

A Primer on Gun Permits and Carrying Weapons

Any person 21 years of age may apply for a concealed pistol license to the chief of police or the sheriff of the county. The license authorizes a person to carry a loaded pistol (automatic or revolver) on his or her person. A person cannot carry a loaded pistol in a vehicle unless he or she has a license and (a) the pistol is on the licensee's person or (b) the licensee is within the vehicle at all times that the loaded pistol is located there or (c) the licensee is away from the vehicle and the pistol is locked within the vehicle and concealed from view from the outside. No license is necessary to carry a loaded concealed pistol at a person's place of abode (home) or fixed place of business. Revised Code of Washington, (RCW) 9.41.050. You must be 21 to purchase a handgun and 18 to purchase rifle or shotgun. Without a permit there is a 3 day waiting period for delivery.

The restrictions on carrying firearms do not apply to law enforcement officers or (a) regularly enrolled members of clubs organized for target shooting, when members are going to or from their place of target practice or (b) regularly enrolled members of clubs organized for the purpose of firearm collecting, when those members are at or are going to or from their gun shows or exhibits or (c) any person engaging in a lawful outdoor recreational activity such as hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, or horseback riding or (d) any person while carrying a pistol unloaded and in a closed opaque case or secure wrapper RCW 9.41.060.

Unlawful possession of firearms constitutes a felony, if the person in possession has been convicted of any felony in this or another state or of any of the following crimes, when committed by one family or household member against another, assault in the fourth degree, coercion, violation of the provisions of a protection order or no-contact order restraining the person or excluding the person from a residence. "Convicted" includes a plea of guilty, verdict of guilty, a dismissal entered after a period of probation, suspension or deferral of sentence. A conviction is only erased by a pardon, annulment, or certificate of rehabilitation. One may also petition the court to have his or her right to possess a firearm restored. RCW 9.41.040.

A person under 18 years of age cannot possess a firearm unless he or she is (a) in attendance at a hunter's safety course or a firearms safety course or (b) engaging in the practice in the use of a firearm or target shooting at a range authorized by the county or city in an area where the discharge of a firearm is not prohibited or (c) engaging in an organized competition involving the use of a firearm, by an organized group that uses firearms as part of its performance or (d) hunting or trapping under a valid license issued to the person or (e) in an area where the discharge of a firearm is permitted, is not trespassing, and the person is either at least fourteen years of age, has been issued a hunter safety certificate, and is using a lawful firearm other than a pistol or is under the supervision of a parent, guardian, or other adult approved by the parent or guardian or (f) traveling with any unloaded firearm in the person's possession to or from any of these activities or (g) on real property under the control of his or her parent, relative or legal guardian and who has the permission of the parent or guardian to possess a firearm or (h) is at his or her residence and who with the permission of his or her parent or legal guardian, possesses a firearm for the purpose of exercising the right of self defense. RCW 9.41.042.

The license is only valid in the state of Washington. However, based upon reciprocity these states (according to the Washington State AG), NC, OH, MS, OK, LA & UT currently (2006) honor the license, but the firearm must be carried in accordance with that state's requirements.. It is a federal felony to sell a firearm to a non-resident of this state, absent a FFL license. State law prohibits the carrying of loaded rifles or shotguns in a vehicle. Carrying unloaded rifles visible in gun racks is permissible. Many premises are off limits to carrying a pistol even with a license, including common school grounds, courthouses, bars, cocktails lounges, and federal facilities. (Copyright 2006 by RMM)