



FRANKLIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Dallas Baldwin
Support Services Division

In the State of Ohio, townships do not have the power to create their own laws and ordinances like cities and village do. The laws available to township governments for regulation, zoning, and enforcement on private property are those specifically provided by the Ohio Revised Code.

Recently, there has been growing concern in Washington Township regarding citizens discharging firearms on private property. It is legal to discharge firearms on private property provided that the act of discharging the firearm(s) is done in a safe and legal manner AND the person(s) discharging the firearm(s) is the property owner or someone whom the property owner has given permission to. Please keep in mind that in order to legally discharge a firearm you must be legally able to possess one. ORC 2923.162 specifically addresses discharging firearms.

What is a safe and legal manner? Let's talk about safety first. It is recommended that private property owners install a proper backstop, prior to allowing any discharging of a firearm on his/her property. A proper backstop is strongly encouraged to ensure that bullets remain on the property owners land. It is important that bullets fired on private property remain on that property.

Another safety consideration is that shooters are aware of neighboring houses and structures. Property owners must make every attempt to avoid having neighboring houses and structures directly in their line of fire. Nobody is to shoot a firearm towards a house, vehicle, roadway, or other structure even with a backstop. ORC 2923.162 prohibits discharging firearms upon or over a public roadway, and on the grounds appurtenant to a schoolhouse, church, or inhabited dwelling, or the property of another.

In order to be safe while discharging firearms, a shooter needs to be able to see his/her intended target, the backstop, and beyond. For various reasons, shooting activities should be limited to daylight hours. Keep in mind that **once a bullet leaves the barrel of the firearm you are shooting, you are responsible for wherever that bullet goes**. If someone else's property is damaged, or a person is injured or killed by your bullet, you are subject to various degrees of misdemeanor and/or felony criminal charges.

Being cordial with neighbors, exercising common sense and good discretion can minimize neighbors calling the police with shooting complaints. We encourage residents to thoroughly educate themselves with available gun safety information and courses.

Please be advised that the information provided in this correspondence is not all encompassing, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you are following all applicable laws when discharging a firearm on private property.