



## **Tens of Thousands of D.C. Gun Owners Forced to Re-Register Firearms**

By: Mark Segraves - December 17, 2013

Big changes for gun owners in the nation's capital will impact tens of thousands of law-abiding citizens, many of whom have no idea the change is coming.

The new requirement for gun owners in the District goes into effect next year and failure to comply could mean jail time.

Starting Jan. 1 all registered gun owners in D.C. must re-register their firearms within 90 days. D.C. Police Chief Cathy Lanier says notices will start going out to gun owners soon.

"Every three years you'll have to confirm you still live in the District and you still have your firearm," Lanier tells WNEW.

The re-registration requirement will impact anyone who registered a firearm in the District from 1976 to 2010.

"There are probably between 40,000 and 50,000 people who registered a gun during that time," Lanier says.

Not everybody is happy with the new requirement. Ilya Shapiro, a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, worries the requirement could make criminals out of law-abiding gun owners.

"Of the 50,000 or however many people there are, at least one person won't comply," Shapiro says. "Not willfully, but because they haven't heard about the new law and all of a sudden they'll be in technical violation of the law which has serious penalties."

The penalties for not re-registering a gun range from a \$13 fine to a \$1,000 fine and a year in jail, according to an MPD spokesperson.

"A person who fails to renew their firearms registration within 90 days of the deadline (meaning, 90 day renewal period + 90 day grace period = 180 days total) will have their firearm registration cancelled, will be in possession of an unregistered firearm, and may face criminal charges punishable by a fine up to \$1,000 or 1 year in jail, or both," MPD spokeswoman Gwendolyn Crump wrote in an email.

What makes the re-registration fee more cumbersome for many is that the vast majority of re-registrations have to be done in person at police headquarters.

"After the first re-registration it will be done online or by mail — you won't ever have to come in again," Lanier says.

Dick Heller, the D.C. resident who sued the District to get handguns legalized in the city and won the landmark Supreme Court decision, says he's going back to court. Heller says he's filed suit to challenge the new requirement.

"You don't see criminals registering guns," Heller said.