

California Department of Justice DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT Stephen Woolery, Chief 		INFORMATION BULLETIN	
<i>Subject:</i> New AB 451 LEA Policies for Serving and Enforcing Protection and Restraining Orders that Include Firearm Restrictions Due January 1, 2027	<i>No.</i> 2026-DLE-15		<i>Contact for information:</i> Office of Gun Violence Prevention OGVP@doj.ca.gov
	<i>Date:</i> 09/25/2026		

TO: ALL CALIFORNIA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, CITY ATTORNEYS, AND COUNTY COUNSEL

This bulletin informs law enforcement agencies and their legal counsel of their obligation under Assembly Bill 451 (2025, Petrie-Norris) to adopt and implement – no later than **January 1, 2027** – written policies for serving and enforcing court protection and restraining orders that include firearm access restrictions.¹ AB 451 applies to municipal police departments, county sheriffs’ departments, the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and the University of California and California State University Police Departments (collectively, “Covered LEAs”). Specifically, AB 451 requires Covered LEAs to adopt and implement policies and standards to ensure the Covered LEA consistently complies with all of the following requirements:

- Serve firearm-prohibiting court protection and restraining orders in a timely manner, upon petitioners’ request;
- Document completed service of these orders on appropriate court forms and through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS);
- Ensure restrained individuals subject to these orders relinquish all firearms and other prohibited items they own, possess, or control immediately to officers serving notice of the order, or within 24 hours, if necessary;
- Document information about relinquished firearms and other prohibited items on court forms and through CLETS; and
- Proactively identify and address firearm relinquishment noncompliance.

The California Department of Justice (DOJ) previously published information about AB 451 in Information Bulletin No. 2026-DLE-06, dated March 17, 2026. Information Bulletin No. 2026-DLE-06 also included information and resources to help Covered LEAs comply with other legislative mandates to update agency policies and standards specifically related to Gun Violence Restraining Orders pursuant to Assembly Bill 2621 (2024, Gabriel). This bulletin provides additional detail about AB 451’s requirements and reminds Covered LEAs of the approaching January 1, 2027, deadline for developing and implementing AB 451-compliant policies.

This bulletin is for informational purposes only. Because it is a summary, it does not cover every aspect of the laws described below. The full text of AB 451 can be accessed at [California Legislative Information](#).

¹Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (a).

I. Background on California's Nine Court Protection & Restraining Orders that Include Firearm Access Restrictions

California law establishes nine court protection and restraining orders that authorize law enforcement or other petitioners to petition for court-ordered safety interventions to protect victims and the public from individuals who have engaged in violent, abusive, or other dangerous conduct. All of the following court orders generally include firearm access restrictions prohibiting the restrained person from possessing or acquiring firearms and related items while the court order remains in effect:²

- Civil Harassment Restraining Orders
- Criminal Protective Orders
- Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
- Elder or Dependent Adult Abuse Restraining Orders (excluding orders related to financial abuse only)
- Emergency Protective Orders (including EPO-001 Emergency Protective Orders and EPO-002 "Gun Violence Emergency Protective Orders" also known as "Emergency Gun Violence Restraining Orders")
- Gun Violence Restraining Orders
- Juvenile Restraining Orders
- Postsecondary School Violence Restraining Orders
- Workplace Violence Restraining Orders

For more information about these orders, see the DOJ Office of Gun Violence Prevention's "[Quick Reference Guide to California's Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence](#)."³

A restrained person who becomes subject to these court orders must generally immediately relinquish any firearms and other prohibited items they own, possess, or control to officers serving notice of the order, upon the officer's request.⁴ If a law enforcement officer does not serve the order or facilitate relinquishment of all firearms at the time of service, the restrained person must generally relinquish all firearms and other prohibited items to law enforcement or a licensed firearms dealer within 24 hours of receiving notice of the order. In either case, the restrained person must submit signed receipt forms to the court to verify firearm relinquishment compliance within 48 hours of receiving notice of the order. It is generally a crime for a restrained person to fail to timely comply with these requirements after receiving notice of the order.⁵

² Pen. Code, §§ 29825, 18120, 18205; Fam. Code, § 6389; Code of Civ. Proc., §§ 527.6, 527.8, 527.85.

³ See California Dept. of Justice, Office of Gun Violence Prevention, "Quick Reference Guide to California's Nine Court Protection Orders to Prevent Gun Violence" (updated. Nov 2024), at <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/attachments/press-docs/OGVP%20Protection%20Orders%20Reference%20Guide%20Handout.pdf>.

⁴ Pen. Code, §§ 29825.5 (specified Criminal Protective Orders), 18205 (Gun Violence Restraining Orders); Fam. Code, § 6389 (Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and other orders issued pursuant to the Family Code); Code of Civ. Proc., § 527.9 (other civil and criminal protection and restraining orders).

⁵ Pen. Code, §§ 166, 273.6, 18205, 29825.

