

Auction vs Dealer vs Private Sale – Firearm Estate Checklist

Use this quick reference when deciding how to sell inherited or estate firearms. Each path has different goals, documentation needs, and safety steps.

Auctions & Consignment – Best for Collectible or Rare Firearms

- Get a certified firearm appraisal before consigning.
- Confirm the auction house fee structure, reserves, and payment timeline.
- Ask about packing, insurance, and shipping requirements.
- Gather provenance documents, serial numbers, and clear photos.
- Be patient—expect weeks or months before payment is received.

Licensed Dealer / FFL – Best for Probate and Documentation

- Request a written offer showing comparable sales or market comps.
- Confirm the dealer's license and, if needed, SOT status for NFA items.
- Obtain documentation suitable for probate or insurance filings.
- Ask if they provide in-home inventory services for estates.
- Keep copies of the offer, receipts, and ATF transfer paperwork.

Private Sale – Proceed with Caution

- Verify Missouri and federal laws for private firearm sales.
- Always complete the transfer through a licensed FFL for safety.
- Meet in a safe, public location and confirm buyer's eligibility.
- Use a bill of sale with both parties' signatures and IDs.
- Avoid buyers offering cash-only deals or requesting direct shipment.

Tip: For estates, start with an appraisal. It ensures defensible value, proper documentation, and helps decide the right sales path.

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