

mobile in any line of automobile beginning after July 7, 1958, see section 5 of Pub. L. 85-506, set out as a note under section 1231 of this title.

**CHAPTER 29—MANUFACTURE, TRANSPORTATION, OR DISTRIBUTION OF SWITCHBLADE KNIVES**

Sec.	
1241.	Definitions.
1242.	Introduction, manufacture for introduction, transportation or distribution in interstate commerce; penalty.
1243.	Manufacture, sale, or possession within specific jurisdictions; penalty.
1244.	Exceptions.
1245.	Ballistic knives.

**§ 1241. Definitions**

As used in this chapter—

(a) The term “interstate commerce” means commerce between any State, Territory, possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia, and any place outside thereof.

(b) The term “switchblade knife” means any knife having a blade which opens automatically—

(1) by hand pressure applied to a button or other device in the handle of the knife, or

(2) by operation of inertia, gravity, or both.

(Pub. L. 85-623, §1, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 562.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in text, was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 85-623, which enacted sections 1241 to 1244 of this title and amended section 1716 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Pub. L. 85-623, §6, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 563, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter and amending section 1716 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure] shall take effect on the sixtieth day after the date of its enactment [Aug. 12, 1958].”

SHORT TITLE OF 1986 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 99-570, title X, §10001, Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3207-166, provided that: “This title [enacting section 1245 of this title, amending section 1716 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 1245 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Ballistic Knife Prohibition Act of 1986’.”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 85-623, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 562, which enacted this chapter, is popularly known as the “Federal Switchblade Act”.

**§ 1242. Introduction, manufacture for introduction, transportation or distribution in interstate commerce; penalty**

Whoever knowingly introduces, or manufactures for introduction, into interstate commerce, or transports or distributes in interstate commerce, any switchblade knife, shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(Pub. L. 85-623, §2, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 562.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the sixtieth day after Aug. 12, 1958, see section 6 of Pub. L. 85-623, set out as a note under section 1241 of this title.

**§ 1243. Manufacture, sale, or possession within specific jurisdictions; penalty**

Whoever, within any Territory or possession of the United States, within Indian country (as defined in section 1151 of title 18), or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States (as defined in section 7 of title 18), manufactures, sells, or possesses any switchblade knife, shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

(Pub. L. 85-623, §3, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 562.)

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the sixtieth day after Aug. 12, 1958, see section 6 of Pub. L. 85-623, set out as a note under section 1241 of this title.

**§ 1244. Exceptions**

Sections 1242 and 1243 of this title shall not apply to—

(1) any common carrier or contract carrier, with respect to any switchblade knife shipped, transported, or delivered for shipment in interstate commerce in the ordinary course of business;

(2) the manufacture, sale, transportation, distribution, possession, or introduction into interstate commerce, of switchblade knives pursuant to contract with the Armed Forces;

(3) the Armed Forces or any member or employee thereof acting in the performance of his duty;

(4) the possession, and transportation upon his person, of any switchblade knife with a blade three inches or less in length by any individual who has only one arm; or

(5) a knife that contains a spring, detent, or other mechanism designed to create a bias toward closure of the blade and that requires exertion applied to the blade by hand, wrist, or arm to overcome the bias toward closure to assist in opening the knife.

(Pub. L. 85-623, §4, Aug. 12, 1958, 72 Stat. 562; Pub. L. 111-83, title V, §562, Oct. 28, 2009, 123 Stat. 2183.)

AMENDMENTS

2009—Par. (5). Pub. L. 111-83 added par. (5).

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section effective on the sixtieth day after Aug. 12, 1958, see section 6 of Pub. L. 85-623, set out as a note under section 1241 of this title.

**§ 1245. Ballistic knives**

**(a) Prohibition and penalties for possession, manufacture, sale, or importation**

Whoever in or affecting interstate commerce, within any Territory or possession of the United States, within Indian country (as defined in section 1151 of title 18), or within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States (as defined in section 7 of title 18), knowingly possesses, manufactures, sells, or imports a ballistic knife shall be fined as provided in title 18, or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.