



## **Support House Bill 1315/Senate Bill 6294: Training Requirements for Concealed Pistol License Applicants**

**Bottom Line:** In the majority of states, a person must undergo firearm safety training and get a permit to carry a concealed handgun in public. Safety training requirements are an important component of the permitting system. In fact, most gun owners support permit training requirements.<sup>1</sup> Washington does not currently require applicants for Concealed Pistol Licenses to undergo any safety training. This bill would help promote responsible gun ownership and public safety in Washington by requiring firearm safety training for Concealed Pistol License applicants.

- ❑ **Currently in Washington, Concealed Pistol License applicants are not required to undergo any firearm safety training.**
  - To carry a concealed handgun in public in Washington, a person must get a Concealed Pistol License.
  - There are over 625,000 active Concealed Pistol Licenses (CPL) in Washington, meaning that one of every twelve Washingtonians is a CPL holder.<sup>2</sup>
  - Currently, a person who wishes to apply for a CPL is not required to undergo firearm safety training or demonstrate that they can actually handle or fire a handgun responsibly.
  - This means that current CPL holders who have received their license from the state have never been required to undergo training on Washington's gun laws or show they know how to safely handle a handgun.
- ❑ **There is wide consensus on the importance of firearm training, including live-fire training, for concealed carry license holders.**
  - Law enforcement experts, firearms trainers and military personnel all overwhelmingly agree that citizens carrying concealed weapons in public should undertake firearm training including live fire.<sup>3</sup>
  - In a recent national survey, over 80 percent of respondents said that they agree or strongly agree that individuals should receive training before owning a firearm.<sup>4</sup>
- ❑ **Comprehensive firearm training for CPL holders can meaningfully improve public safety.**
  - In a self-defense experiment involving a firearm simulator, participants with higher levels of firearm training and experience performed better than their counterparts with lower levels of training. In the simulation, many lower-skilled participants accidentally shot innocent bystanders or unarmed people.<sup>5</sup>
  - In Wisconsin, since mandatory hunting safety training courses have been required, there has been a substantial decline in fatal and non-fatal incidents during the state's annual deer hunting season.<sup>6</sup>
- ❑ **HB 1315/SB 6294 would create training requirements for all Concealed Pistol License applicants.**
  - The bill would establish a mandatory training requirement that all CPL applicants must demonstrate completion of before they are issued a license.



- These requirements would include a minimum of eight hours of instruction on a variety of subject areas related to handgun safety, including secure storage, handgun use and safety, and suicide prevention. There would also be a live-fire training component to be completed on a firing range, requiring an actual demonstration of safe use of a handgun.
    - Training on how to store guns securely directly impacts gun violence. One study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition were associated with a 78 percent lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children, compared to those that locked neither.<sup>7</sup>
    - Suicide prevention training could help reduce the prevalence of gun suicide in the state. Currently, 76 percent of all gun deaths in Washington are suicides. Every year, 545 people in Washington die by gun suicide on average.<sup>8</sup> Strikingly, 56 percent of all gun deaths among children and teens in the state are suicides.<sup>9</sup>
  - All training courses would be administered by certified handgun instructors and all applicants would be required to submit proof of training from one of these certified trainers.
- ❑ **Concealed pistol licensing training could help prevent shootings.**
- There have been numerous instances where Concealed Pistol License holders in Washington have unintentionally shot themselves or others with a gun, including instances where unintentional shootings occurred in places where children and families play and work.<sup>10</sup>
  - Tragically, there have been instances where children have shot themselves or been struck due to the preventable actions of CPL holders. In one instance in Tacoma, a 3-year-old boy shot and killed himself with a gun he found in his family car.<sup>11</sup> In Thurston County, a CPL holder was arrested after a toddler was unintentionally wounded as the gun he owned was passed around at a party.<sup>12</sup>
- ❑ **Washington is 1 of only 10 states in the country that does not require training before issuing a license to carry a concealed handgun.**
- 31 states and DC require some version of training for license applicants.<sup>13</sup>
    - 26 of these states require that a person complete live-fire training before being issued a license to carry a concealed handgun.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Support for Gun Violence Prevention Policies Among Gun Owners and Non-Gun Owners in 2017, Colleen L. Barry, PhD, MPP, Daniel W. Webster, ScD, MPH, Elizabeth Stone, BMus, Cassandra K. Crifasi, PhD, MPH, Jon S. Vernick, JD, MPH, and Emma E. McGinty, PhD, MS

<sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Licensing. "Department of Licensing Statistics At-A-Glance: Fiscal Year 2019," August 2019. <https://www.dol.wa.gov/about/docs/2019-FY-stats-at-a-glance.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Vince Jr, Joseph J, et al. Firearms Training and Self-Defense. Does the Quality and Frequency of Training Determine the Realistic Use of Firearms by Citizens for Self-Defense?: Facts and Evidence for Public Policy Considerations. Mount St. Mary's University, The National Gun Victims Action Council. 2015. Chicago, Illinois. <http://www.multivu.com/players/English/65360-ngvac-national-gun-victims-tell-and-compel-we-re-done-asking/flexSwf/impAsset/document/c6b7ad45-3bc2-4483-9de1-4dc5dc9d449f.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Rowhani-Rahbar, Ali, et, al. Formal Firearm Training among adults in the USA: Results of National Survey. The Joyce Foundation, 2017. <http://www.joycefdn.org/news/formal-firearm-training-among-adults-in-the-usa-results-of-a-national-survey>

<sup>5</sup> Vince Jr, Joseph J, et al. Firearms Training and Self-Defense. Does the Quality and Frequency of Training Determine the Realistic Use of Firearms by Citizens for Self-Defense?: Facts and Evidence for Public Policy Considerations. Mount St. Mary's University, The National Gun Victims Action Council. 2015. Chicago, Illinois. <http://www.multivu.com/players/English/65360-ngvac-national-gun-victims-tell-and-compel-we-re-done-asking/flexSwf/impAsset/document/c6b7ad45-3bc2-4483-9de1-4dc5dc9d449f.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Bureau of Law Enforcement, "Wisconsin Hunting: Annual Report 2016," available at: [http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/le/LE0006\\_2016.pdf](http://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/pubs/le/LE0006_2016.pdf). The mandatory hunting education course includes multiple modules on firearm training



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including safely handling and operating firearms and ammunition. Firing a gun is not a mandatory part of the course but most training sessions include live-fire training.

<sup>7</sup> Grossman, David C, Beth A Mueller, Christine Riedy, M Denise Dowd, Andres Villaveces, Janice Prodzinski, Jon Nakagawara, John Howard, Norman Thiersch, and Richard Harruff. "Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries," n.d., 8.

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. A yearly average was developed using five years of the most recent available data: 2013 to 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. A yearly average was developed using five years of the most recent available data: 2013 to 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Stephenson, Megan. "Gun Owned by Poulsbo Man Discharged in Silverdale Store." Kitsap Daily News, January 7, 2013.

<https://www.kitsapdailynews.com/news/gun-owned-by-poulsbo-man-discharged-in-silverdale-store/>; McLaughlin, Brian. "Negligent Discharge in Tacoma Chuck E. Cheese's Causes Parents to Panic | Washington Concealed Carry Training and Resources." ConcealedCarry.com, September 19, 2018. <https://washington.concealedcarry.com/2018/09/19/negligent-discharge-in-tacoma-chuck-e-cheeses-causes-parents-to-panic/>;

<sup>11</sup> MyNorthwest Staff. "3-Year-Old Kills Self with Gun in Car at Tacoma Gas Station." MyNorthwest, March 14, 2012.

<https://mynorthwest.com/36562/3-year-old-kills-self-with-gun-in-car-at-tacoma-gas-station/>;

<sup>12</sup> US News. "Gun Fires at Party, Wounding Woman and Child in Her Arms," February 17, 2019. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/washington/articles/2019-02-17/gun-fires-at-party-wounding-woman-and-child-in-her-arms>.

<sup>13</sup> [https://everytownresearch.org/navigator/states.html?dataset=permitting\\_process&states=CA](https://everytownresearch.org/navigator/states.html?dataset=permitting_process&states=CA)