



Signature Report

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

September 10, 2018

Ordinance

Proposed No. 2018-0373.1

Sponsors McDermott and Kohl-Welles

1 AN ORDINANCE relating to the secure storage of
2 firearms; adding a new chapter to K.C.C. Title 12 and
3 prescribing penalties.

4 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

5 1. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Wide-
6 ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research, also known as
7 WONDER, in the United States, thirty-six thousand two hundred forty-
8 seven people died in 2015 as a result of firearms. That is just fewer than
9 the thirty-eight thousand eight hundred eighteen death resulting from
10 motor vehicle incidents. Of those firearm deaths, sixty-one percent were
11 suicides and thirty-six percent were homicides.

12 2. The Washington state Department of Health data show that in 2015,
13 firearms were the third leading cause of injury-related death in
14 Washington state, killing approximately seven hundred fourteen
15 Washington residents. Of these firearm deaths, seventy-five percent were
16 suicides and firearm suicides accounted for forty-seven percent of all
17 suicides in Washington state in 2015. During the same period, one
18 hundred forty-six King County residents died from a firearm injury,
19 including six youth age seventeen and younger.

20 3. According to the 2015 Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police
21 Chiefs Annual Report, sixty-two percent of homicides in Washington state
22 were committed with firearms.

23 4. The Washington state Department of Health data also indicate that
24 thirty-nine youth, age seventeen and younger, died as a result of firearms
25 in 2015. That is the equivalent of a child or teen being killed by gunfire
26 every nine days. An additional thirty children were hospitalized. In King
27 County, six youth died as a result of firearms in 2015 and nine other youth
28 were hospitalized in King County during that period.

29 5. The Washington state Department of Health data show that in 2015
30 twenty-eight homicides occurred among youth, age seventeen and younger
31 and of those, seventeen, which is sixty-one percent, died as a result of
32 firearm homicides.

33 6. Between 2013 and 2015, the Washington state Department of Health
34 data also show that one hundred eighteen youth, age seventeen and
35 younger, died by suicide in Washington and forty-seven of those youth,
36 which is forty percent, died from firearm suicide. During the same period,
37 twenty-five youth died by suicide in King County of which seven used
38 firearms.

39 7. The Washington state Department of Health data also indicate that
40 three hundred eight Washington state residents were hospitalized for
41 nonfatal firearm injuries in 2015, including thirty youth age seventeen and
42 younger. During that same period, ninety-five King County residents

43 were hospitalized for nonfatal firearm injuries, including nine youth.

44 8. The Washington state Department of Health data indicate that
45 seventeen youth, age seventeen and younger, were hospitalized for firearm
46 assault injuries in Washington in 2015 and eight King County youth
47 accounted for forty-seven percent of those nonfatal injury hospitalizations.

48 9. The January 21, 2014 Annals of Internal Medicine report finds that
49 adolescents, between the ages of ten and nineteen years, with access to
50 firearms are 2.6 times as likely to die by suicide as adolescents without
51 access to firearms.

52 10. The December 2008 Journal of Adolescent Health study of adolescent
53 (between the ages of ten and nineteen years) suicides by firearm found that
54 over half were carried out with firearms from the adolescent's home.

55 More than seventy-five percent of firearms used in suicide attempts and
56 unintentional injuries were stored in the residence of the victim, a relative,
57 or friend.

58 11. The Washington state Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
59 estimated thirty-four percent of Washington adults who are at least
60 eighteen years old, which is one million eight hundred twenty-five
61 thousand people, reported having a firearm in or around their homes in
62 2015. Just under half of those adults, which is forty-six percent or eight
63 hundred thirty-nine thousand people, reported having an unlocked firearm.

64 Access to firearms, including when firearms are easily available because
65 of unsafe storage practices, are a known risk factor for firearm suicide,

66 especially among youth age seventeen and younger.

67 12. The Washington state Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
68 finds that, in 2015, approximately twenty-one percent of King County
69 adults, which is three hundred forty thousand persons, reported firearms
70 present in or around their homes. Among those adults, an estimated thirty-
71 one percent, which is one hundred five thousand persons, stored their
72 firearms loaded and an estimated forty-three percent, which is one
73 hundred fifty thousand persons, stored their firearms unlocked and not
74 stored in a way to render them safe. Approximately fifteen percent, which
75 is fifty-one thousand persons, of firearm owners reported storing them
76 loaded and unlocked.

77 13. According to various Public Health - Seattle & King County analysis
78 on firearm violence in King County, firearm violence has a
79 disproportionate impact on communities of color and children of color are
80 victims of homicide by firearms at a higher rate than white children in
81 King County.

82 14. A June 2004 study from the American Journal of Epidemiology
83 concluded that those persons with guns in the home were at greater risk
84 than those without guns in the home of dying from homicide, firearm
85 homicide, suicide and firearm suicide.

86 15. King County's LOK-IT-UP initiative is part of the county's Gun
87 Violence Prevention Initiative to promote the safety of our communities
88 through increasing safe storage of firearms. The program focuses on the

89 importance of safe storage of firearms, safe storage device options, how to
90 practice safe storage in the home and how to encourage the practice of
91 safe storage in others.

92 16. According to a February 2005 Journal of the American Medical
93 Association study, locked guns can reduce the odds of accidental death or
94 suicide by seventy-three percent.

95 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

96 SECTION 1. Sections 2 through 5 of this ordinance should constitute a new
97 chapter in K.C.C. Title 12.

98 NEW SECTION. SECTION 2.

99 A. "Ammunition" means ammunition or cartridge cases, primers, bullets or
100 propellant powder, designed for use in any firearm.

101 B. "Firearm" means a weapon or device from which a projectile or projectiles
102 may be fired by an explosive such as gunpowder. "Firearm" does not include a flare gun
103 or other pyrotechnic visual distress signaling device, or a powder-actuated tool or other
104 device designed solely to be used for construction purposes.

105 C. "Person" means natural persons of any sex, firms, copartnerships and
106 corporations, whether acting by themselves, by servant, agent or employee. The singular
107 number includes the plural and words referring to a specific gender may be extended to
108 any other gender.

109 D. "Secure firearm storage or safety device" means:

110 1. A safe, gun safe, gun case, lock box, or other device, that is designed to be or
111 can be used to store a firearm and unlocked only by means of a key, a combination, or

112 other similar means;

113 2. A device that, when installed on a firearm, is designed to prevent the firearm
114 from being operated without first deactivating the device; or

115 3. A device incorporated into the design of the firearm that is designed to
116 prevent the operation of the firearm by anyone not having access to the device.

117 NEW SECTION. SECTION 3. It is unlawful for any person in King County,
118 state of Washington, outside the boundaries of incorporated cities and towns within King
119 County, to keep a firearm, whether loaded or unloaded with ammunition, within any
120 premise unless the firearm is safely stored in or using a secure firearm storage or safety
121 device.

122 NEW SECTION. SECTION 4.

123 A. Any person violating or failing to comply with section 3 of this ordinance
124 shall first be given a warning in writing by a law enforcement officer. The law
125 enforcement officer shall inform the person of nearby facilities where a secure firearm
126 storage or safety device may be purchased.

127 B. Any person violating or failing to comply with section 3 of this ordinance,
128 after the initial warning as described by subsection A. of this section, is guilty of
129 committing a misdemeanor infraction and is subject to a fine of not more than one
130 thousand dollars and by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than ninety days, or
131 both.

132 SECTION 5. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application to

133 any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
134 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.
135

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

J. Joseph McDermott, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, _____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None