



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 12, 2011

New Wisc. Concealed Carry Law Permits Online Safety Training

A new law in Wisconsin may allow applicants for a concealed carry permit to take safety classes online. The concealed carry bill was signed into law by Governor Scott Walker on Friday and because of a bit of legislative vagueness, it may be possible for those seeking a permit to satisfy the safety course by enrolling in an online class.



**Maryland Police Training
Commission**
Firearms Training Center

A provision in the new law mandates a firearms safety course be taken by all those seeking a permit allowing them to carry a concealed weapon. The law makes no mention of whether an online class would satisfy the coursework requirement.

There are other a number of such web-based instructional videos that comply with the education requirements of other states with similarly vague statutes.

For example, an agency of the state government of Maryland put together a 30-minute presentation and [posted it online](#) (see graphic above) for use by those seeking a concealed carry permit in that state. The video reportedly covers the use of firearms, including their maintenance and cleaning.

The existence of the Maryland video class may prove beneficial to residents of Wisconsin as there is nothing currently included in the recently enacted concealed carry law that would prohibit an applicant from watching the video and satisfying the education requirement.

As a matter of fact, reports out of Madison indicate that several gun-enthusiast online chat groups have begun disseminating a link to the Maryland video encouraging citizens of the Badger State to recur to it for their necessary training.

For its part, the state government agency tasked with monitoring compliance with the new law says that it is “too early to say” if the Maryland video or any other online offering would be sufficient to satisfy the state’s new education standard.

“Like everyone else, we are trying to understand what the law means and will be issuing more information and FAQs [Frequently Asked Questions] as we are able to do so,” explained Bill Cosh, a spokesman for the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

Spokesmen for Governor Walker’s office indicate that they will wait for the Department of Justice to promulgate appropriate regulations before commenting on the issue.

The vague wording of the training requirement has drawn criticism from some in the Wisconsin legislature. State Representative Kelda Helen Roys (D-Madison) and several fellow Democrats said that the statute’s training requirement failed to ensure that permit holders would receive sufficient instruction in gun safety. She added,

I still think that the law that we have is a radical departure from Wisconsin’s history. It’s not at all



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clear to me that the concerns of law enforcement and the adequacy of training have really been addressed.

During debate on the measure, Democratic leaders in the state Assembly pushed unsuccessfully for stiffer training guidelines. Democratic Minority Leader Peter Barca said anyone seeking a permit should meet very strict safety standards like those in neighboring states such as Minnesota. In Minnesota, applicants must demonstrate proficiency at firing a weapon before being approved for the concealed carry permit.

"Let's just do it right," Barca said. "Let's make sure when we give people this ability, they know what they're doing."

Under terms of the new law, the Wisconsin Department of Justice will issue carry permits to state residents 21 and over who have satisfied the training requirement and passed the background check into the applicant's criminal history and eligibility to carry a weapon.

Permits will cost a maximum of \$50 and be valid for five years.

According to the [Milwaukee News Sentinel](#):

Guns will be banned from law enforcement offices, prisons, jails, courthouses, secure mental-health facilities, and the areas of airports beyond security checkpoints. Guns will be allowed in city and state parks, an issue that raised concerns among some opponents of the bill.

Permit holders will be able to carry guns in taverns and other places that sell alcohol, provided they are not drinking.

Private businesses could post signs to keep guns out of their buildings. Signs also could be posted in government buildings, such as city halls and the state Capitol. But guns could not be banned from government-owned grounds, meaning they could be carried on the Capitol lawn or the Milwaukee Public Zoo.

Instructors of safety courses report that their classes are filling up quickly, despite the fact that the relevant portion of the new law doesn't go into effect until November.

There are additional online options available to applicants beyond the Maryland state police video.

The website [Madison.com reports](#):

Eric Korn runs American Firearms Training, a website based in Harrisonburg, Va. that offers online gun training. Korn, 33, said his 90-minute video offers in-depth information about pistol proficiency, safety, cleaning, storage and other issues.

"According to the Second Amendment, there should not be any type of training requirement in order to carry firearm," he said. "That said, we feel our class is a very good compromise between practical hands-on training and no training at all."

He acknowledged that individuals are better prepared when their training includes time at a shooting range, but said the law was about the civil right to defend oneself, a right that's separate from the question of proficiency.

Constitutionally speaking, the Second Amendment prohibits Congress from making any law infringing on the right of the people to keep and bear arms. There is no mention of permits, training, safety, or restriction on the right whatsoever. So, while reducing the red tape that separates a person from his



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natural and constitutional rights is laudable, the citizens of the several states should demand that their duly elected representatives abide by the terms of the contract of their employment -- namely, faithful adherence to the principles of liberty protected by the Constitution.



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