

WHO IS AT A HIGHER RISK FOR INJURY WITH A GUN?

WHAT TO DO WHEN A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER IS AT RISK AND HAS ACCESS TO A GUN

STORING AMMUNITION (BULLETS) AWAY FROM GUNS

STORAGE AT A SAFE, REMOTE LOCATION



Gun Safety and Your Health

SAFE GUN HANDLING

SAFE GUN STORAGE

A PROACTIVE GUIDE TO PROTECT YOU AND THOSE AROUND YOU

DISPOSING OF AN UNWANTED GUN

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COMMITTEE
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Did You Know?

- **38,000 people die** and more than **80,000 people are injured** every year in the U.S. from guns.
- **22,000** people per year commit suicide using a gun.
- Many gun deaths and injuries **can be prevented** by improving firearm handling, safe storage, and keeping guns away from those at risk of hurting themselves or others.

Gun safety is important to keep you, your family, and your community safe and healthy.

These tips are helpful if you or your family members:

- Own a gun
- Live in a home with a gun
- Are around guns
- Know people who may harm themselves or others with guns

Guns, like cleaning products or medicines, can be dangerous if used or stored incorrectly.

The tips in this handout will help keep your family and friends safe from gun injuries.

Talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider if you have any concerns about gun safety and the impact a gun may have on your health or the health of your loved ones.

Safe Gun Use

If you own a gun, it is important to know how to safely handle it, load it, and clean it. You can take a gun safety class at your local gun store or shooting range. Some states require this training before getting a license to own a gun.

BASIC RULES OF GUN SAFETY

- ✓ Assume gun always loaded.
- ✓ Finger off trigger until ready to fire.
- ✓ Never point at anything you don't intend to kill or destroy.
- ✓ Always check all chambers before cleaning.



Safe Gun Storage

Two thirds of accidental child gun deaths could have been prevented if guns had been stored locked and unloaded.

The safest way to store a gun in your home is **unloaded** and securely **locked**, with the bullets locked in a separate container.

Safe gun storage will make it difficult for children, teens, and other family members to accidentally hurt themselves with a gun. Only people who will safely use a gun should have access to it.

You should also ask about gun safety and storage when your children are visiting other homes that may have guns.

Easy ways to store a gun safely include:

- Gun cases or safes
- Lock boxes
- Gun cabinets
- Trigger and cable locks

Many states have laws regarding gun storage. To find updated firearm safe storage laws in your state, visit statefirearmlaws.org.



Cable lock

Lock box



To learn more, visit: facs.org/quality-programs/trauma/ipc

Storing Ammunition (Bullets) away from Guns

To lower the chance that someone uses a gun to hurt him or herself or others, a gun owner should store bullets in a separate place away from the gun or dispose of the bullets.

When storing guns or bullets in other places, it is important to securely lock both the gun and the ammunition to prevent access by others.



Storage at a **Safe, Remote Location**

As long as a gun is properly stored, a gun does not legally need to be kept in the owner's home. For instance, if a gun is mostly used for hunting, it could be stored in another location when not being used for that purpose.

Examples of some remote locations might include:

- In a bonded warehouse for gun storage
- In a secure storage unit
- In a garage or attic in a lock box or safe
- In a hunting lodge in a lock box or locked rifle cabinet
- In a lockbox or safe at another person's home

Cars are NOT safe places to keep guns.

Children can easily access guns left in cars, and cars are often targets for gun theft.



Keep Children and Family **Safe**

Having a gun in the home increases the chance that someone could get hurt. Certain groups of people and situations have a higher risk of having an injury if a gun is present.

Be extra careful with guns when someone in your home:

- Has suicidal thoughts, depression, or wants to hurt themselves
- Is drinking alcohol or using drugs that alter judgement
- Has been violent or is making violent threats
- Has a partner who hurts them or threatens to hurt them
- Has a stalker

Abusive partners and stalkers who have guns are more likely to use them to hurt both their partner and their children. If you or a loved one is being abused, seek help from your local family violence agency and police. In some states, abusers who have protective orders in place or are charged with violent acts, including domestic violence, can have their guns taken away by police.



