



## Dealer Responsibility

[HB 2118](#) (Rep. Walen) / [SB 6266](#) (Sen. Pedersen)

There are nearly 78,000 firearms dealers in the United States, however, there is little to no federal oversight to ensure that these dealers are following best practices. Additional guidelines are critical to ensure that all licensed dealers in our state take the necessary steps to prevent firearms from falling into the hands of bad actors. Precautions such as mandatory anti-theft features, standardized record-keeping, and reporting of lost or stolen merchandise are common-sense measures that will help stop theft and straw purchases (when one person purchases a firearm for someone who is prohibited from doing so).

### Preventing Theft

Federal law does not require that firearms dealers secure their inventory or their premises, despite firearms dealers being a high-value target for break-ins, theft, and destruction of property. In Washington alone, there were 94 reported theft incidents from FFLs from 2017-2021, with over 600 firearms stolen.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, these crimes have only increased in recent years - data shows that there was a 14% increase in gun thefts between 2021 and 2022.<sup>2</sup> We know this is likely only a fraction of what has actually been taken; ATF compliance and inspections commonly reveal many firearms for which dealers can not account.<sup>3</sup> Asking dealers to take additional security precautions, such as an alarm system and metal grates or doors, helps deter theft and keeps firearms out of the hands of bad actors.

### Preventing Straw Purchasing

Straw purchasing – when someone purchases a firearm for another person who isn’t able to legally buy the firearm themselves – gives prohibited people access to firearms, with potentially deadly consequences. Last year, for example, two King County men were charged for buying and illegally distributing more than 100 firearms, almost a quarter of which were traced to crimes.<sup>4</sup> While identifying the number of straw purchases that happen in our state is challenging due to the covert nature of the crime, over half of crime guns recovered in our state were being used by someone who wasn’t the person who bought it from the firearm dealer.<sup>5</sup> The recordkeeping and video surveillance requirements established in this bill will prevent straw purchasing by giving law enforcement the tools they need to collect evidence about a straw purchase, as well as give store employees the ability to identify common red-flags and prevent straw purchases.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/washington-state-report/download>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fox13seattle.com/news/multiple-guns-stolen-from-monroe-shop-during-burglary#>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thetrace.org/2021/05/atf-inspection-report-gun-store-ffl-violation/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/two-wa-men-charged-with-straw-purchasing-more-than-100-guns/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/washington-state-report/download>

## Summary of the Law

This bill directs firearms dealers in Washington to have the following in place in order to be eligible for a firearms dealer license:

- Secure features to help stop break-ins, such as bars, grates, or metal doors.
- An electronic security system that can contact law enforcement in the event of an alarm.
- Secure storage of all firearms.
- A digital video surveillance system that captures entrances, exits, places in the store where firearms are displayed, and the register where sales occur.
- Mandatory reporting of any lost or stolen firearms to both local law enforcement and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.
- A recordkeeping system that tracks all sales and inventory.
- A general liability insurance policy.

Currently, ten states and the District of Columbia require mandatory security measures for firearms dealers, and five states have lost and stolen reporting laws for dealers.<sup>6</sup> By making these guidelines explicit, Washington can help dealers keep firearms out of dangerous hands.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-sales/gun-dealers/>