



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 11, 2012

Google Shopping Site Bans Guns, Ammo as Unsafe for Families

Google has announced a ban on firearms, ammunition, and other items its censors deem to be unsafe from its new [Google Shopping](#) site, initiated in early June. While most major U.S. news organs appeared to have missed or ignored the announcement, which Google made in late May, foreign newspapers were all over it. "Our company has a strong culture and values, and we've chosen not to allow ads that promote products and services that are incompatible with these values," the U.K.'s [Telegraph](#) news site quoted Google as explaining of its new "family safe" policy. Google added that it would no longer allow "the promotion of weapons or devices designed to cause serious harm or injury," including "guns, gun parts or hardware, ammunition, bombs, knives, throwing stars, and brass knuckles," the French news service AFP reported.



The *Telegraph* noted that "American firearms enthusiasts have already raised a petition on [Change.org](#) asking Google to reconsider and citing rights under the Second Amendment. The petition's organizers claim, "This has started to severely affect many people's ability to find good prices on things ranging from knives to swords to hunting rifles and ammo, to axes. Why does Google feel the need to tell people they cannot shop online for legal items?"

The petition notes that "if you wish to purchase a gun, you are required to do a back ground check.... The new policy will only effectively disable many law abiding citizens from acquiring legal weapons for legitimate purposes at reasonable prices, and hurt many small business's income."

According to AFP, the National Rifle Association weighed in on the move by Google, calling it a "discriminatory policy" that "appears to be a calculated political statement by Google at a time when most other large online retailers and search services are increasing the level of information they provide and the number of gun-related products they offer for sale."

[Forbes.com](#) reported that in late June the "Google Shopping Team" e-mailed one manufacturer of firearms accessories, [HamLund Tactical](#), to inform the company that its products violated Google's new policy and would be removed from the site. "We do not allow the promotion or sale of weapons and any related products such as ammunitions or accessory kits on Google Shopping," the e-mail advised. "In order to comply with our new policies, please remove any weapon-related products from your data feed and then re-submit your feed in the Merchant Center. We've given much thought to our stance on this content, as well as the potential effect our policy decision could have on our Merchants, and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you."



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Google offered a few reasons to justify its assault on HamLund's products, including: "1) Google Shopping should provide a positive experience to users.... 2) Google Shopping should be safe for all users. User safety is everyone's business, and we can't do business with those who don't agree.... 3) Google Shopping should comply with local laws and regulations. Many products and services are regulated by law, which can vary from country to country."

In an editorial posted at [Ammoland.com](#), Larry Keane of the [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#) (NSSF) wrote that although the Google Shopping site was launched to help shoppers compare prices and get the best deal, "Google's new policy raises barriers to one of the country's strongest economic trends — the robust sales of firearms and ammunition, one of the true bright spots in the U.S. economy. Firearms and ammunition sales are at all-time highs, accounting for a 30.6 percent increase in jobs from 2008 through 2011 and an overall economic impact of nearly \$32 billion to the nation."

According to [OutdoorLife.com](#), Keane said his group is appealing to Google in an effort "to reconsider this discriminatory policy that is hostile to the Second Amendment," especially since the policy is unnecessary. Keane said that he has reminded Google that "firearms cannot be purchased online and be transferred directly to the purchaser. A firearm that is purchased online must be physically sent from one federal firearms licensee to another, with the latter conducting the mandatory FBI background check on the purchaser (represented in person) and then transferring the firearm only after the purchaser has passed [a] background check."

In its coverage of the story, [Examiner.com](#) noted that in light of Google's restrictive policy, other websites friendly to gun owners have stepped up to fill the void, including Gunspec.com, which the news site claimed "provides the first and only comparison shopping engine developed with shooters in mind."

Bill Vollono of [Townhall.com](#) suggested that Google's new policy may be tied to President Obama's ongoing assault on Americans' Second Amendment guarantees, noting that Google's employees and owners have already donated over \$608,000 to the president's reelection campaign. Specifically, wrote Vollono, "Eric Schmidt, Google's own Executive Chairman has already [donated \\$5,000](#) out of his pocket to Obama's campaign." He added that "Google is already on track to lead Obama donors for 2012 with [over \\$270,000 thus far](#)," and its members have donated [in the neighborhood of \\$1,000,000](#) to Obama's 2008 campaign.



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