What to Do When a Friend or Family Member Is at Risk and Has Access to a Gun

Talk to your friend or family member about safe storage or removing their gun from the home.

If you are worried about a friend or family member hurting themselves or someone else, seek help immediately from:

- A mental health provider
- A substance abuse treatment center
- A primary care provider
- A hospital emergency department
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255

If you are concerned that someone you know should not have a gun because he or she is violent, suicidal, or at risk of accidental injury, alert the local police or call 911.



Disposing of an Unwanted Gun

If you have a gun you no longer want, get rid of it safely. Call your local police station to find out if these programs are available in your area.

Surrender Programs

Some states allow people to surrender guns to police without being charged for having an unlicensed gun or finding a gun used in a crime.

Gun Buy-Back Programs

Buy-back programs give cash, gift cards, or other vouchers when people turn in guns to local police. Many programs will not ask for names or charge people for having an unlicensed gun.

Donation to Training Programs

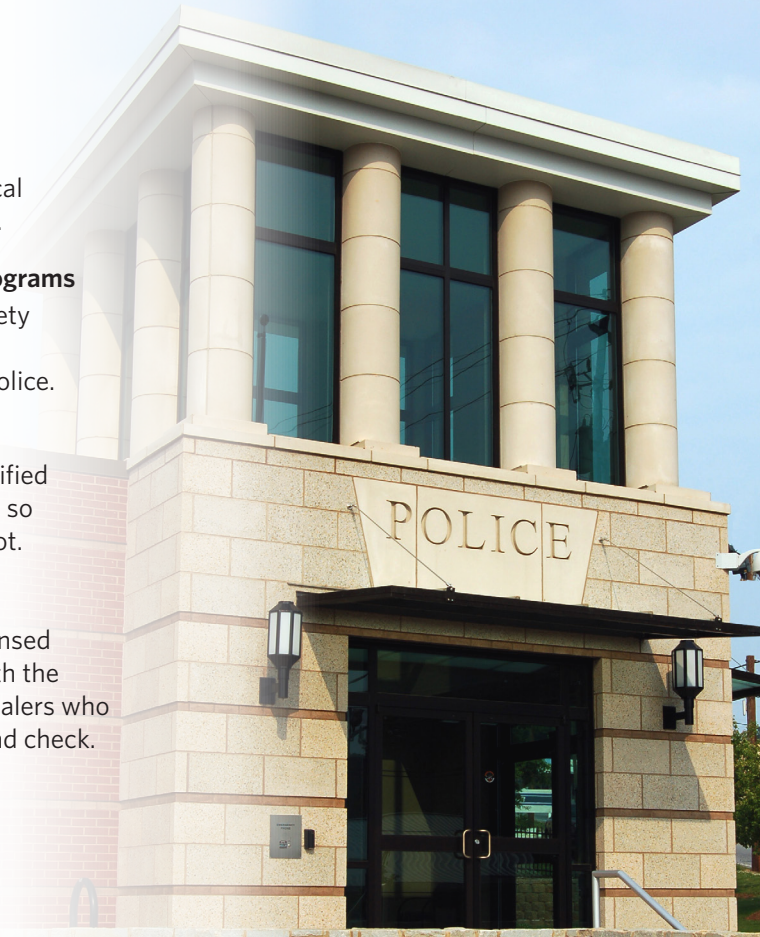
Some police and gun safety agencies will accept gun donations to help train police.

Deactivation

A gunsmith or other certified person can change a gun so that it can no longer shoot.

Sale to Dealers

Guns may be sold to licensed dealers or individuals with the assistance of licensed dealers who can perform a background check.



To learn more, visit:

facs.org/trauma

Acknowledgment: This document was adapted by the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma from materials provided by the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General and the Massachusetts Medical Society.



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