

BLOOD

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demand.

"It really is important, every two seconds, someone needs blood to be transfused," Ferreira said. "We're talking about cancer patients who regularly receive blood transfusions, anyone who has a scheduled surgery, women who are giving birth."

The Red Cross accepts donations of all blood types, especially type O, which is the most common.

Donors also will have their blood tested for COVID-19 antibodies.

"Within two weeks of donating blood or platelets, you will receive a notification," Ferreira said. "So if your immune system was producing the antibod-



Caesars Atlantic City employee Melissa Stuchel, of Absecon, gives blood Thursday at the casino.

EDWARD LEA / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ies for COVID, it will come up in the test results, and we'll notify you."

The tests can help identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies, which can be given to current coronavirus patients who need convalescent plasma transfusions.

Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors with antibodies that may help patients who

are actively fighting the disease, the Red Cross said in a news release.

Plasma from whole blood donations that tests positive for high levels of COVID-19 antibodies can also be used to help COVID-19 patients.

Ferreira urges people to visit redcross.org for upcoming blood drives. Donor requirements are listed on the site.

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How N.J. gun laws work: Licenses, permits, open and concealed carry

NICK VADALA

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Gun sales have been going up across the country since the beginning of 2020, with more than 21 million background checks conducted for the sale of a firearm in 2020 alone. That's a 60% increase from 2019's total of 13.2 million, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Gun laws differ from state to state, so it's important to know what the rules are where you live.

But finding answers can be complicated, and the laws can be pretty different even in the same region. The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence rates the "quality of comprehensiveness" for gun laws in different states, looking at the strength of state gun laws and comparing them to gun death rates.

According to the group, New Jersey's gun laws get an A.

"New Jersey, along with California, is an 'A' — those are the only two in the country," says staff attorney David Pucino.

So what are New Jersey's gun laws, and how do they work? Here, we break down some of the basics of buying and carrying firearms in the Garden State:

The state requires that you first get a firearms purchaser identification card (FPIC) if you are buying a rifle or shotgun, or a permit to purchase a handgun if you are buying a handgun. You also need one of those licenses, or a permit to carry a handgun, to buy handgun ammunition.

Once you get a permit to buy a handgun, it's valid for 90 days, and you can only buy one handgun (So if you want to buy more, you need to apply for multiple licenses — though there is a 30-day waiting period between purchases). An FPIC is valid indefinitely, and doesn't limit the number of firearms you can buy or the number of times you can use it.

To get those permits, you need to apply through your local police department, or the State Police if your area doesn't have a municipal police department (and you can do it online). The process involves a background check, two references who aren't relatives, and you have to consent to a

search of mental health records. You also have to pay several fees, (\$2 for a permit to purchase a handgun and \$5 for an FPIC, and \$20 for a criminal background check). And if you are a first-time applicant, you will need to be fingerprinted. If you qualify to receive an FPIC or permit to purchase a handgun, it should be issued within 30 days.

There are federal and state laws that prohibit you from getting either license, such as if you:

- have been convicted of a crime (a crime in New Jersey is defined as something for which a sentence "in excess of six months is authorized") or disorderly persons offense that involved domestic violence

- are drug dependent, a "habitual drunkard" or have ever been confined to a mental institution for a mental disorder
- have a "physical defect or disease" that makes it unsafe for you to handle firearms (unless a doctor or psychiatrist certifies that you no longer "suffer from that particular disability")
- knowingly lied on your application for either permit
- are under 18 for an FPIC, or under 21 for a permit to purchase a handgun
- have a juvenile record with offenses that would be considered crimes if committed by an adult, and they involved unlawful possession or use of weapons, explosives or destructive devices
- are subject to a restraining order that prohibits you from possessing firearms, or have had firearms seized as part of the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act of 1991, and the firearms have not been returned
- are on the terrorist watch list

You also may not be able to buy a firearm if someone has filed an "extreme risk protection" order against you. The state allows family members, members of your household or law enforcement to petition the court to take away your firearms if you are in crisis, Pucino says. Those laws (sometimes known as "red flag" laws) also mean there's a one-year ban on buying or possessing firearms if a court finds you are at significant risk of harming yourself or others.

