

## Guns-at-Work Laws Put Employers in Legal Crosshairs

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On July 1, 2008, Florida joined a handful of other states that have recently enacted laws expanding the rights of workers to possess firearms. Florida's law authorizes employees to keep lawfully owned guns locked in their vehicles while they are at work, even if the employees' cars are parked on company property. Other states that have passed "guns-at-work" laws are Alaska, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma. Interestingly, a federal judge has blocked the Oklahoma law, ruling that it is preempted by federal OSHA requirements that employers provide a safe work environment for their employees.

It is important for employers to have detailed, written policies regarding guns on company grounds, keeping in mind the differences in the law among the states. Policies should make it clear to employees where guns may and may not be kept. Employees need to be aware that while the laws give them the right to store a gun locked in a car on company grounds, they do not permit an employee to carry a gun into a company facility. Employers also should consider a zero tolerance policy when it comes to verbal threats of violence by employees.

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