



Destruction of Confiscated Firearms

[HB 2021](#) (Rep. Senn) / [SB 6001](#) (Sen. Lovick)

Firearms acquired by local law enforcement agencies can be disposed of in a variety of ways under Washington State law. Many local governments in our state opt to destroy firearms, so dangerous weapons are not recirculated back into the communities they serve. However, as the current law is written, Washington State Patrol is not afforded that same flexibility. Instead, they are forced to auction or trade a majority of these firearms to licensed dealers. This bill would allow Washington State Patrol the same level of flexibility that our local law enforcement agencies have, and would empower them to help stop the deadly life cycle of crime guns .

This bill would also direct any government or law enforcement entity to destroy any firearms that were acquired as a result of a buyback program. Buyback programs work by providing individuals money or gift cards in exchange for their unwanted firearms. They also serve as opportunities to educate communities about gun violence reduction strategies. This results in fewer unwanted firearms in our homes and communities. While many local government or law enforcement entities operate such programs to get firearms off the street, this bill ensures that these firearms will not be recirculated.

Below are just some results from buybacks that have happened in our state over the past couple years:

- In summer of 2022, Kirkland Police Department hosted a firearm buyback program that took place over two separate days. The first event in early July drew 45 participants who received a combined \$11,375 in gift cards, and the volume of firearms was higher than expected.¹ The second event in late July took in 60 firearms from 21 people that were worth a total of \$6,975 in Visa gift cards.²
- The King County Sheriff's Office held a gun buyback event in Burien during the summer of 2023. The agency collected 287 firearms during the four-hour event and gave out \$36,525 in gift cards, including 11 AR-15s.³
- Everett has hosted several gun buybacks for Snohomish County. The first buyback event resulted in 241 firearms obtained⁴, and the second buyback event resulted in 256 firearms obtained.⁵

¹ <https://www.kirklandreporter.com/news/kirkland-police-collect-91-firearms-in-the-regions-first-gun-buy-back-program-in-nearly-a-decade/>

² <https://www.kuow.org/stories/kirkland-will-give-you-a-gift-card-for-your-gun>

³ <https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/reduce-gun-violence-in-washington/281-2f646241-e72a-4753-908c-4ff7a7ca87dd>

⁴ https://www.facebook.com/EverettPoliceWA/posts/537133188458815?ref=embed_post

⁵ <https://myeverettnews.com/2023/08/13/everett-police-guns-for-gift-cards-events-collects-256-firearms-in-exchange-for-38875-00-in-gift-cards/>