

RCW 9.41.113 Firearm sales or transfers—Background checks—

Requirements—Exceptions. (1) All firearm sales or transfers, in whole or part in this state including without limitation a sale or transfer where either the purchaser or seller or transferee or transferor is in Washington, shall be subject to background checks unless specifically exempted by state or federal law. The background check requirement applies to all sales or transfers including, but not limited to, sales and transfers through a licensed dealer, at gun shows, online, and between unlicensed persons.

(2) No person shall sell or transfer a firearm unless:

(a) The person is a licensed dealer;

(b) The purchaser or transferee is a licensed dealer; or

(c) The requirements of subsection (3) of this section are met.

(3) Where neither party to a prospective firearms transaction is a licensed dealer, the parties to the transaction shall complete the sale or transfer through a licensed dealer as follows:

(a) The seller or transferor shall deliver the firearm to a licensed dealer to process the sale or transfer as if it is selling or transferring the firearm from its inventory to the purchaser or transferee, except that the unlicensed seller or transferor may remove the firearm from the business premises of the licensed dealer while the background check is being conducted. If the seller or transferor removes the firearm from the business premises of the licensed dealer while the background check is being conducted, the purchaser or transferee and the seller or transferor shall return to the business premises of the licensed dealer and the seller or transferor shall again deliver the firearm to the licensed dealer prior to completing the sale or transfer.

(b) Except as provided in (a) of this subsection, the licensed dealer shall comply with all requirements of federal and state law that would apply if the licensed dealer were selling or transferring the firearm from its inventory to the purchaser or transferee, including but not limited to conducting a background check on the prospective purchaser or transferee in accordance with federal and state law requirements, fulfilling all federal and state recordkeeping requirements, and complying with the specific requirements and restrictions on semiautomatic assault rifles in chapter 3, Laws of 2019.

(c) The purchaser or transferee must complete, sign, and submit all federal, state, and local forms necessary to process the required background check to the licensed dealer conducting the background check.

(d) If the results of the background check indicate that the purchaser or transferee is ineligible to possess a firearm, then the licensed dealer shall return the firearm to the seller or transferor.

(e) The licensed dealer may charge a fee that reflects the fair market value of the administrative costs and efforts incurred by the licensed dealer for facilitating the sale or transfer of the firearm.

(4) This section does not apply to:

(a) A transfer between immediate family members, which for this subsection shall be limited to spouses, domestic partners, parents, parents-in-law, children, siblings, siblings-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, first cousins, aunts, and uncles, that is a bona fide gift or loan;

(b) The sale or transfer of an antique firearm;

(c) A temporary transfer of possession of a firearm if such transfer is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to the person to whom the firearm is transferred if:

(i) The temporary transfer only lasts as long as immediately necessary to prevent such imminent death or great bodily harm; and

(ii) The person to whom the firearm is transferred is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;

(d) A temporary transfer of possession of a firearm if: (i) The transfer is intended to prevent suicide or self-inflicted great bodily harm; (ii) the transfer lasts only as long as reasonably necessary to prevent death or great bodily harm; and (iii) the firearm is not utilized by the transferee for any purpose for the duration of the temporary transfer;

(e) Any law enforcement or corrections agency and, to the extent the person is acting within the course and scope of his or her employment or official duties, any law enforcement or corrections officer, United States marshal, member of the armed forces of the United States or the national guard, or federal official;

(f) A federally licensed gunsmith who receives a firearm solely for the purposes of service or repair, or the return of the firearm to its owner by the federally licensed gunsmith;

(g) The temporary transfer of a firearm (i) between spouses or domestic partners; (ii) if the temporary transfer occurs, and the firearm is kept at all times, at an established shooting range authorized by the governing body of the jurisdiction in which such range is located; (iii) if the temporary transfer occurs and the transferee's possession of the firearm is exclusively at a lawful organized competition involving the use of a firearm, or while participating in or practicing for a performance by an organized group that uses firearms as a part of the performance; (iv) to a person who is under 18 years of age for lawful hunting, sporting, or educational purposes while under the direct supervision and control of a responsible adult who is not prohibited from possessing firearms; (v) under circumstances in which the transferee and the firearm remain in the presence of the transferor; or (vi) while hunting if the hunting is legal in all places where the person to whom the firearm is transferred possesses the firearm and the person to whom the firearm is transferred has completed all training and holds all licenses or permits required for such hunting, provided that any temporary transfer allowed by this subsection is permitted only if the person to whom the firearm is transferred is not prohibited from possessing firearms under state or federal law;

(h) A person who (i) acquired a firearm other than a pistol by operation of law upon the death of the former owner of the firearm or (ii) acquired a pistol by operation of law upon the death of the former owner of the pistol within the preceding 60 days. At the end of the 60-day period, the person must either have lawfully transferred the pistol or must have contacted the department of licensing to notify the department that he or she has possession of the pistol and intends to retain possession of the pistol, in compliance with all federal and state laws;

(i) A sale or transfer when the purchaser or transferee is a licensed collector and the firearm being sold or transferred is a curio or relic; or

(j) (i) A transfer, loan, gift, or bequest to a museum or historical society, or the return of loaned firearm(s) to its lender from a museum or historical society, and museum personnel while acting

in the scope of their official duties, provided, however, that before returning a loaned firearm to its lender, a museum or historical society or personnel of the museum or historical society must comply with the requirements of subsection (3) of this section.

(ii) For the purposes of this subsection [(4)](j), "museum or historical society" means the same as in RCW 63.26.010 and is designated as a nonprofit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the internal revenue code. [2023 c 403 § 1; 2019 c 3 § 11 (Initiative Measure No. 1639, approved November 6, 2018); 2017 c 264 § 2; 2015 c 1 § 3 (Initiative Measure No. 594, approved November 4, 2014).]

Finding—Short title—Effective dates—Implementation—2019 c 3 (Initiative Measure No. 1639): See notes following RCW 9.41.360.

Finding—2015 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 594): See note following RCW 9.41.010.