New Jersey law places some limitations on what you may and may

not own — particular on weapons that are considered "assault firearms." New Jersey prohibits the possession of dozens of makes and models of assault firearms without a special license — such as Colt AR-15s and Avtomat Kalashnikov semiautomatic rifles — as well as firearms that copy those specific weapons.

Firearms are considered assault weapons, and banned in New Jersey without a special license, if they are:

- semiautomatic rifles with fixed magazines that hold more than 10 rounds
- semiautomatic shotguns that have a magazine capacity above six rounds, a pistol grip or a folding stock
- parts (or combinations of parts) that are "designed or intended to convert a firearm into an assault firearm" or any combination of parts "from which an assault firearm may be readily assembled"

Also prohibited in New Jersey:

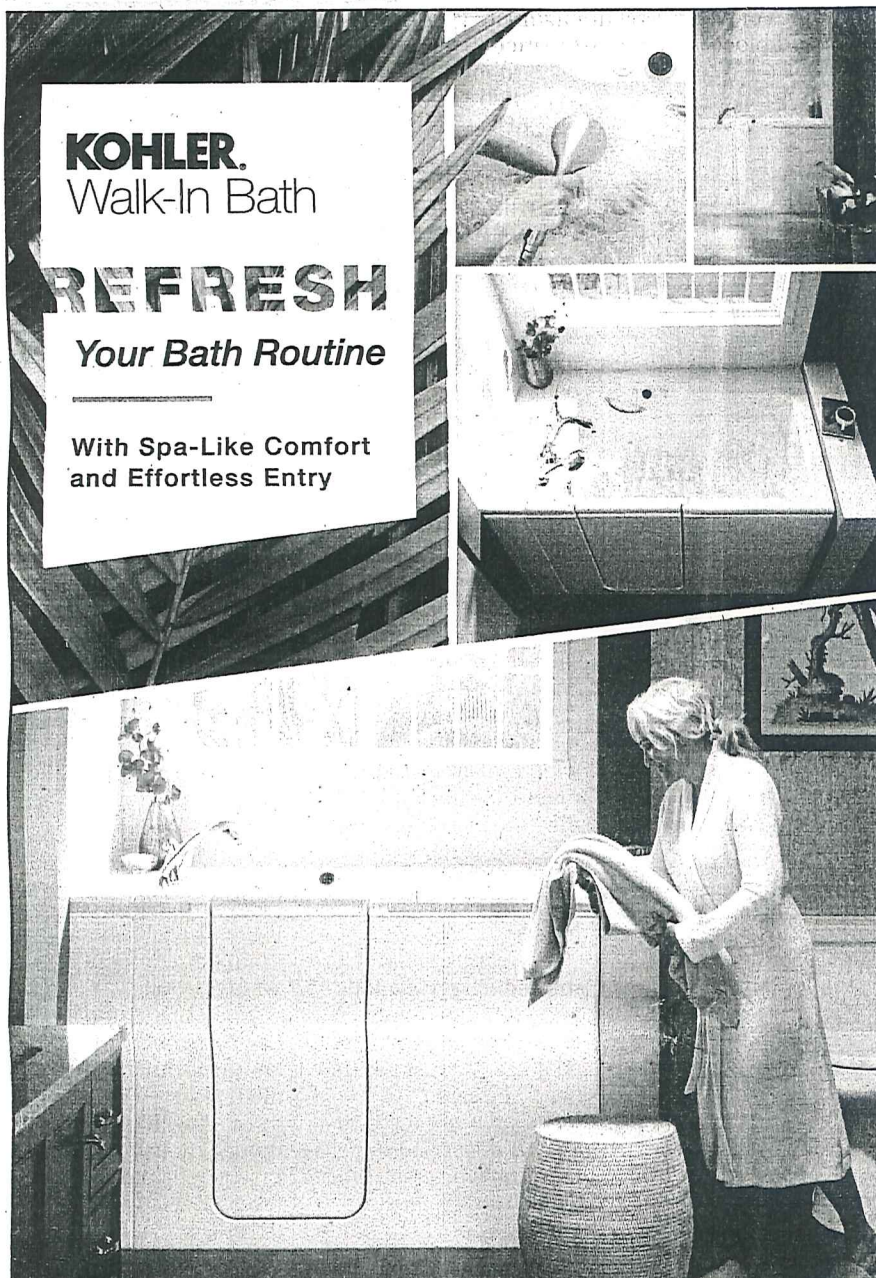
- high-capacity magazines, defined as magazines for semiautomatic weapons that hold more than 10 rounds
- ghost guns, or weapons that don't have serial numbers (and therefore are untraceable) and can be assembled at home
- armor-piercing ammunition

