HOUSE BILL 562, Amend Firearm Laws

NEWS MEDIA RELEASE

On August 5, 2015 Governor Pat McCrory signed House Bill 562, Amend Firearm Laws, into law. This bill makes a number of changes to North Carolina's firearms laws, to include changes in the way sheriffs evaluate and process pistol purchase permits. As sheriffs, we have attempted to implement these changes mandated by the General Assembly in such a way as to minimize the inconvenience to pistol purchase permit applicants. However these new requirements do result in some additional steps that applicants for pistol purchase permits must comply with.

A summary of these new pistol purchase permit requirements enacted by the General Assembly are below.

1. Effective December 1, 2015 for all pistol purchase permits issued on or after that date, a uniform application for a pistol purchase permit and a uniform pistol purchase permit certificate must be used by all sheriffs. This new application and certificate was created by the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI).

   Pistol purchase permits issued before this date remain valid until their expiration date. Any person with such a permit can exchange it for an updated permit from the sheriff with no further application being required. Any permit issued in exchange will expire on the same date as the original permit. The SBI is required to make reasonable efforts to notify federally licensed firearms dealers in North Carolina of the new permit's appearance.

2. Effective December 1, 2015 for all pistol purchase permits issued on or after that date, for purposes of determining an applicant's good moral character to receive a pistol purchase permit, the sheriff is only able to consider an applicant's conduct and criminal history for the five year period immediately preceding the date of the application. This five-year period only applies to a sheriff's evaluation of an applicant's good moral character. If a crime or condition occurred prior to this five-year period, the sheriff must consider it if the crime or condition is independently a disqualifier for a pistol purchase permit (for example, a felony conviction or involuntary commitment).

3. Effective December 1, 2015, if a pistol purchase permit is denied and the applicant wants to appeal that decision, the denied applicant has to take his/her appeal to the superior court, as opposed to district court as was previously required.

4. Effective December 1, 2015, the new law requires all applicants for a pistol purchase permit to submit the following items:

   a. The permit application;
   b. $5.00 for each permit requested;
   c. A government-issued identification;

d. Proof of residency; and
e. A signed release that authorizes and requires any entity that has court orders concerning the mental health or capacity of the applicant to be disclosed to the sheriff.

We hope this summary of the new changes to our pistol purchase permit laws is helpful. If you have additional questions, please contact **[insert name of personnel]** of the _____ County Sheriff's Office at **[insert telephone number]**.