



Madison Township Police Department

4567 MADISON LANE • GROVEPORT, OHIO 43125-9237
BUSINESS OFFICE (614) 836-5355 • FAX (614) 836-2370
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Discharging Firearms on Private Property in Madison Township

In the State of Ohio, statutory townships, like Madison, do not have the power to create laws and ordinances as cities and villages do. The laws available to township governments for regulation, zoning, and enforcement purposes on private property are those specifically provided by the Ohio Revised Code.

According to the Ohio Revised Code, it is not illegal to discharge firearms on private property within the unincorporated areas of Madison Township, provided the act of discharging the firearm(s) is done safely and legally **AND** the person(s) discharging the firearm(s) is the landowner or someone whom the landowner has permitted to do so. Likewise, it is legal to hunt on private property in Madison Township. Hunters are bound by the rules and regulations as set forth by the Ohio Division of Wildlife/Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Revised Code.

There are laws provided by the Ohio Revised Code that prohibit specific individuals from possessing firearms. Such examples include convicted felons, individuals convicted of domestic violence, and individuals who are under the influence of alcohol.

So, what is a safe and legal manner? Let's discuss safety first. A private property owner, before allowing any discharging of a firearm on his/her property, needs to have a proper backstop for target practicing. A proper backstop, in short, is one made of soil or some other soft, porous material that is free of rocks or any other hard material that may increase the chances of a ricochet bullet. The backstop must also be of sufficient height and width that will guarantee the capture of all bullets fired at a target(s). The National Rifle Association has a book called the NRA Range Source Book that provides useful and in-depth information on the construction of shooting ranges.

Another safety aspect is that shooters are aware of neighboring or nearby houses and structures. A range should be located so that you are not firing toward a house, vehicle, roadway, or other structures even with the backstop. **ORC 2923.162** prohibits persons from discharging firearms upon, over, or within 100 yards of a cemetery. The same code prohibits persons from discharging firearms upon or over a public roadway, and also on the ground appurtenant to a schoolhouse, church, or inhabited dwelling, or the property of another. Thus, the necessity for an appropriate backstop and that shooting activities are conducted safely and prudently and all shooting activities are contained to the rightful property. **REMEMBER!** Once the bullet leaves the barrel of your gun you own it. You are responsible for that bullet wherever it goes and for any damage or injury, it causes. If someone else's property is damaged or a person is injured as a result of being struck by your bullet, you are subject to possible criminal and/or civil liability.

To be safe while discharging firearms, a shooter needs to be able to see his/her intended target, the backstop, and beyond. For this reason, shooting activities should be restricted to daylight hours.

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If the Madison Township Police Department is called due to a complaint of firearms being discharged, the responding officer(s) will first attempt to locate where the shooting activity is taking place. Once located, the shooting range will be surveyed to ensure a proper backstop is in place and that person(s) are shooting in a safe direction. **NOT ALL PRIVATE PROPERTY IS SUITABLE FOR SHOOTING ACTIVITIES.** Properties located in housing development are typically not suitable for a private property shooting range due to smaller lot sizes and the close proximity of neighboring houses and properties in all directions. The responding officer will determine if the location of the shooting is safe and if the shooting activity is or has been conducted safely and advise the shooter(s) and/or landowner accordingly. If the officer deems the location or the shooting activity unsafe, he/she may order a cease-fire until the location, backstop, and activity is made safe.

In closing, the last thing I would like to mention is the word **RESPECT**. As an avid shooter and strong supporter of our Second Amendment, I have always prided myself on being respectful of others when I'm shooting. I have a membership to a private gun club, and even they set limits on when members can begin shooting and when they must cease firing. It's all about respect and being neighborly to others who live close by.

Be kind to your neighbors. A good dose of common sense and discretion go hand in hand when practicing safe gun ownership.

Yours in Public Service,

Gary B. York
Police Chief

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