

Washington



Total prohibition

(+0, good, but unlicensed vehicle carry could be better)

Total freedom

0 ----- 10 ----- 20 ----- 30 ----- 40 ----- 50 ----- 60 ----- 70 ----- 80 ----- 90 ----- 100

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- ***Standard firearms & ammo:** no permit required for possession or sale by individuals – see p. 3
- ***Semi-auto guns & high capacity magazines:** no permit required for possession or sale
- ***Machine guns & suppressors:** personal ownership of machine guns prohibited; suppressor ownership lawful per federal law compliance
- ***Firearm law uniformity:** preemption statute, firearm laws uniform throughout state
- ***Right of Self-Defense:** no NRA castle doctrine, *stand your ground* in public not codified
- ***Open carry:** unrestricted under state law in most public areas
- ***Licensed concealed carry:** licenses issued on a "shall issue" basis to residents and nonresidents
- ***Constitutional or “no permit required” concealed carry:** no
- ***Out-of-state permit recognition:** conditional recognition of permits from other states (see p. 65)
- ***Weapons allowed for *licensed* carry:** limited to handguns only
- ***Vehicle carry by non-permittees:** handguns must be unloaded and secured in commercial gun cases; long guns must be unloaded
- ***Vehicle gun possession at colleges:** prohibitions enforced through WA’s admin. code
- ***Vehicle gun possession at K-12 schools:** Washington permittee w/loaded handgun lawful while picking up or dropping off a student
- ***Duty to notify LEO of permit status:** upon demand of police officer
- ***State Parks:** concealed handgun carry by recognized licensees permitted
- ***Restaurants serving alcohol:** permittees may carry while eating in dining areas – see p.3
- ***Hotels:** subject to hotel policy enforcement – see p.7

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Washington's vast tracts of wilderness create a setting where gun ownership is quite common. Despite being known for left leaning politics (especially near Seattle), the state’s gun laws reflect more Rocky Mountain than Pacific coast.

Recognized permittees: A license is required to carry a loaded handgun concealed on one's person or in any personal vehicle or public transportation. Residents are issued permits through their local police or sheriff. Nonresidents may apply in person to any local law enforcement agency. Licenses are valid for 5 years. Washington recognizes permits from states that recognize Washington, require fingerprint-based background checks of their licensees and do not issue permits to persons under 21. A recognized permittee must be a nonresident and is limited to handgun carry only. He must also keep the weapon locked up and concealed from view if it is left in his vehicle. Carry is prohibited in courtrooms, schools, mental health facilities, horse racetracks, outdoor music festivals and many colleges.

Persons without recognized permits: Loaded handguns may not be carried anywhere in a vehicle. They must be unloaded and secured in gun cases specifically designed for handguns. Loaded magazines may be carried in the vehicle as long as they are not inserted into any handgun.

While on foot, a person without a license may carry a loaded, concealed handgun while engaged in outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, and target shooting. Open carry of a loaded handgun is legitimate and best practiced by securing the weapon in a visible belt holster. Washington's preemption law prevents most local regulation of this carry mode. But cities retain the power to regulate carry by non-permittees in stadiums and convention centers. And carrying a firearm openly may not be done if such carry manifests any intent to intimidate another or causes alarm for the safety of others.

All Persons: Unloaded rifles and shotguns may be kept in gun racks or cases within a vehicle. Long guns are considered “loaded” only if the weapons’ chambers are loaded or loaded magazines are attached to the guns. One may have loaded magazines nearby and still be lawful.

Long guns in vehicles must be unloaded regardless of one’s permit status. Carry licenses only authorize loaded handgun carry. And all firearms carried in snowmobiles must be unloaded.