

CONGESTED AREA

**DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS
PROHIBITED**

CO. CODE 50.090 - 50.158



With increased citizen concern regarding target shooting in congested areas, the Washoe County Sheriff's Office would like to remind residents of county ordinances governing discharge of firearms in congested areas.

Washoe County Code 50.094 to 50.154 states that it is unlawful to discharge:

- Any gun, pistol, or rifle, with the exception of shotguns, air rifles, or BB guns, within 5000 feet of an occupied dwelling.
- Shotguns, air rifles, or BB guns within 1000 feet of an occupied dwelling.
- A firearm from, upon, over or across any federal or state highway or any county road or highway.
- A firearm within a Nevada State Park, unless otherwise designated by the Administrator.
- Within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service, it is prohibited to discharge a firearm in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site or occupied area, or across or on a National Forest System road or a body of water adjacent thereto, or in a manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result in such discharge, or into or within any cave.



If shooters follow those parameters, they are generally allowed to shoot in any area not designated as a "no shooting" or "congested area." It is important to reiterate three key points:

A "congested area" is a geographic location where discharge of any firearm is prohibited. Because congested areas are generally densely populated, there is a high risk of personal injury.

A "restricted congested area" is a location where recreational shooters must be a minimum of 1000 feet from any occupied dwelling. In restricted congested areas, shooters are allowed to discharge shotguns, air rifles and BB guns. A person is not allowed to discharge any gun, pistol, rifle or any other firearm in this area.

A "non congested area" is a location where shooters must be 5000 feet away from an occupied dwelling. In these areas, they may shoot guns, pistols, rifles, shotguns, air rifles, BB guns, or any other firearms.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office takes our residents' safety very seriously. The Sheriff's Office, with assistance from the Washoe County and Reno Roads Departments, posts congested area signs and maps in areas of reported concern, warning that shooting in a congested area could result in heavy fines.

Recreational shooters are encouraged to practice safe shooting in established and lawfully authorized and licensed rifle ranges, gun clubs or shooting galleries.

Target Shooting Can Cause Wildfires

As our summer days get longer, more people head outdoors to practice target shooting. But as northern Nevadans know, these hot summer months also increase the risk of wildfires. Increased temperatures along with highly flammable cheat grass and other Nevada native shrubs produce the ideal conditions for recreational shooters to unintentionally start wildfires. A small spark from target shooting can quickly ignite a large fire and endanger lives and property. In the last decade, thousands of acres and structures in northern Nevada have been lost to fires that were started by recreational shooting in the wildlands. If you plan to target shoot in uncongested areas this season, make sure you take the necessary precautions to prevent the chance of wildfire. Here are a few recommendations for shooting responsibly:

1. Bring water or a fire extinguisher. This may sound obvious, but shooters often fail to bring a fire extinguisher or enough water to put a fire out. A simple five gallon container of water available to you while shooting could help prevent the spread of fire, if one does start.
2. Choose locations with little vegetation, preferably dirt or gravel. Placing a target in grass or vegetation increases the risk of fire.
3. Bring soft targets with you; avoid shooting rocks, metal, or pressurized containers.
4. Don't shoot with steel core ammunition. Ammunition that contains steel core will spark when it hits hard surfaces. To avoid any chance of sparking, don't use steel ammo and avoid shooting in rocky areas.
5. Bring a shovel with you when are out in the wildland areas. You may use the shovel to remove vegetation from around the target. Disturbing the soil to bare ground will help prohibit the spread of fire should one start.
6. Binary exploding targets made of ammonium nitrate and aluminum powder are highly destructive and flammable. People using exploding targets are subject to federal and local penalties.
7. Park your vehicle away from dry grass. The hot undercarriage of a car or truck can easily create enough heat to ignite dry grass. One pound of cheat grass has the same combustibility as one gallon of gasoline.
8. Consider going to a target range for safety.
9. Make sure you are not shooting in a congested area. For more information go to:
<http://www.WashoeSheriff.com>

By taking these few precautions, you can greatly reduce the risk of starting a fire. If a wildfire does occur, call 9-1-1 immediately and remain safely nearby to guide firefighters to the fire.

If you have concerns about activity that may be illegal or dangerous, they should immediately call the Sheriff's Office at 785-WCSO (9276).

For more information, please refer to the Sheriff's Office website: washoesheriff.com, where you can click on the Congested Area Map. The link will provide you with the Washoe County Code, Chapter 50, and a live map highlighting restricted areas.



In Cooperation with:



www.WashoeSheriff.com