Hollow-point ammunition, which New Jersey law refers to as "hollow nose" ammo or "dumdum" bullets, is a little more complicated. According to the State Police, it is legal to purchase and possess, but you can only have it in your home, at a gun range, when hunting, or when "traveling to and from such places."

To carry a handgun in public — either openly or concealed — New Jersey requires you to have a permit to carry a handgun. It is considered a "may issue" state, meaning law enforcement has more discretion in deciding whether to issue you a permit, as opposed to a "shall issue" state (such as Pennsylvania) where you will be granted a license if you meet all the application criteria.

To get a concealed-carry permit, you must submit an application through either your local law enforcement, or with the State Police, depending on where you live. The application,

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Atlantic City Press
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hundreds of pounds of mounting brackets and struts in 8-foot duffle-style bags. The equipment was so big and awkward that it had to be taken apart like furniture, just to get through the hatch.

Some of the attachment locations required extra turns of the power drill and

ions electrical capability by as much as 30%.

Rubins and Glover tackled the struts for the first two solar panels, due to launch in June. Their spacewalk ended up lasting seven hours, a bit longer than planned.

"Really appreciate your hard work. I

nuon camera that provided stunning views, particularly those showing the vivid blue Earth 270 miles below. "Pretty fantastic," observed Mission Control.

Sunday's spacewalk was the third for infectious disease specialist Rubins and Navy pilot Glover — both of

work, and to vent and relocate ammonia coolant hoses.

Glover and Noguchi were among four astronauts arriving via SpaceX in November. Rubins launched from Kazakhstan in October alongside two Russians. They're all scheduled to return to Earth this spring.

from state to state. It's a key step: For many, how much aid they might receive shapes which school they ultimately attend.

The process has become increasingly high-stakes, as the cost of college climbs and schools face pressure to lower tuition. Undergraduate and graduate students received \$242 billion in grants, loans, tax credits, and work-study aid in the 2019-20 academic year, according to the College Board, with undergraduates getting an average of \$14,940.

Numbers down nationwide

Nationwide, FAFSA applications from first-time filers are down by 140,000 — or more than 9% — than at the same point last year. It's an improvement from November, when the gap was 17%, but still cause for concern, said MorraLee Keller, director of technical assistance for the National College Attainment Network, which tracks FAFSA numbers. Filing a FAFSA is one of the highest predictors of whether students will enroll, she said.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey are doing a little better, with numbers down about 7% and 5%, respectively, Keller said. Schools with high percentages of low-income students are trailing 12.3% and those with high concentrations of minority students nearly 15%, she said.

The nonprofit that oversees the Common Application, which allows students to simultaneously apply to multiple schools, also last month noted a worrisome decline in applications from first-generation students and those who seek fee waivers — even though applications overall climbed 10%.

The reasons for fewer financial-aid applications, experts speculate, are myri-

said DeLaRosa-Ortiz, the college and career coordinator. Until last March, it was a good year for FAFSA completion and college applications.

"There was just a decline when COVID hit," said DeLaRosa-Ortiz. "People said, 'I don't know if I can actually go to college now.'"

