



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: All California Field Managers and Law Enforcement Officers

From: State Director

Subject: BLM California Policy on Assault Weapons (Reissue of IM No. CA-2000-018)

The State of California has in recent years issued an amendment to the California Assault Weapons Law, and this year changed the definition of "Assault Weapons" to include specific items instead of make and model. As a result of these changes, this office has received requests to address the position the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will take regarding the use and possession of these weapons on BLM-managed federal lands.

Background

In 1989 the State of California passed a law that prohibited the possession of specific make and model firearms. In 1991, the State of California passed an amendment to this law, allowing the possession of these types of weapons on public lands upon approval of the managing agency. In the summer of this year, the State of California changed the definition of Assault Weapons to include specific items instead of make and model, thereby causing numerous weapons to be illegal. The listing of specific firearms, defined as "Assault Weapons" by the State of California, requires landowners to regulate their usage and possession of defined assault weapons.

Policy for BLM Managed Lands in California

California policy is to allow the use of firearms on public lands, as provided for in state law, and to cooperate with state authorities in the enforcement of firearms regulations. Federal lands managed by the BLM in California are generally closed to the possession of assault weapons, as defined by state law; however, BLM Field Managers, after consultation with the State Office and the public, may designate specific areas, through issuance of specific authorization, where state defined assault weapons may be utilized.

This would be under authority of the Recreation and Public Purposes Act. Such authorizations will require compliance with the appropriate regulations and state law. The authorizations will contain safety conditions, including liability insurance. Authorization will specifically require that it will be the responsibility of the lessee to ensure adherence to state law regarding assault weapon use at these specially authorized areas.

Definitions

Assault Weapons - those weapons as defined by state law.

Possession - Anyone possessing an assault weapon must comply with state or federal law.

Use Authorization - The approving official may approve the use of legally possessed weapons in designated use areas and times.

Authorized Officer - the BLM approving official, State Director, District Manager, Field Manager or any Bureau employee acting in such a capacity.

Enforcement - Enforcing the state law will be the primary responsibility of the local authorities. Enforcement by BLM law enforcement officers will be in coordination with local law enforcement authorities.

For further reference, the California State Assault Weapons Law is available at the following internet address: <http://caag.state.ca.us/firearms/dwcl/12275.htm>

Signed by:
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