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Pistol Brace Compliance Checklist

2026 Edition | Federal + State | Updated June 2026

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- Federal Status**
Confirm current federal posture for braced pistol owners post-vacatur.
 - Amnesty Registration**
Separate paths for owners who registered during the 2023 NFA window.
 - State Law Check**
Identify your state's current brace and SBR restrictions.
 - Documentation Fields**
Measure, photograph, and log your configuration with date.
 - When to Call an Attorney**
Four hard-stop situations that require professional legal counsel.

How to Use This Checklist: Work through each section in order. Check each box only after you have confirmed the item for your specific firearm and your specific state. Do not skip the state law section based on federal guidance alone.

guncarrier.com/atf-pistol-brace-enforcement-2026

SECTION 1 | Federal Status Check

- The 2023 ATF pistol brace rule has been vacated.**
Federal courts vacated the rule in June 2024. The DOJ dropped its appeal in July 2025. No registration is required under the vacated rule.
- The NFA statute remains in force.**
The underlying National Firearms Act definition of a short-barreled rifle (barrel under 16 inches, OAL under 26 inches, designed to be fired from the shoulder) was not removed by the vacatur.
- ATF retains case-by-case enforcement authority.**
ATF confirmed in a March 2026 court filing (State of Texas v. ATF) that it can still evaluate specific configurations under the NFA statutory definition.
- My firearm is genuinely configured as a pistol, not an SBR.**
The brace straps to the forearm. The firearm is not configured to be shouldered. A standard observer would describe it as a pistol, not a rifle.
- I am aware of the August 4, 2026 proposed repeal comment period.**
ATF No. 2025R-11P proposes formally removing the 2023 brace language from 27 CFR 478.11 and 479.11. Submitting a comment is optional and is not a compliance action.

SECTION 2 | 2023 Amnesty Registration Status

Complete only one path below based on whether you registered during the 2023 free NFA window.

PATH A | I did NOT register during the 2023 amnesty window

- No registration action is required based on owning a braced pistol.**
The vacated rule's registration requirement does not apply to you.
- My firearm's configuration does not meet the NFA definition of an SBR.**
Barrel is 16 inches or longer, OR overall length is 26 inches or longer, OR the firearm is not configured to be shouldered.

PATH B | I DID register during the 2023 amnesty window

IMPORTANT: Your NFA tax stamp is valid. Do not take action without professional guidance.

The rule being vacated does not automatically cancel your individual NFA registration. If you want to revert your firearm from SBR to pistol status, you must contact the ATF NFA Branch directly or consult a qualified firearms attorney. Do not rely on forum posts or informal advice for this process.

I have confirmed my NFA tax stamp is current and on file.
Keep your Form 1 approval and tax stamp in a safe, accessible location.

I have NOT made any configuration changes without NFA Branch guidance.
Any change to a registered SBR's configuration requires proper NFA administration steps.

I have contacted the NFA Branch or a firearms attorney about reverting status.
Required if you wish to return the firearm to pistol status. Do not skip this step.

SECTION 3 | State Law Check

Federal vacatur does not override state law. Complete this section for your home state AND every state you travel to with this firearm.

- I have checked my home state's current brace and SBR restrictions.**
Restrictive states as of mid-2026: CA, CT, NY, NJ, IL, WA, HI, MD. If you are in one of these states, consult a firearms attorney before carrying.
- My home state does not treat braced pistols as SBRs or restricted rifles.**
If unsure, consult your state's current statutes or a qualified firearms attorney. Do not rely on out-of-date forum posts.
- I have identified every state I travel to with this firearm.**
Carrying a braced pistol across state lines requires a state-by-state check, not a federal one. A firearm legal in your home state may be illegal in a neighboring state.
- I have verified each travel destination state's current law.**
CA, NY, NJ, CT, and IL are the highest-risk travel states as of mid-2026. Verify before every out-of-state trip.
- I will leave this firearm at home if traveling to a state that restricts it.**
The correct response to a state restriction is compliance, not assumptions about federal preemption.

SECTION 4 | Paperwork and Documentation

Firearm make, model, and serial number:

Barrel length (inches):

Overall length (inches):

Date of photograph / documentation:

Documentation checklist:

- Firearm photographed from multiple angles in current configuration.
- Barrel length measured and recorded above.
- Overall length measured and recorded above.
- Photograph is dated and stored in a secure, accessible location.
- NFA paperwork (if applicable) is stored with this record.
- Record has been updated to reflect any configuration changes since the 2023 rule period.

SECTION 5 | When to Call a Firearms Attorney

Stop and consult a qualified firearms attorney before taking any action if ANY of the following apply:

1. You registered your firearm as an SBR during the 2023 amnesty and want to revert to pistol status.
2. Your firearm's barrel is under 16 inches and you are unsure whether the overall configuration would be described as a shouldered rifle.
3. You live in or regularly travel to CA, CT, NY, NJ, IL, WA, HI, or MD with a braced pistol.
4. You have received any correspondence from ATF or law enforcement regarding your firearm's classification.

Firearms attorney contact (name / phone / firm):

Keep this field populated before you need it.

Source references: Federal Register ATF No. 2025R-11P ([federalregister.gov](https://www.federalregister.gov)) | [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) RIN 1140-AA98 | [ATF.gov](https://www.atf.gov) | *State of Texas v. ATF* (March 2026 filing) | *Mock v. Bondi* (July 2025 joint dismissal)