless the Secretary requires a set of the person's fingerprints to resolve a question of the person's identity.

Generally, a handgun permit expires on the last day of the holder's birth month following two years after the date the permit is issued; however, the Secretary may establish an alternative expiration date for a permit to coincide with the expiration of a private detective license, a security guard certification, or a special police officer commission. A permit may be renewed for successive periods of three years each if, at the time of an application for renewal, the applicant possesses the qualifications for the issuance of a permit and pays the renewal fee.

In 2024, the Department of State Police (DSP) received 40,944 new applications for handgun permits and 28,735 handgun permit renewal applications. DSP denied 1,557 applications in the same year. As of December 31, 2024, there are approximately 202,241 active handgun permits in the State. It generally takes less than two days to receive the results of a national criminal history records check from the FBI and approximately seven days to process and issue a permit.