In recent years, California has enacted multiple laws to strengthen and standardize the responsibilities placed on law enforcement agencies to serve, document, and enforce these orders. These new laws included Senate Bill 320 (2021, Eggman), Assembly Bill 818 (2023, Petrie-Norris), and Senate Bill 899 (2024, Skinner).

The Legislature enacted AB 451 as part of a comprehensive public safety effort to strengthen implementation and enforcement of these laws to prevent homicide, coercive control, and illegal firearm offenses.

II. AB 451 Requires Covered LEAs to Adopt and Implement New Policies Governing Service, Implementation, and Enforcement of All Firearm-Prohibiting Court Protection and Restraining Orders

Assembly Bill 451 codified a new Penal Code section 13667, which requires Covered LEAs to develop, adopt, and implement new policies and standards by January 1, 2027 that “ensure that the agency consistently complies with the requirements of California laws governing service and enforcement of protection and restraining orders and governing relinquishment of firearms by individuals who are armed and subject to those court orders, including new mandates and responsibilities placed on law enforcement agencies” pursuant to Assembly Bill 818 (2023, Petrie-Norris) and Senate Bill 899 (2024, Skinner).⁶ The requirements of Assembly Bill 818 and Senate Bill 899 are generally codified at sections 6383 and 6389 of the Family Code and sections 527.9 and 527.12 of the Code of Civil Procedure; corresponding requirements applicable to service and enforcement of Gun Violence Restraining Orders are generally codified in Division 3.2 of Title 2 of Part 6 of the Penal Code.

More specifically, AB 451 requires Covered LEAs’ policies and standards to include all of the following:

1. Policies & Standards for Serving Court Protection and Restraining Orders:

AB 451 policies must “provide a standard agency process for [the Covered LEA] to serve the order against a restrained person in a timely manner and ensure the agency consistently complies with the requirements of California law governing service of protection and restraining orders, including pursuant to Section 6383 of the Family Code and Section 527.12 of the Code of Civil Procedure.”⁷ Both of these statutes generally require Covered LEAs to serve court protection and restraining orders upon petitioners’ request, without charging the petitioner a fee.

2. Policies & Standards for Recording that the Court Order Has Been Served:

AB 451 policies must “ensure that officers who have served protection or restraining orders consistently accomplish all of the following steps” to record that service has occurred “as soon as possible and within one business day of serving the order”:

- Completing the appropriate proof of service form developed by the Judicial Council for the protection or restraining order.

⁶ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (b).

⁷ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (d).

- Filing the proof of service form with the court that issued the order.
- Ensuring proof of service information is entered into the California Restraining and Protective Order System (CARPOS) through CLETS to record that the order has been served on the restrained person.⁸

3. Policies & Standards for Effectuating Firearm Relinquishment at Time of Service:

AB 451 policies must “ensure that officers effectuate firearm relinquishment at the time of service by requesting, at the time of service, that the restrained person immediately and safely relinquish to the officer’s control any firearms, ammunition, body armor, and other prohibited items in the restrained person’s possession or control, or subject to the restrained person’s possession or control.”⁹

AB 451 states that these policies and standards should ensure officers consistently accomplish all of the following steps to effectuate firearm relinquishment immediately upon serving a protection or restraining order:

- Notify the restrained person that they are required to immediately transfer all firearms and prohibited items they possess or control to the officer serving the order.
- Request that the restrained party immediately transfer to the officer, safely and unloaded, any firearms or other prohibited items they possess or control.
- Conduct a lawful search as necessary for the protection of the officer or other individuals present and take custody of any firearms or other prohibited items in plain sight or discovered pursuant to the lawful search. (If a respondent who has received notice of the court order refuses or fails to relinquish firearms or other prohibited items as required, officers may also request a search warrant pursuant to Penal Code section 1524, subdivision (a), paragraphs (11), (14), or (22).)
- Complete the appropriate proof of firearm relinquishment form developed by the Judicial Council that serves as the receipt to document relinquished firearms and other prohibited items and issue the receipt form to the restrained person.
- Ensure the Automated Firearms System (AFS) is promptly updated through CLETS to record any firearms that the restrained person relinquished to the law enforcement officer.
- Determine whether the restrained person possesses or controls other firearms that they have not relinquished to the officer. AB 451 states that the officer should be instructed to consider all relevant information in making such a determination, to the extent possible, including by:
 - Reviewing the protection or restraining order to determine if the court made a finding that the restrained person has firearms;
 - Querying the Automated Firearms System (AFS) through CLETS to determine whether the restrained person is recorded as having legally acquired firearms in that database; and

⁸ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (d).

⁹ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (e).

- Asking the restrained person or, if it is safe to do so, other persons present about whether the restrained person owns, possesses, or controls firearms.

