The Q1 POS switch planner

A 12-week plan for moving your gun store to a new point-of-sale system

If you are going to change systems, the weeks after the holidays are the best window most shops get. Whatever system you pick, decide how your records come over before you sign.

The 12 weeks at a glance

Twelve weeks is a planning target. Ask each vendor for its real onboarding schedule and adjust.

When	What gets done
Weeks 1 to 2	Check your current contract, and list what your system does well and what it misses.
Weeks 3 to 5	Ask at least three vendors the questions on the next page, and call their references.
Week 6	Sign with one vendor, and use your own sales history to pick a go-live date in a slow week.
Weeks 7 to 9	Export your data, clean it up, and run a test import. Set up registers, scanners, and printers.
Week 10	Train your staff with practice sales, not live customers.
Week 11	Go live, and keep the old system available for looking things up.
Week 12	Balance cash, count firearms against the new A&D record, and fix what you find before you shut off the old system.

Check your current contract first

- [ ] Find your cancellation notice period and renewal date, because some contracts renew on their own.
- [ ] Ask your current vendor how you get your data out, in what format, and for what fee.
- [ ] Check your card processing agreement, which can carry its own early termination fees.
- [ ] Ask how long you keep read-only access to old sales and records after you cancel.

Move your data

Check off each item once you have confirmed it came over complete.

- [ ] Confirm your plan for past A&D records with ATF or your counsel before you close out the old record.
- [ ] Make sure you can still find every past 4473 for as long as you are required to keep it.
- [ ] Move inventory with serial numbers and cost, then spot-check 25 firearms against the shelf.
- [ ] Move consignments, layaways, transfers, storage, and repairs with the customer's name attached.
- [ ] Move gift cards, store credit, deposits, and loyalty balances you owe customers.
- [ ] Merge duplicate customers before you import them.
- [ ] Move open purchase orders and special orders so no customer misses a call.
- [ ] Move your sales history for taxes, reordering, and year-over-year comparisons.

Ask every vendor the same questions

Bring this page to every demo and write each vendor's answers in its column.

Question	Vendor 1:	Vendor 2:	Vendor 3:
Was it built for FFLs? Have them show you a firearm sale, a transfer, and a layaway.			
How do my A&D records and past 4473s come over, and who does the work?			
How does your electronic A&D record meet ATF Ruling 2016-1?			
What is my total cost, with setup, migration, hardware, add-ons, and card processing?			
Which of my other tools does it work with, and do those connections cost extra?			
Can it run ammo, accessories, clothing, and fishing gear alongside firearms?			
Does it handle more than one location, or a store and a range together?			
Who do I call when something breaks, and can I reach them evenings and weekends?			
How long is the contract, and how do I get my data out if I leave?			
Can I talk to two stores my size that switched in the last year?			

Train your staff

- ☐ Name one person as your in-house lead who learns the system first and calls the vendor.
- ☐ Train the week before go-live on your most common sales and every firearm transaction.
- ☐ Put a cheat sheet with the vendor's support number at every register.
- ☐ Schedule extra staff for the first few days, because every sale takes longer while people learn.

Why this came from AIM

AIM builds operations software for FFL retailers and ranges, so we see firsthand what makes a switch go smoothly. The stores that switch cleanly are the ones that plan first, whatever system they pick.

To talk through a switch for your store, visit aim-pos.com/contact-us or call (515) 581-7201.

ATF Ruling 2016-1 sets out the conditions under which licensees may keep acquisition and disposition records electronically. This planner is a general planning guide. It is not legal advice, and it does not state what ATF or state rules require of your shop. Confirm how your records move, and how long you must keep them, with ATF and your own counsel.