



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 19, 2020

Fears Over Coronavirus Pandemic Driving Up Gun Sales

Buyers are concerned about protecting themselves and their property from looters, as well as the possibility that government may crack down on gun rights.



With COVID-19 taking center stage around the globe, Americans are becoming increasingly fearful of the coronavirus, with their fears exacerbated by the mass hysteria being generated by the media and the various health organizations around the world. Panic has prompted shoppers to buy more items than otherwise, creating more demand for food, toilet paper, and hand sanitizer. And empty shelves have Americans turning to the Second Amendment, concerned that looting may become an eventuality.

Gun stores across the country have experienced an increase in gun and ammunition sales. According to Fox News, the FBI's universal background check system has seen a 34-percent increase in February, and when news first began breaking of the virus in Wuhan, China in January, background checks increased 25 percent as people began to see the writing on the wall. As of March 15, firearm sales through dealers has increased 17-percent nationwide.

Associated Press notes some of the sales are from first-time gun buyers. Betsy Terrell, a 61-year-old resident of Decatur, Georgia, purchased a handgun for the first time after witnessing long lines and panic-driven people at her local Costco, she told Associated Press.

"I was beginning to see people acting oddly. That was a little unnerving," she said. "I feel there's potential political upheaval.... It's scary. It's only now I've felt this overwhelming need to arm myself to protect myself."

The spikes in sales ranged from 20 to 400 percent, Fox News reports. Even body armor requests have seen an increase in some places, underscoring the fears of mass riots as the response to coronavirus continues to become more [draconian](#).

"Firearms and ammunition sales are strong this week as many gun stores are quickly trying to restock inventory. There has been an uptick in inquiries for firearms training as families seek guidance on the selection, use and storage of a new firearm," Robyn Sandoval, 45, executive director of the Austin-based "A Girl & A Gun Women's Shooting League," told Fox News. "Law-abiding Americans want to have access to firearms during times of uncertainty. Families are social distancing and stocking up on food and supplies at home. The outbreak is creating a lot of anxiety in our communities. Families who have prepared at home want to be equipped to protect themselves from any looters or violence."



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Jeff Knox of The Firearms Coalition made similar observations, stating that buyers appear to be “focused on home defense.”

But like with the food and toilet paper, there is now growing concern that the supply will be unable to meet the demand for firearms, cautioned Eric Poole, editor of *Guns and Ammo* magazine.

“That percentage is expected to increase before the end of March dramatically. Firearm retailers and manufacturers were not prepared to meet the surge or a sustained long-term demand, so firearms and ammunition will seem to be largely absent from dealer shelves for weeks to come,” Poole warned. “If firearm and ammunition manufacturers throughout the U.S. are required to keep their workforce at home, this will have a more profound effect and drive up prices, to include private transfers of firearms and ammunition, which are not monitored or recorded by the NICS system.”

Frank Minter, editor in chief of the NRA’s *America’s 1st Freedom* magazine, contends the increase in sales is common during a crisis.

“During national emergencies, gun and ammunition sales go up. This is a practical thing. Self-reliance is what communities rely on,” he said. “The rise in gun sales is the practical nature of Americans coming out.”

Kris Parnto, former U.S. defense contractor, Army Ranger, and owner of Battleline Tactical, contends that that spike in sales is triggered not only by fears of looting and concerns over self-defense, but by panic that the government will use this crisis to forcibly remove gun rights.

“I know there is a general distrust of the government, no matter which party is in charge, since gun control is always at the forefront. Uncertainty can easily turn into panic without positive reassurance,” he said. “This leads to panic in the general populace; people worry that the government will forcibly take away their rights assured by the Constitution, or they panic over the shortage of items that have become necessities in our daily lives.”

This is not an unfounded fear. Associated Press reported earlier this week that a mayor in Illinois has already signed an executive order purportedly enabling her to ban the sale of guns or ammunition.

Champaign, Illinois, Mayor Deborah Frank Feinen [signed](#) the executive order on March 12. It supposedly allows her to not only ban the sale of weapons, but to also ban the sale of alcohol and gasoline, to cut off access to electricity, gas, and water, and to “take possession of private property.”

Earlier this week, the Democratic mayor of New Orleans took a [similar](#) step.

Raven Clabough acquired her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English at the University of Albany in upstate New York. She currently lives in Pennsylvania and has been a writer for The New American since January 2010.



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