Stolen firearm checklist

What to do if a gun is stolen, and how to check if a gun is stolen. Work down the list in order and tick each step as you finish it. The full guide, with the reasons behind every step, is at confirmedstolen.com/stolen-firearm/.

As soon as you discover it

- [ ] **Confirm the firearm is missing, not misplaced**
  Check safes, vehicles, cases and anyone else in the household who has access, but do not delay the report for long.
- [ ] **Do not touch the scene if there was a break-in**
  Leave forced doors, safes and vehicles as you found them so police can examine them.
- [ ] **Call your local police and report the theft**
  Use the non-emergency line unless a crime is in progress or someone is in danger. ATF does not take stolen-gun reports from private citizens.
- [ ] **Give the make, model, caliber and serial number**
  Police need the serial number to enter the firearm into NCIC, the FBI's law-enforcement database. Without it, a recovered gun is hard to trace back to you.
- [ ] **Write down the police report number**
  You will need it for insurance, for any state reporting rule and to claim the firearm if it is recovered.

Within the first day or two

- [ ] **Check whether your state sets a reporting deadline**
  Some states require owners to report lost or stolen guns within a set time, from immediately to several days. Ask the police or read your state statute.
- [ ] **Find the serial number if you do not have it**
  ATF suggests contacting the dealer who sold the gun, your local police or your state firearms registration office, if your state has one.
- [ ] **List everything else taken in the same theft**
  Include ammunition, magazines, accessories and the safe or case, with photos and receipts if you have them.
- [ ] **If you hold a federal firearms license, report to ATF**
  Licensees must report inventory theft or loss to ATF and local police within 48 hours of discovery; see ATF's theft or loss page (www.atf.gov/firearms/tools-and-services-firearms-industry/current-licensees/report-firearms-theft-or-loss).

This week

- [ ] **Contact your insurer about a claim**
  Ask whether your homeowners or renters policy covers firearms and whether it sets a lower limit for them. Provide the police report number.

- [ ] **Give police any new information promptly**
  If you find a receipt, photo or serial number later, or learn who may have taken the gun, add it to the existing report.

- [ ] **Tell police at once if the gun turns up**
  If you find the firearm or it is returned to you, ask the police to update the report so the NCIC record reflects the recovery.

Prevent it happening again

- [ ] **Record the make, model, caliber and serial number of every gun**
  Keep the record, with photos and receipts, somewhere separate from the firearms, such as a secure digital file.

- [ ] **Store firearms locked and unloaded when not in use**
  Use a gun safe, lockbox or locking device, and store ammunition separately where practical.

- [ ] **Do not leave guns in unattended vehicles**
  If you must, use a locked container secured to the vehicle, and never leave a firearm in plain view.

- [ ] **Check local storage laws**
  Some states and cities set safe-storage rules. Ask local police or read your state's current statutes.

If you are buying a used gun

- [ ] **Prefer a transfer through a licensed dealer**
  A dealer runs a background check on the buyer and may run a voluntary serial number check against the NCIC Gun File.

- [ ] **Use a state public search where one exists**
  In Florida, the FDLE Public Access System (pas.fdle.state.fl.us/pas/restricted/PAS/StolenVehicles.jsf) includes stolen guns. Treat any result as a lead, not proof.

- [ ] **Contact police if you suspect a gun is stolen**
  Do not confront the seller. Give police the serial number and the details of the offer.

Your case record

Make, model, caliber and serial number

Police report number and officer

Date and time reported

Insurance claim number

State reporting requirement checked

Notes

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