

Managing Firearms in an Estate

A Practical Guide for Families and Professionals

MDRF Enterprises | Apr 19, 2025



Overview

Introduction

When a loved one passes away and leaves behind firearms, families and estate professionals often face uncertainty. Firearms are not like other possessions—they are highly regulated and may carry significant value.

This guide offers straightforward, legally sound steps to manage firearms in an estate, tailored for families, executors, and professionals in Missouri and beyond.

Why Firearms Are Different

Firearms are subject to federal and state laws that make them more complex to transfer or sell. Mishandling can lead to legal trouble or lost value.

Common Risks:

- Unlawful possession or transfer
 - Violations of ATF or State regulations
 - Inheriting firearms as a prohibited person
 - Danger of accidental injury when handled by inexperienced individuals
 - Devaluation from improper storage or handling
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What To Do When You Find Firearms in an Estate

1. Secure the Scene

Ensure all firearms are unloaded and safely stored. Unsure? Call a licensed professional.

2. Pause All Transfers

Do not sell, gift, or move firearms until you understand the legal process.

3. Document Everything

Take photos and notes of make model, serial number, and caliber. Include ammunition.

4. Call an FFL Dealer that Specializes in Estates

A licensed dealer like MDRF Enterprises ensures legal handling, transfer, and valuation.

5. Evaluate Options

Get an appraisal. You may keep, consign, or sell—but always through proper legal channels.

Planning Ahead: Gun Trusts and Legal Tools

For gun owners planning their estate, trusts and other legal tools can provide a structured way to ensure firearms are transferred safely and legally.

If you discover firearms in an estate, check to see if the decedent had any of the following:

- A revocable living trust that includes firearms
- A dedicated gun trust (especially for NFA-regulated items)
- Instructions in their will regarding firearm distribution
- Documentation of lawful ownership or prior appraisals

Revocable Living Trusts:

For standard firearms, a revocable living trust can help streamline the inheritance process. These trusts allow owners to name beneficiaries and set clear instructions for distribution.

Gun Trusts for NFA Items:

If the estate includes items regulated under the National Firearms Act (e.g., suppressors, SBRs, machine guns), a dedicated gun trust can ensure legal compliance and avoid complications.

Legal Transfer Procedures Still Apply:

Even with a trust in place or Instructions in their will, firearms should still be transferred through a licensed FFL dealer to ensure all background checks and legal processes are followed.

Peace of Mind for Families and Executors:

Proper legal planning can reduce confusion and liability while preserving the value and history of the firearms involved.

Situations We Commonly Handle

- **Family Inheritor:** A spouse or adult child has no interest in keeping firearms.
- **Executor/Fiduciary:** Responsible for legal transfer or liquidation.
- **Collector's Estate:** A large, valued collection needing full inventory and appraisal.
- **Surprise Discovery:** Guns found unexpectedly during a cleanout.

We handle each case with discretion, care, and full compliance.

Why Choose MDRF Enterprises

Based in Saint Louis, Missouri, MDRF Enterprises is a family owned federally licensed firearms dealer with over a decade of experience.

We provide:

- On-site evaluations
- Legal transfers (ATF-compliant)
- Fair cash offers or consignment
- Secure transportation
- Proper estate documentation

We're professionals who treat every collection—large or small—with respect

Frequently Asked Questions

Can inherited guns be kept legally?

Yes—if the recipient is eligible and the transfer is done legally through an FFL.

Do I need to report inherited guns to police?

No—unless the firearm is stolen or criminally linked. We can verify its legal status.

What if I live out of state?

We work with heirs and executors nationwide and handle all legal interstate transfers.

Contact MDRF Enterprises

Let us help you handle firearms in an estate with confidence and care.

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This guide is intended for general informational purposes only. For legal advice, please consult an estate attorney familiar with firearms law.