



## **Carrying Weapons and Firearms by Ohio Law Enforcement Officers in Public Establishments**

*There is some confusion among Ohio business owners about when law enforcement officers are legally allowed to carry firearms onto their premises. The following aims to provide clarity.*

**Officers may carry firearms in public establishments.** Under Ohio law, establishments serving the public may not prohibit or restrict a law enforcement officer, investigator or peace officer who possesses valid identification from carrying his/her authorized weapon on the premises. This holds true whether or not the officer is working or in uniform. (Ohio Revised Code Section 2923.1214(A)).

The definition of establishments is comprehensive and very broad. Under Ohio law, an establishment serving the public is “a hotel, a restaurant or other place where food is regularly offered for sale, a retail business or other commercial establishment or office building that is open to the public, a sports venue, or any other place of public accommodation, amusement or resort that is open to the public.” (ORC Section 2923.1214(D)(1)).

**Immunity.** Establishments serving the public are immune from civil liability for injury, death or loss caused by or related to a law enforcement officer carrying a weapon. However, this immunity is lost if the owner engages in an act or omission that contributes to the injury, death or loss and venue personnel’s act or omission was with malicious purpose, in bad faith or done in a reckless manner. (ORC Section 2923.1214(C)(1) and (2)). Establishments that interfere with an officer’s right to carry a firearm may impose liability on the venue and its operator, employees and contractors.

Under Ohio law, venues are not permitted to impose any restriction or condition on this right. Officers who work for venues while on duty or on special duty should similarly be aware of this law. Establishments that bar armed off-duty or on-duty officers from events should consult their legal counsel and ensure compliance with the law.

The public as well as venue operators may verify the credentials of an Ohio peace officer at any time through the [OPOTA portal](#).