

Chapter 66 – OFFENSES AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

ARTICLE III. – DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS AND AIR GUNS

Sec. 66-75 Purpose

The purpose of this article is to establish regulations surrounding the discharge of firearms and air guns on private property to provide for the safety and well-being of the residents of the Town of Coventry

Sec. 66-76 Definitions

Firearm

Any shotgun, pistol, rifle, revolver, muzzle-loading device or other such weapon which uses chemical propellant to expel a projectile

Air gun

Any device which uses springs, air, compressed gas, or other non-explosive force to expel a projectile

Backstop

A device, structure, or terrain designed to stop and contain projectiles fired on a range.

Commercial Shooting Range/Private Gun Club

An organization of individuals which meets the following criteria:

- a) Maintains in good condition a shooting range in a fixed location with an adequate design to contain fired projectiles;
- b) Said shooting range is in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws; and
- c) Has criteria for members or other range users to ensure the safe discharge of firearms.

Recreational Shooting

For the purposes of this chapter, recreational shooting is understood to be the discharge of a **Firearm or Air Gun**

Flammable Materials

For the purposes of this chapter, “flammable materials” is understood to not include wood, paper, leaves or other similar plant-based substances

Sec. 66-77 Safety Requirements

The following restrictions apply within the Town of Coventry:

- a) Persons wishing to ~~engage in recreational shooting with discharge~~ **Firearms or Air Guns** must be the owner of the property on which the discharge is to occur ~~and backstop is located~~, be the spouse or lineal descendant of the owner of the property, have on their person the written permission from the owner of the property, or be an invited guest with

Commented [AT1]: Ver. 9 – Revised for the 1/5/2026 meeting of the Town Council

Commented [AT2]: This ordinance is a draft based on preferences expressed by the FS/HRSC and Steering Committee. This is not finalized, and all language present within may be subject to change.

Commented [AT3]: This draft specifically shows changes by the Steering Committee from the version of the ordinance as presented by the FS/HRSC

Commented [AT4]: Definition added at the request of the Steering Committee to exclude wood sheds from the requirements in 66-77c

Commented [AT5]: Changes made throughout to consistently center language on the activity of discharge at the request of the steering committee

Commented [AT6]: Section reworded for clarity at the request of the steering committee

the owner of the property present. ~~The same requirements apply for the location of the backstop at which projectiles are being directed.~~

- b) Persons wishing to ~~engage in recreational shooting with discharge~~ **Firearms** or **Air Guns** must do so only with an adequate backstop capable of stopping all projectiles intended to be used. The backstop must be of sufficient depth and strength to contain any projectiles fired or intended to be fired at a range and must be of a sufficient height or size to stop projectiles at any position the shooter intends to use.
- c) Persons wishing to discharge a **Firearm** must do so at a distance of greater than 250ft from any structure or enclosed outdoor space occupied by people or domestic animals, or used for the storage of flammable materials unless they are the owner of such property, the spouse or lineal descendant of the owner of the property, or have on their person the written permission from the owner of the property to discharge a **Firearm** at a lesser distance. A building is considered to be occupied for the purposes of this ordinance unless it appears from a reasonable inspection of the structure to be unoccupied.
- d) Minors under 18 years of age wishing to shoot **Firearms** must be properly supervised by a parent or legal guardian of such minor, or another adult with the approval of their parent or legal guardian.

Sec. 66-78 Time Requirements

The following restrictions apply within the Town of Coventry:

- a) Persons wishing to ~~engage in recreational shooting with discharge~~ **Firearms** must do so between the hours of 9:00 AM to sunset as defined in the current Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide.
- b) Persons wishing to ~~engage in recreational shooting with discharge~~ **Firearms** shall have a four (4) hour window per calendar day in which to do so.

Sec. 66-79 Exceptions

The restrictions within this Sec. 66 Article III shall not be construed to apply in the following circumstances:

- a) The use of a **Firearm** or **Air Gun** by a police officer or animal control officer acting within the scope of their official duties;
- b) The use of a **Firearm** or **Air Gun** for the purposes of hunting as defined by the Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 26-1;
- c) The use of a **Firearm** or **Air Gun** for the purposes of defending oneself or other persons from physical force in accordance with all federal, state and local laws;
- d) The use of a **Firearm** or **Air Gun** for the purposes of shooting wildlife actively causing property damage or posing an active threat to public safety in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes;
- e) The use of a **Firearm** or **Air Gun** at a range on the property of The Manchester Sportsmen's Association, Manchester Coon and Fox Club, or a Commercial Shooting Range/Private Gun Club duly organized in accordance with Town zoning requirements;

- f) The use of a device designed and operated solely for the purposes of construction, such as a nail or staple gun, which by its design might otherwise fall under the definition of a ***Firearm*** or ***Air Gun***;
- g) The use of a device designed and operated solely for the purposes of propelling paintballs, airsoft pellets, or other foam, rubber, or plastic projectiles, which by its design might otherwise fall under the definition of an ***Air Gun***;
- h) The use of a ***Firearm*** or ***Air Gun*** as a part of a memorial ceremony or parade by police officers, active duty members in military service of the United States or Connecticut National Guard, or by a nationally recognized veteran's organization; and
- i) The use of a ***Firearm*** or ***Air Gun*** as a part of an authorized historical reenactment.

Sec. 66-80 Penalty for violation of article

Any person who violates the regulations set out in this article shall be punishable by a fine for such a violation pursuant to **Sec. 1-10** of the Coventry Code of Ordinances

Commented [A7]: Sec. 1-10 indicates fines shall be at most \$100 if not otherwise specified. Each day a violation continues may be counted as a separate offense.

Secs. 66-81 – 66-96 Reserved

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