

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES ALERT

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Expanded Concealed Carry Rights for Employees Go Into Effect on March 20, 2017

By ***Nathan Pangrace***, Associate

Ohio legislation expanding concealed carry laws will take effect on March 20, 2017. In December of last year, Governor Kasich signed into law Senate Bill 199, which allows employees with a valid concealed carry license to store a firearm on the employer's premises, so long as the firearm remains in the employee's locked vehicle and the vehicle is in an authorized location, such as a company parking lot. The rule applies to both public and private employers.

Employers may still prohibit an employee from possessing a firearm inside their building or in a company-owned or leased vehicle. The bill further provides that employers are not liable for incidents arising from a stored firearm, unless the employer intentionally solicited the injuries. Nonetheless, many Ohio employers opposed the new legislation because it gives employees easier access to firearms and has the potential to escalate workplace violence.

The new law also expands the locations where permit holders can carry their firearms, including daycare centers, airports, and college and university campuses. An earlier version of Senate Bill 199 that did not pass the General Assembly would have added employees that hold a concealed handgun license and store a firearm in their vehicle to the list of protected classes — such as race, sex, age, religion, national origin, and disability — under Ohio's anti-discrimination laws. In other words, the bill would have prohibited employers from discriminating against such employees.

Employers should review their employee handbooks and workplace violence policies **now** to ensure they are compliant with the new law. Many employer policies prohibit employees from bringing a firearm on company property, including the parking lot. Such policies are now unlawful under Senate Bill 199.

For additional information on Senate Bill 199 and assistance reviewing your policies, please contact one of the listed Roetzel attorneys.

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