Concealed Weapons Legislation: Implications for Schools

Colorado has updated legislation regarding carrying handguns to clarify who may carry a concealed weapon onto school property. The following definitions and details come from the Attorney General’s *Colorado School Violence Prevention and Student Discipline Manual* revised in 2003.

It is a class six felony if any person “knowingly and unlawfully and without legal authority carries, brings, or has in such person’s possession a deadly weapon ... in or on the real estate and all improvements erected thereon of any public or private elementary, middle, junior high, or high school...” Section 18-12-105.5(1), CRS (2002).

The law defines a deadly weapon as any of the following: firearm (either loaded or unloaded), knife, bludgeon, or any other weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance (animate or inanimate) if capable of producing death or serious bodily harm. Section 18-1-901(3)(e), CRS (2000).

In 2000, published exceptions described two situations where a person could legally carry a weapon onto school grounds: for the purpose of presenting an authorized demonstration or to carry out duties when the person is a peace officer and the weapon is for use in an educational program approved by the school. 18-12-105.5(3) CRS.

Three new exceptions are included this year to specifically address concealed weapons:

- A permit holder may keep the handgun in his vehicle. If the permit holder leaves the vehicle, the handgun must be in a compartment inside the vehicle and the vehicle locked;
- A permit holder who is employed as a school security guard for a public elementary, middle, junior, or senior high school may carry a concealed weapon while on duty;
- A permit holder may carry a concealed handgun on undeveloped school property used for hunting or other shooting sports.

18-12-214 (a) through (c), CRS (2003).

Thus, Colorado law prevents carrying a concealed firearm into or onto the premises of any Colorado public or private school unless the carrier explicitly meets one of the exceptions in the statute.

Copies of the revised manual are available online at www.ago.state.co.us.

Guns and Youth: Research Update

*What Do We Know About Gun Use Among Adolescents?* by Deanna Wilkinson and Jeffery Fagan describes what is known about adolescent gun use by bringing together published research findings from the past 20 years.

Attitudes, motivations, and contexts are the primary focus of the research on youth gun violence, and these vary greatly from inner city youth to rural school kids to those who are incarcerated for a gun crime. Wilkinson and Fagan present summaries of several large-scale samples of adolescents in schools and target samples of criminal justice or criminally involved offenders. The numbers vary, but the findings address such issues as how many respondents carried a gun in the previous 30 days, how difficult or easy it is to get a gun, and the main motivation for carrying a gun.

Several studies are described that involved either gang members or actively violent adolescent males, including one that used samples from Denver and Aurora. Detailed findings address such issues as carrying habits (respondents carry a new gun more frequently at first), the level of police presence in the neighborhood, and age the respondent first fired a gun.

The paper also includes an analysis of ten multiple-victim shootings that occurred in non-urban schools during the late 1990s. Similarities and contextual details of the incidents are highlighted in a table for quick comparison. The authors conclude that these non-urban shootings are not the result of a “contagion from the inner cities to the suburbs and rural communities.” Too many differences between the urban and non-urban gun violence suggest distinct event patterns.

Wilkinson and Fagan present a thought-provoking overview of this important research and hope to clarify what is known so far about the role of guns in the lives of young people. For the entire findings, you may purchase a copy for $10 from CSPV by calling 303-492-8465 or downloading an order form at www.colorado.edu/cspv.

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**You are Invited**

**October 17 - Sterling**  
**October 21 - Denver**

**Safe Communities~Safe Schools**  
**Tools to Address Liability Issues**

[see back for details]

**October 24 - Grand Junction**  
**October 28 - Pueblo**
Join the Colorado School Districts Self Insurance Pool (CSDSIP), the Colorado Attorney General’s Office, CSPV and Colorado Crime Stoppers for a free day-long seminar to discuss violence prevention in schools.

October 17 - Northeastern Junior College, Sterling  
October 21 - Holiday Inn Denver I-70 East, Denver  
October 24 - Two Rivers Convention Center, Grand Junction  
October 28 - Sangre De Cristo Arts & Conference Center, Pueblo

An esteemed panel of speakers will focus on topics such as Colorado Violence Prevention Efforts, School Liability and Personal Liability, Information Sharing, Student Crime Stoppers, Bullying, and Colorado Safe Schools Legislation.

Choose the location that best fits your needs, and watch for more information regarding specific agenda items. Each seminar will be held from 9:00 to 3:00, and we will provide lunch and materials at no cost. Contact Kathy with the Insurance Pool at 303-722-2600 ext. 225 for more details. Registration is required, and space is limited.