**CRIMINAL PURCHASE OR DISPOSAL OF A WEAPON**

**Penal Law 265.17 (1)**

**(Committed on or after July 1, 2021**

**except for Rifle or Shotgun September 1, 2022)[[1]](#footnote-1)**

(Revised December 2022)1

The (*specify*) count is Criminal Purchase or Disposal of a Weapon.

Under our law, a person is guilty of Criminal Purchase or Disposal of a Weapon when,

*Select appropriate alternative(s):*

knowing that he or she is prohibited by law from possessing a (*specify*: firearm, rifle, or shotgun)

because of a prior conviction[[2]](#footnote-2) [or]

because of some [other] disability which would render him or her ineligible to lawfully possess a (*specify*: firearm, rifle, or shotgun) in this state, [or]

knowing that he or she is the subject of an outstanding warrant of arrest issued upon the alleged commission of a felony or serious offense,

such person purchases or otherwise acquires a (*specify*: firearm, rifle, or shotgun) from another person.

The following terms used in that definition have a special meaning:

FIREARM means any pistol or revolver.[[3]](#footnote-3)

[RIFLE means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger using either: (a) fixed metallic cartridge; or (b) each projectile and explosive charge are loaded individually for each shot discharged. (*Add if in issue:* In addition to common, modern usage, rifles include those using obsolete ammunition not commonly available in commercial trade, or that load through the muzzle and fire a single projectile with each discharge, or loading, including muzzle loading rifles, flintlock rifles, and black powder rifles.[[4]](#footnote-4)]

[SHOTGUN a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive to fire through a smooth or rifled bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger using either: (a) a fixed shotgun shell; or (b) a projectile or number of ball shot and explosive charge are loaded individually for each shot discharged. (*Add if in issue:* In addition to common, modern usage, shotguns include those using obsolete ammunition not commonly available in commercial trade, or that load through the muzzle and fires ball shot with each discharge, or loading, including muzzle loading shotguns, flintlock shotguns, and black powder shotguns.[[5]](#footnote-5)]

Under this count, the (*specify*) need not be loaded but it must be operable. To be operable, (*specify*) must be capable of discharging ammunition.[[6]](#footnote-6)

POSSESS means to have physical possession or otherwise to exercise dominion or control over tangible property.[[7]](#footnote-7)

In order for you to find the defendant guilty of this crime, the People are required to prove, from all of the evidence in the case, beyond a reasonable doubt, both of the following two elements:

1. That on or about (*date*), in the county of (*County*) the defendant purchased or otherwise acquired a firearm, [rifle or shotgun] from another person;

2. That the defendant did so,

*Add appropriate alternative(s):*

knowing that he/she is prohibited by law from possessing a (*specify*)

because of a prior conviction[[8]](#footnote-8) [or]

because of some [other] disability which would render him/her ineligible to lawfully possess a (*specify*) in this state, [or]

knowing that he/she is the subject of an outstanding warrant of arrest issued upon the alleged commission of a felony or serious offense.

If you find the People have proven beyond a reasonable doubt both of those elements, you must find the defendant guilty of this crime.

If you find the People have not proven beyond a reasonable doubt either one or both of those elements, you must find the defendant not guilty of this crime.

1. Effective July 1, 2021, this statute was amended to include the alternative: “or knowing that he or she is the subject of an outstanding warrant of arrest issued upon the alleged commission of a felony or serious offense”; and to add after “purchases”: “or otherwise acquires.” L. 2021, c. 236.

   The December 2022 revision was for the purpose of amending the definitions of “rifle” and “shotgun” per the L. 2022, ch. 371, effective September 1, 2022. This charge may be used for this offense involving a “rifle” or “shotgun” committed on or after July 1, 2021, and before September 1, 2022, by substituting the prior definitions of “rifle” or “shotgun” that are reproduced in the footnote to each term. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *See* CPL 200.60 with respect to the procedure applicable when a prior conviction is an element of a crime; and see *People v. Cooper*, 78 N.Y.2d 476 (1991) and its progeny. In brief, the prior conviction needs to be alleged in an Information and the defendant given an opportunity to admit, deny, or stand mute with respect to the allegation. If the defendant admits the allegation, the element is proved and must not be read to the jury. *See* NY Model Colloquies, Arraignment On A Special Information Charging A Previous Conviction. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 Penal Law 265.00(3). The statutory definition of a “firearm” includes other weapons. If, therefore, a firearm, other than a pistol or revolver, is in issue, see **“**DEFINITION OF FIREARM AS OTHER THAN A PISTOL OR REVOLVER” in"Additional Charges” at the end of the Table of Contents for Penal Law article 265 crimes. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Penal Law 265.00 (11). The previous definition read: RIFLE means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive in a fixed metallic cartridge to fire only a single projectile through a rifled bore for each single pull of the trigger. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Penal Law 265.00 (12). The previous definition read: SHOTGUN means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy of the explosive in a fixed shotgun shell to fire through a smooth or rifled bore either a number of ball shot or a single projectile for each single pull of the trigger [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6 Case law has added "operability" of a firearm as an element of the crime (*see People v Longshore,* 86 NY2d 851, 852 [1995]), but has further held that there is no requirement that the possessor know the firearm was operable *(see People v Parrilla*, 27 NY3d 400 [2016] ["Defendants need only knowingly possess a firearm, they need not know that the firearm was loaded or operable"]; *People v Saunders,* 85 NY2d 339, 341-342 [1995]; *People v Ansare,* 96 AD2d 96, 97 [4th Dept 1983]). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7 Penal Law 10.00(8). If necessary, an expanded charge on the definition of possess may be found in the Instructions of General Applicability under Possession. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See footnote 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)