

First Gun Purchase Checklist

What to know, ask, and do before buying your first firearm

Buying your first firearm is a significant decision. This checklist helps you approach it thoughtfully — covering the research, questions, and steps that lead to a confident, informed purchase.

Before You Shop

Research & Self-Assessment

- I've honestly assessed whether firearm ownership is right for my situation
- I understand the basic types: revolvers, semi-automatic pistols, shotguns, rifles
- I've researched my state's laws on purchase, ownership, storage, and carry
- I know if my state requires a permit, waiting period, or background check
- I've considered how a firearm fits into my overall protection plan
- I've budgeted for the full cost: firearm + safe storage + training + ammunition

Don't rush this process. A thoughtful purchase takes weeks, not hours.

At the Gun Store

Questions to Ask

- "Can I hold several different models to compare?"
- "What's the difference in recoil between these options?"
- "Is this a good fit for someone with my hand size/grip strength?"
- "What ammunition does this use, and what's the cost/availability?"
- "Do you offer a range where I can try before I buy?"
- "What's your return/exchange policy?"

What to Evaluate

- Can I comfortably reach all controls (trigger, magazine release, safety)?
- Can I rack the slide without struggling?
- Does it feel balanced in my hand, not too front-heavy or awkward?
- Is the grip texture comfortable (not too aggressive, not too slick)?

Build your complete protection system

join.fierana.com

- Can I see the sights clearly?

How it feels in the store for 30 seconds ≠ how it performs after 500 rounds. Ask to try it first.

Red Flags to Watch For

- Staff who steer you to "women's guns" without asking about your needs
- Anyone who dismisses your questions or talks down to you
- Pressure to buy today or buy something specific
- Claims that you "don't need training" or "it's not complicated"
- Stores that won't let you handle multiple options

If you encounter these, find a different store. You deserve respectful, knowledgeable service.

Before Leaving the Store

- I understand how to safely load, unload, and clear this firearm
- I've received a demonstration of all controls and functions
- I have the manual and know where to find additional resources
- I've purchased (or have at home) a secure storage solution
- I have a training plan — class scheduled or instructor identified
- I've purchased appropriate ammunition for practice

After Purchase

- Firearm is stored securely and inaccessible to unauthorized users
- Household members know the firearm exists and basic safety rules
- If children are present: had age-appropriate safety conversation
- Training scheduled within 2 weeks of purchase
- Practice ammunition purchased for ongoing training
- Considered: carry insurance / self-defense legal protection