



# Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

---

### Texas Louisiana Gulf-Coast Synod FAQ on Concealed and Open Carry in Houses of Worship in Texas

#### **Is it lawful to carry either permitted, concealed firearms, or openly holstered firearms into a church or a school?**

Texas law now has conflicting provisions of the law that address this issue. Section 46.035(b)(6) of the Texas Penal Code declares it to be unlawful for a person holding a concealed carry license to carry a weapon "on the premises of a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship." Other provisions of the Penal Code also declare it to be unlawful to carry weapons on the premises of a school or educational institution. See Texas Penal Code Section 46.03(a) (1).

#### **Why are people now saying it may be legal of the holder of a concealed or open carry firearms permit to carry weapons in church?**

In the recent Texas Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature enacted an amendment to the criminal trespass statutes to provide that a person may not be prosecuted for carrying a weapon in a church (or any other public place) unless the church has posted signs notifying the public that it does not permit either the concealed carrying or the open carrying of firearms on their property. The language of the required notice is specified in the statute and must be adopted verbatim in order to be effective.

#### **What do churches need to do to approve the posting of these signs?**

If congregations wish to ensure people are prohibited from carrying weapons on the premises of their church or school properties, their congregation council should adopt a resolution authorizing the posting of the requisite signs. Importantly, to prohibit both the concealed and open carry of weapons, the council will need to refer to both Section 30.06 and 30.07 in the resolution. This does not require any elaboration or rationale. The Council can simply adopt, by a majority vote, a motion worded as follows: "The Council hereby authorizes the staff of the church to purchase and post at all entrances of our property, signs compliant with Section 30.06 and 30.07 of the Texas Penal Code that notify all persons and members of the public that the open carry and concealed carry of weapons on the premises of [Church Name] and [School, if applicable] are prohibited."

#### **Where can we obtain the required signs?**

Texas Impact has compliant signs available. They can be purchased [online](#).

#### **What should we do if someone carries a weapon into our church?**

As recent events indicate, it is important that you be in touch with your local law enforcement to obtain their advice about how you should respond if someone appears on your property carrying an unauthorized weapon.

#### **What does the synod recommend we do with regard to the posting of these signs?**

Each congregation should decide whether or not to post these signs in light of its particular ministry context. The synod makes no recommendation regarding the posting of the signs, other than that all congregations consider this issue carefully and decide what approach is right for themselves, their communities, and those whom they seek to serve.

---

*"A network of growing, Christ-centered, outwardly-focused congregations passing the faith to the next generation"*

12941 North Freeway, Suite 210 · Houston, TX 77060-1243 · 281.873.5665 · Fax 281.875.4716 · [GulfCoastSynod.org](http://GulfCoastSynod.org)