4. Policies & Standards for Ensuring Restrained Person Relinquishes Firearms that Cannot Be Immediately Relinquished:

AB 451 policies must “[p]rovide a standard agency process for officers to promote firearm relinquishment compliance in circumstances where a restrained person owns, possesses, or controls firearms but credibly indicates that they cannot relinquish all firearms at the time of service, including circumstances where those firearms are stored in another location.”¹⁰

For these circumstances, AB 451 policies must do all of the following:

- Instruct officers to provide accessible local information about how the restrained person can lawfully comply with the court order by:
 - Relinquishing possession or control of all firearms and other prohibited items, unloaded and in a safe manner, to a local law enforcement agency or to a licensed firearm dealer within 24 hours of being served with the order; and
 - Providing the proof of relinquishment compliance receipt form to the court and to the law enforcement agency within 48 hours of receiving notice of the order to verify that the restrained person sold or transferred all firearms and other prohibited items that they possess or control.
- Instruct officers to inform the restrained person that failure to timely comply with these requirements may result in fines, arrest, and criminal penalties.
- Require officers to encourage restrained individuals to relinquish any firearms they cannot immediately relinquish to the officer through a designated third party, or with law enforcement supervision, to reduce the risk that the restrained person will access the firearms or other items to threaten or harm individuals protected by the court order or to otherwise harm themselves or others.
- Encourage officers to proactively follow up with the restrained person to confirm that the restrained person timely relinquished all firearms and submitted receipt forms verifying relinquishment compliance.
- Instruct officers about how to respond if the restrained person credibly indicates that they do not possess or control firearms that are associated with the restrained person in the Automated Firearms System (AFS), the court order, or other sources.
 - For these circumstances, AB 451 policies must instruct officers to inform the restrained person that they should complete and submit to the court a standard form developed by DOJ that declares under penalty of perjury that the restrained person is no longer in possession of one or more firearms, along with their response to the protection or

¹⁰ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (f).

restraining order and any other supporting documentation to verify that the restrained person no longer possesses or controls firearms. The DOJ Bureau of Firearms' "[Notice of No Longer in Possession Form](#)" (BOF 4546) should be used for this purpose, and should be submitted by the restrained person to both DOJ and the court that issued the court order.

5. Policies & Standards for Proactively Identifying and Addressing Firearm Relinquishment Noncompliance:

AB 451 policies must "provide a process for the agency, in coordination, with court staff and other law enforcement agencies and stakeholders, to proactively identify restrained persons who are illegally armed in violation of the court order and state law."¹¹

That process must include information instructing officers to take one or more of the following steps, as appropriate for the circumstances, to ensure firearm relinquishment compliance and the safety of any individuals protected by the court order, if the agency receives credible information indicating that the restrained person has not relinquished all firearms or other prohibited items as required:

- Contact the restrained person to facilitate and verify immediate firearm relinquishment compliance.
- Take custody of firearms or other prohibited items at a location where there is probable cause to believe those items are located, including through a lawful search or by requesting a search warrant to search for and seize these items (including pursuant to Penal Code section 1524, subdivision (a), paragraphs (11), (14), or (22).)
- Notify appropriate partners, such as court clerks, prosecutors, and petitioners or protected parties who may be in danger, that the restrained person has violated the protection or restraining order's firearm relinquishment requirements.
- Arrest the restrained person for violating the court order and state law.

6. Procedural Requirements for AB 451 Policies:

Penal Code section 13667 states that in developing and updating AB 451 standards and policies, Covered LEAs:

- "[A]re encouraged to consult and collaborate with domestic violence service providers and survivor advocates, gun violence prevention experts, [and] local court staff," and refer to guidance, technical assistance, or recommendations issued by the Department of Justice.¹²
- Shall review and update existing agency protocols, policies, or standards pertaining to protection or restraining orders, and law enforcement responses to domestic violence incidents, to ensure these policies are consistent with one another and with current law.¹³ Existing laws requiring such policies include:

¹¹ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (g).

¹² Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (i).

¹³ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (c).

- o Penal Code section 18108, which requires Covered LEAs to develop, adopt, and implement written standards relating to Gun Violence Restraining Orders.
- o Penal Code sections 13701 and 13702, which require law enforcement agencies to implement written standards for officers' responses to domestic violence calls.
- o Family Code section 6389, subdivision (c)(5), which requires law enforcement agencies to implement written policies and standards for requesting immediate relinquishment of firearms and prohibited items from individuals subject to Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and other protection orders issued under the Family Code.

7. Mandatory Information on Agency Websites:

Finally, Penal Code section 13667 also requires Covered LEAs to post information on their website about how:

- Petitioners may request service of protection or restraining orders by that agency; and
- Prohibited persons and other community members may relinquish firearms to the custody of the agency.¹⁴

Additional Resources:

- For technical assistance or trainings related to protection and restraining orders, please contact **DOJ's Office of Gun Violence Prevention** at OGVP@doj.ca.gov.
- Any CLETS-subscribing agency requiring assistance or training on entering proof-of-service or other protection and restraining order information into CARPOS, should please contact **DOJ's CARPOS Unit** at Restraining.Orders@doj.ca.gov.

¹⁴ Pen. Code, § 13667, subd. (h).