



Hundreds of Montgomery County business owners concerned over new gun law; request stickers from Sheriff's Office to prohibit guns



By [Erin Edgemon | eedgemon@al.com](mailto:eedgemon@al.com)

Email the author | [Follow on Twitter](#)

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[Email](#)



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MONTGOMERY, Alabama -- The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office has ordered about 3,000 stickers to give out to business owners concerned that gun owners will carry weapons into their establishments.

The stickers feature a handgun in a circle with a line crossed through it, called a null set, indicating that guns aren't permitted.

The new gun law, which went into effect today, prohibits employers from barring loaded guns from their property -- as long as they remain in a locked car. Employers, though, won't be held responsible if injuries or damages that may occur.

Business owners can place a sticker or a sign on their door indicating guns aren't allowed in their establishments, Montgomery County Sheriff D.T. Marshall said.

"We have requests for literally hundreds of them," he said of the stickers, adding that they should be in his office on Monday.

Marshall said business owners are concerned that with the new law gun owners will attempt to carry weapons into their establishments both concealed and unconcealed.

“It might be bad for businesses because they have to go through the expense of putting a sign on their door to say that guns can’t be carried in their business,” he said.

Signs aren’t required but law enforcement and lawyers have recommended business owners put signs up prohibiting guns.

Marshall said he expects open carry advocates to begin testing business owners.

Gun owners don’t have to have a permit to carry an unconcealed weapon, but law enforcement can question them and business owners can bar them from entering their business.

Both Marshall and Montgomery Police Chief Kevin Murphy said they don’t think the new gun laws will have much of an impact in their municipalities. The new law won’t have an impact on how criminals will carry their weapons, both said.

“All this does is keep honest people honest,” Marshall said.

Marshall said his office is prepared for a large influx of people applying for conceal permits, but he doesn’t know if his office will actually see an increase. He doesn’t think the new law will make it any easier for gun owners to gain a conceal permit.

Marshall said gun owners still have to pass the same background check and answer more questions regarding their mental health.

“That is one angle of the law that we have been able to use to our advantage,” he said, adding that the new requirements could keep someone with a serious mental illness from carrying a weapon.

Marshall can deny a conceal permit based on a "reasonable suspicion" that the applicant would use the weapon unlawfully or in a manner that presents a danger to the public or the applicant.

He can also deny a permit if there is evidence that the applicant is mentally diseased or defective, he or she falsified any portion of the permit application, was convicted of a violent crime, certain drug-related crimes or sexual offenses involving victims under the age of 12.