Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

*Transforming lives*

**Administrative Policy No. 18.76**

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| **Title:** | Weapons |
| **Authorizing Sources:** | Chapter 9.41 RCW Firearms and Dangerous Weapons<br>RCW 72.23.300 Bringing narcotics, intoxicating liquors, weapons, etc., into institution or its grounds prohibited — Penalty |
| **Information Contact:** | DSHS Human Resources |
| **Effective Date:** | July 1, 2005 |
| **Revised:** | May 24, 2023 [i] Housekeeping 2/26/24 [ii] Housekeeping 3/13/2026 |
| **Approved By:** | **Original signed by Wendy Long**<br>Senior Director, Human Resources Division |

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**Purpose:**

The policy outlines expectations, roles and responsibilities for employees, contractors, interns and volunteers regarding weapons.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all department of social and health services (DSHS) employees, contractors, interns, and volunteers. Where local policies or rules are more restrictive, the local policies or rules will supersede specific provisions of this policy with which it conflicts.

**Additional Guidance:**

Administrative policy 9-01 incident reporting
Administrative policy 9-12 workplace physical security program
Administrative policy 14-12 accountability for state owned vehicles
Administrative policy 18-67 workplace and domestic violence/reasonable safety

**Definitions:**

**Weapon:** Means any firearm, explosive as defined in RCW 9.41.300, knife, club, or other object that is used or wielded in a manner to threaten or inflict harm, that has the capability of and is

commonly used with the intent to cause death or bodily injury. This definition does not include objects that are used in accordance with operationally approved purposes (e.g., cutlery used in dining services, tools used for maintenance or cleaning implements) unless they are used in a way that is intended to harm a person or property.

**Policy:**

A. The DSHS Secretary maintains the right to establish guidelines pertaining to weapons in the workplace.

B. Regardless of whether a DSHS employee, contractor, intern or volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed firearm under RCW 9.41.050, they are prohibited from using, threatening the use of, or possessing a weapon while:

1. Performing their official DSHS duties;
2. On DSHS-owned or leased property;
3. In a state-owned or leased vehicle; or
4. While driving a privately owned vehicle while performing official duties for DSHS.

C. The prohibition described in paragraph B does not apply to employees or contractors whose official job duties require that they possess or use a weapon (e.g., armed security guards). In these cases, DSHS prohibits the use of personal firearms in carrying out DSHS duties.

D. An employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer who is licensed in their private capacity to carry a concealed firearm per RCW 9.41.050 may securely store their personal firearm in their personal vehicle while parked in the DSHS parking lot area per RCW 9.41.050(2)(a) and 9.41.300.

E. When securely storing a licensed firearm in a personal vehicle on DSHS property, the employee, contractor, intern or volunteer must:

1. Secure the firearm and firearm accessories within their personal vehicle;
2. Ensure the firearm and firearm accessories (holsters, magazines) are out of sight within the vehicle; and
3. Keep the vehicle locked.
    i. Motorcycles and other non-enclosed modes of transportation are not considered to be a secure location to store a firearm.
    ii. An employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer may not store their personal firearm in their personal vehicle while on the grounds at any state institution for the care of mental illness per RCW 72.23.300. Per RCW 9.41.300, grounds do not include the public parking areas of state hospitals.

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F. A DSHS employee, contractor, intern or volunteer may possess chemical defense spray, such as pepper spray, commonly referred to as mace, for purposes of personal defense unless prohibited by local program, administrative policy, or ordinance, provided that when on state business the employee, contractor, intern or volunteer must securely store it to prevent access by anyone other than the employee.

G. If a DSHS employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer becomes aware of a weapon on DSHS premises or in a state vehicle, or that an employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer is carrying a weapon during the performance of DSHS business in violation of this policy, they must immediately report any violation of this policy to their supervisor, manager, or appointing authority.

H. Any employee, contractor, intern, or volunteer who is uncertain whether an object is prohibited under this policy, is obligated to request clarification from their supervisor, manager or human resources point of contact to ensure they are not in violation of this policy, prior to bringing the object into the workplace.

I. Supervisors, managers, appointing authorities, or human resource representatives who become aware of a potential violation of this policy must:

1. Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security for all in the immediate area;
2. Submit an incident report; and
3. Report violators to law enforcement, for instance, if a weapon is displayed in a threatening manner.

J. DSHS may take disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, if an employee fails to comply with this policy.

[i] Link updates 2024 SharePoint move.
[ii] Clarified language in E.3.ii regarding public parking areas of state hospitals and added reference to RCW 9.41.300.

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