

Safe Gun Handling

Storing Ammunition (Bullets) away from Guns

*Who Is at a Higher Risk
for Injury with a Gun?*

Storage at a Safe, Remote Location

Gun Safety and Your Health

Disposing of an Unwanted Gun

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

Safe Gun Storage



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Did You Know...

- That **38,000 people die** and more than **80,000 people are injured** every year in the U.S. from guns?
- That **22,000** people per year commit suicide using a gun?
- That many gun deaths and injuries **can be prevented**?

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 are like any other risks around your home (chemicals, pools, medications, or fire hazards).

Just like other risks, there are steps you can take to prevent injuries.

You can also help prevent injuries from guns.

Talk to your doctor or nurse 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 Handling

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.



Safe Gun Storage

More than two out of three child gun deaths could have been prevented if guns had been stored locked and unloaded.

Safe gun storage can help prevent children from getting guns and prevent family members who are thinking about hurting themselves or others from obtaining a gun.

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

Easy ways to store a gun safely include:

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

These safety tools can be bought online and at local stores.

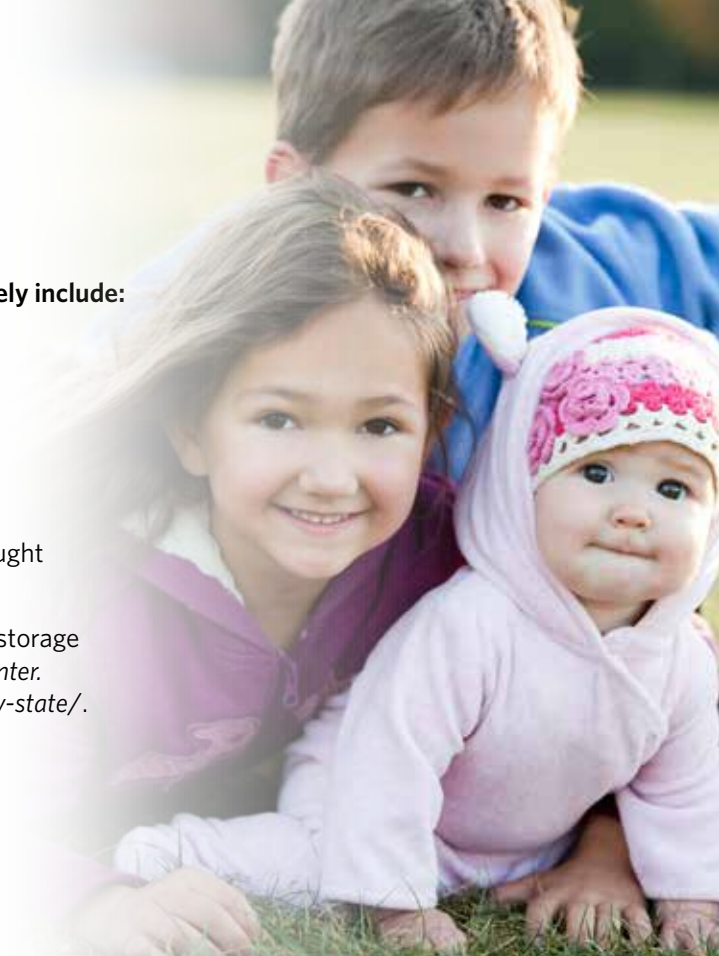
To find updated firearm safe storage laws in your state, visit lawcenter.giffords.org/search-gun-law-by-state/.



Cable lock



Lock box



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 remote locations might include:

- At another licensed person's home
- In a secure storage unit
- In a bonded warehouse for gun storage
- In a second home in a lock box or safe

Cars are not safe places to keep guns.

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



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 make sure those who do not have a license cannot access them.

To ensure that your children are safe at all times, you may also ask about gun safety and storage when your children are visiting other homes that may have guns.






Who Is at a **Higher Risk** for Injury with a Gun?

Guns in the home increase the risk for injuries, but certain people and situations also increase the risk. You should take steps to keep you and your family safe if someone in your household:

- Is a young child
- Is a teenager
- Suffers from suicidal thoughts or depression
- Has a history of violence or is making violent threats toward others
- Has a condition that causes confusion like drug addiction or dementia
- Is or was in a relationship with an abusive partner or 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 concerned about the person having a mental health or substance abuse problem that puts him or her at risk for self-harm or harm to others, seek help immediately from:

- A mental health provider
- A substance abuse treatment center
- A primary care doctor
- A hospital emergency department

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. The police may take away a gun license if a person is a threat or unsafe for gun ownership.

Disposing of an Unwanted Gun

There are several ways to get rid of a gun that is no longer wanted. You may call your local police station to find out if any of the following programs are offered in your area.

Surrender Programs

In many states, anyone can turn in a gun to their local police station. Surrender programs often allow people to avoid criminal charges for having the gun if it is illegally owned or used in a crime.

Gun Buy-Back Programs

Many communities offer gun buy-back programs, and gun owners can get cash, gift cards, tax credits, or vouchers for giving their guns to the local police. Many of these buy-back programs do not ask for your name and will not charge you with a crime for having the gun illegally.

Donation to Training Programs

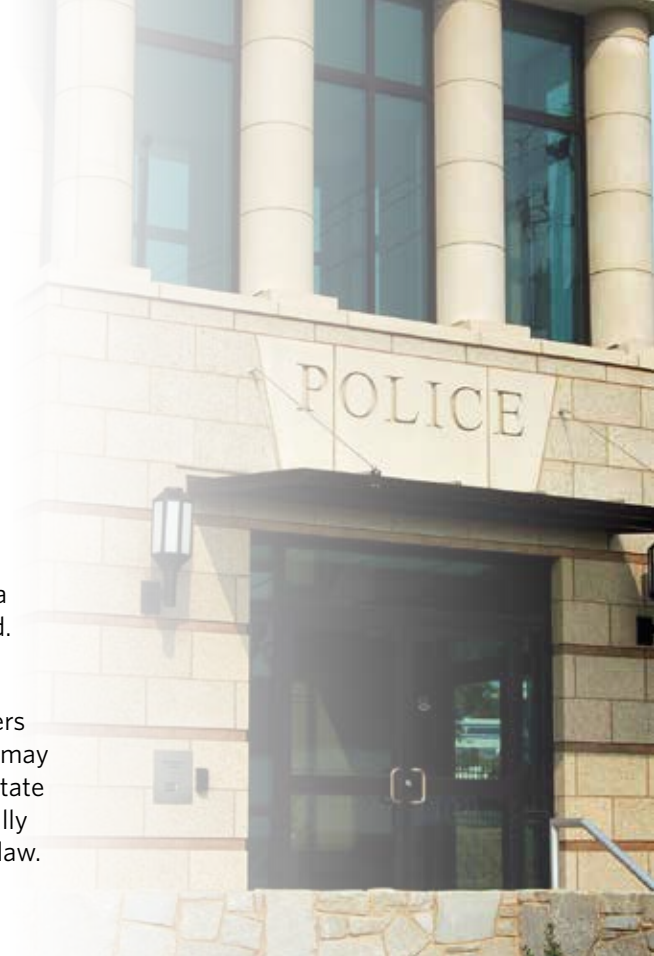
Some law enforcement agencies and gun safety organizations have budgets for buying guns and will accept donations to train police.

Deactivation

A gunsmith or other certified professional can make changes to a gun so that it can no longer be fired.

Sale to Dealers or Individuals

Guns may be sold to licensed dealers or individuals and licensed dealers may assist in this sale. Laws vary from state to state, and the seller should be fully informed with respect to the state law.



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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