Inherited Firearms & Estate Collection Primer

What to Do When You've Inherited Guns

Inheriting firearms is common, especially after the passing of a parent, spouse, or relative. Many people find themselves responsible for firearms they didn't choose, don't recognize, or don't feel comfortable handling.

This guide is designed to help you understand what you have, what matters, and what steps to take next — without pressure or assumptions.

Step 1: Pause Before Moving or Disposing of Anything

Do not rush to sell, transport, or surrender firearms immediately.

- Firearms often vary significantly in value
- Some items may have collector, historical, or regulated status
- Moving firearms incorrectly can create unnecessary legal risk

If possible, leave the collection secured until you understand what you're dealing with.

Step 2: Make a Simple Inventory

You do not need to be an expert to start.

Create a basic list that includes:

- Make (manufacturer)
- Model (if visible)
- Type (handgun, rifle, shotgun)
- Caliber (often stamped on the barrel)
- Serial number
- Any visible accessories (optics, magazines, cases)

Photos are extremely helpful. Clear images of:

- Both sides of the firearm
- The serial number area
- Any markings or engravings

You do not need the original box, paperwork, or receipts.

Step 3: Understand That Not All Guns Are the Same

Estate collections often include a mix of:

- Common sporting firearms
- Older or discontinued models
- Military surplus or collectible firearms
- Regulated or restricted items (in some states)

Two guns that look similar can have very different legal requirements and market value.

Avoid assuming value based on age or appearance alone.

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Step 4: Know That Inheritance ≠ Immediate Sale
In most states, firearms may pass to heirs through inheritance or estate settlement. However:

- Rules vary by state
- Interstate transfers can add complexity
- Certain firearms may require additional steps before sale

If you are unsure whether a firearm can be sold privately, transferred, or requires a licensed dealer, it's best to confirm before attempting a transaction.

Step 5: Decide How You Want to Handle the Collection
There is no single "right" approach.

Common options include:

- Selling individual firearms
- Selling the collection as a group
- Using a licensed firearms dealer (FFL) to manage transfer and compliance
- Donating or consigning certain items

Many heirs choose to work with a licensed buyer to avoid:

- Private meetups
- Buyer eligibility concerns
- Paperwork uncertainty
- Shipping and transport issues

Step 6: Get Help Before Making Final Decisions
You do not need to figure this out alone.

A knowledgeable firearms buyer or licensed dealer can:

- Help identify what you have
- Explain what affects value
- Flag any items with special legal requirements
- Walk you through next steps at your pace

Taking time to understand the collection often leads to better outcomes — financially and legally.

A Note on Safety
If you are unfamiliar with firearms:

- Do not attempt to load or unload them
- Do not test functionality
- Keep firearms pointed in a safe direction
- Store ammunition separately if present

If you are uncomfortable handling the collection, seek assistance before moving items.

We're Here to Help
Questions are normal — especially with inherited firearms or estate collections.

If you'd like to talk through your situation or understand next steps, call **(317) 804-8713**. We're happy to help, even if you're just gathering information.