She and Miguel Vargas, another Northeast college and career coordinator, are going all out to help students, even running contests with prizes such as Apple AirPods to entice students still in remote schooling to complete their forms.

"If I'm in the office, I can help them bang out a FAFSA real quick ...," said Vargas. "Virtual is hard, the WiFi is bad a lot."

Colleges are concerned, too. At West Chester University, the filing of federal financial-aid forms by prospective students was down about 10% last month but has caught up some since then.

Every year, the university would invite families to come to campus to fill out their FAFSA forms and counselors would circle the room and assist, said Tori Nuccio, deputy director of financial aid.

"It always eased that anxiety to know that if they got stuck, there was a financial-aid administrator right there they could tap on the shoulder," Nuccio said.

West Chester participated in a virtual version of that held by a local school district, but it wasn't the same, she said.

There were cases where the shared screen wasn't working and another where a student held his cell phone to the webcam so she could try to assess the problem.

West Chester has offered incentives for students to fill out the forms and redesigned its FAFSA information page, Nuccio said. And the school still serves students in the office, with social distancing, she said.

Mich. professor fired after racist, homophobic tweets

Associated Press

BIG RAPIDS, Mich. — A science professor at a university in central Michigan who claimed sinister forces were targeting him and breaking into his home has been fired months after tweeting racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic slurs.

Thomas Brennan announced in a Twitter posting Saturday he'd been fired, and Ferris State University later confirmed he was dismissed last week, The Detroit News reported. The Big Rapids-based university, which put Brennan on administrative leave

in November as it investigated, declined comment. The Torch, the university's student-run newspaper, first reported about the tweets in November. According to the newspaper's screenshots, one tweet said: "Covid19 is another jewish revolution."

The university's president, David Eisler, said the school was "shocked and outraged by these tweets." He added the tweets were "extremely offensive and run counter to the values of our University and our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion."

In a statement linked to his

Saturday posting, Brennan expressed remorse for the tweets. But he said they were a consequence of self-destructive behavior and migraines that stemmed from a "secret program" in which electromagnetic fields and nanotechnology were deployed against him.

"I know that many of the things I tweeted were horrible, and I don't truly feel that way in my heart," the statement said. "But out of spite for myself and what my world had turned into, I decided to say all the things that are some of worst things you could say."

GUNS

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which is open to anyone 21 or older, must include:

- a written certification showing your "justifiable need" to carry a handgun, which can be "evidenced by specific threats or previous attacks which demonstrate a special danger" to your life that "cannot be avoided by means other than by issuance of a permit to carry"
- endorsements from three "reputable persons" who have known you for at least three years and can attest that you are "of good moral character and behavior"
- certification that you have a "thorough familiarity" with the safe use of handguns, which requires completion of a firearms training course, submission of handgun qualification scores from a test adminis-

tered by a certified firearms instructor, or passing a test of New Jersey's use-of-force laws administered by a certified instructor

If law enforcement approves your application, New Jersey law states that you must then present it to the Superior Court of the county where you live. If the court is satisfied, it can issue you the permit, which will be valid for two years.

However, even with a concealed-carry permit, there are places where you cannot legally carry a handgun, including schools and universities, casinos and state parks.

In general, you're not allowed to travel with a firearm in New Jersey unless it is unloaded and "contained in a closed and securely fastened case" or locked in your car's trunk.

If you do not have a concealed-carry permit, you can only transport a firearm under

a few circumstances, such as when traveling between your home and business, between your home and business and a firearms repair shop, or to or from a shooting range or hunting site. (And you need to go directly to and from these locations.)

Per New Jersey law, your "course of travel" can only include "deviations as reasonably necessary under the circumstances," so no stopping at the grocery store, for example, on your way back.

And if you are a nonresident traveling through New Jersey with a firearm, there are a few rules to keep in mind under the federal Firearm Owners Protection Act.

The firearms must be unloaded, neither the ammunition nor the firearm can be "readily accessible" and they must be locked in containers "other than the glove compartment or console."