

Open Carry vs. Concealed Carry on Campus

On December 18, 2015, [President Turner announced to the SMU campus community](#) that SMU is opting out of [Texas Senate Bill 11](#), more commonly known as the “campus carry” law. Campus carry is one of two laws regarding the carrying of handguns that was passed last year by the Texas Legislature. Campus carry regulates concealed carry of handguns and the “open carry” law regulates open carry of handguns. It is important to clarify the difference between these two laws and their potential impact on campus.

Open Carry: Handguns (effective January 1, 2016)

[House Bill 910](#), the “open carry” law, allows people with concealed handgun licenses to openly carry a holstered handgun in Texas. However, this law expressly excludes institutions of higher education. This means that open carry of handguns anywhere on campus is a violation of state law and is prohibited.

Concealed (Campus) Carry: Handguns (effective August 1, 2016)

As you know, SMU, as a private institution of higher education, has decided to opt out of campus carry and prohibit concealed handguns on campus.

Other State Laws Regulating Firearms

Open carry and campus carry are not the only state statutes governing firearms on university campuses. Under pre-existing state law, institutions of higher education may not prohibit or place restrictions on the storage or transportation of a firearm or ammunition in a locked, privately owned or leased motor vehicle by a person, including a student, who holds a license to carry a concealed handgun and lawfully possesses the firearm or ammunition (1) on driveways and streets located on campus; or (2) in parking lots, parking garages, or other parking areas on campus ([Government Code § 411.2032](#)).

Each member of the University community plays a role in maintaining a safe and welcoming campus for all. To that end, the SMU Police Department has always, and will always, respond to reports of an armed individual on campus. Anytime you see a weapon on campus, you should call the police (214-768-3333 or 9-1-1 from a campus phone).