

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 894
Second Edition Engrossed 5/7/25

Short Title: Gun Dealer Door Lock Exemption. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Adams.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 14, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO MODIFY THE DOOR LOCK EXEMPTION FOR CERTAIN FIREARMS
BUSINESSES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Definitions. – As used in this section, "Council" means the State Building Code Council, "Code" means the current North Carolina State Building Code collection and amendments to the Code, as adopted by the Council, "door lock requirements" means the door lock requirements of the means of egress provisions of the Code, and "local inspection department" means the entity in charge of fire code enforcement for a unit of local government.

SECTION 1.(b) Rulemaking. – The Council shall adopt rules to amend the Code to provide an exemption from the door lock requirements for business entities licensed to sell firearms as a federal firearms dealer that are primarily engaged in the business of selling firearms or ammunition when issued a permit to that effect by the local fire code official. In amending rules pursuant to this subsection, the Council shall ensure that the exemption from the door lock requirements is applicable only during nonbusiness hours when the business is closed to the public. Until the effective date of the rules to amend the Code that the Council is required to adopt pursuant to this section, the Council and local governments enforcing the Code shall follow the provisions of subsection (c) of this section as they relate to compliance with the door lock requirements of the means of egress provisions of the Code.

SECTION 1.(c) Exemption Requirements. – The fire code official shall issue a permit to a business entity licensed to sell firearms as a federal firearms dealer that is primarily engaged in the business of selling firearms or ammunition providing an exemption from the door lock requirements as set forth in this subsection:

(1) The business entity must pay a permit fee of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) to the local inspection department and meet the following requirements:

- a. The business has a sales floor and customer occupancy space that is contained on one floor and is no larger than 15,000 square feet of retail sales space. For purposes of this sub-subdivision, retail sales space is that area where firearms or ammunition are displayed and merchandised for sale to the public.
- b. The business is equipped with an approved smoke, fire, and break-in alarm system installed and operated in accordance with the requirements of the fire code official. An approved smoke, fire, or break-in alarm system does not have to include an automatic door



unlocking mechanism triggered when the smoke, fire, or break-in alarm system is triggered.

c. The owner or operator of the business provides to all employees within the later of (i) 10 days of the issuance of the permit under this section or, (ii) at the time the employee is hired, a written facility locking plan applicable for the close of business each day.

d. Each entrance to the business is posted with a sign conspicuously located that warns that the building is exempt from the door lock requirements of the North Carolina State Building Code during nonbusiness hours only and that doors will remain locked from the inside even in the case of fire.

(2) The local inspection department shall file copies of permits issued pursuant to this section with all local law enforcement and fire protection agencies that provide protection for the business entity.

(3) The local inspection department shall be responsible for any inspections necessary for the issuance of permits under this section and shall be responsible for periodic inspections to ensure compliance with the requirements of this section.

(4) The local inspection department shall revoke a permit issued under this section upon a finding that the requirements for the original issuance of the permit are not being complied with or upon a finding that the business entity has failed to limit its use of the exemption from the door lock requirements of the means of egress provisions of the Code to nonbusiness hours when the business is closed to the public.

SECTION 1.(d) Scope. – Subsection (c) of this section does not apply to business entities licensed to sell firearms as a federal firearms dealer that are primarily engaged in the business of selling firearms or ammunition and have received prior authorization from the local fire code official to use an alternative means or method of achieving compliance with the door lock requirements of the means of egress provisions of the Code.

SECTION 1.(e) Sunset. – Subsection (c) of this section expires when the permanent rules adopted as required by subsection (b) of this section become effective.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.