

# KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE

Gun safety is an issue that affects everyone. Regardless of your stance on guns, it is critical that everyone in your household is knowledgeable about what to do if they encounter a firearm that is left unattended. Many people who do not own guns do not believe that children should be educated about gun safety; however, 75% of incidents involving an unintentional shooting or suicide occur with the use of a friend, family member, or neighbor's gun. Just because you do not own a firearm, does not mean your children won't be able to access one.

In fact, 47% of high schoolers and 22% of middle schoolers admit to having access to a firearm. Since 92% of suicide attempts with firearms are fatal, proper gun storage can prevent someone from making a mistake they can never take back.

If you do have firearms in your household, you have a responsibility to protect your family members and visitors from the danger a gun presents. There are precautions you should take to secure your firearms, rules you should establish with children, and training to provide anyone who might use the weapon. Gun safety is an ongoing activity that should be monitored constantly in your household to prevent a tragic accident.

## GET TRAINING AND SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Seek out professional training for the handling and care of firearms. Some resources for information on these programs can be found through the police department, sheriff's office, local gun stores, or NRA chapter. Continually research or attend offered workshops to stay knowledgeable about the newest firearm safety products and techniques.

Invest in quality and tested safety equipment. Purchase a safe or lock box for your firearms and a separate safe or lock box for ammunition. Make sure your firearms are equipped with a childproof safety lock and loading indicator. Some organizations and coalitions offer gunlocks for free. Be sure to check all safety equipment on a regular basis and replace non-functioning devices as soon as possible.

*Just because you do not own a firearm, does not mean your children won't be able to access one.*



## RESOURCES

Contact your local NRA chapter for help acquiring safety devices:

[www.nra.org](http://www.nra.org)

Project Child Safe helps provide safety equipment and training through local law enforcement:

[www.projectchildsafes.org](http://www.projectchildsafes.org)

ATF policies and guidelines:

[www.atf.gov/firearms/enforcement/](http://www.atf.gov/firearms/enforcement/)

>INFOCUS

# FIREARM SAFETY



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## STORE GUNS SAFELY

There are 5 steps to securing firearms:

1. Establish clear rules and expectations for all members of your household. Periodically check stored firearms to be sure that unauthorized users have not accessed them.
2. Remove ammunition and store it in a locked box away from the firearms.
3. Store firearms in a locked box, safe, or room away from the reach of children.
4. Consider using an alarm or similar device to make the firearm inoperable.
5. Store keys to the ammunition and firearm cases separate from household keys and out of the reach of unauthorized users.

Think about firearm storage from the perspective of children. The majority of unintentional deaths from the use of a firearm involve a child. Ask yourself if the location of your storage safe is accessible by children in your home. Make sure there are not any tables or drawers to climb near storage areas that would allow easy access to firearms or ammunition. As your children grow, reevaluate your storage locations.

Remember, even if children do not live at home, family and friends may visit. Proper gun storage will keep everyone safe from the danger of an unintentional shooting.

## TRAIN AND TALK TO CHILDREN

Children have natural curiosities about things they do not understand. Answer questions, demonstrate handling techniques, and inform them about the purpose and dangers of firearms. These steps can help reduce the attraction of firearms.

Be sure to emphasize the difference between fantasy and reality. Use TV, movies and video games to discuss how firearm use can be glorified, even though it is dangerous. Explain that Hollywood does not use real ammunition when filming. Perhaps the most driving point you can make is that most people, unlike the hero of an action film, will not recover from a gunshot wound.

Talk to children about what they should do if they encounter an unattended firearm.

**STEP 1: DO NOT APPROACH THE FIREARM.** Do not go closer to the firearm.

**STEP 2: DO NOT TOUCH THE FIREARM.** Do not touch it to move it to a safer place or to look at it.

**STEP 3: FIND AN ADULT.** Leave the area and find a responsible adult. Emphasize that older siblings are not the best choice, and an adult should be notified.

Role-play these steps in different situations so children can become comfortable and less likely to make a dangerous mistake if they encounter an unattended firearm.

## FIREARMS IN PUBLIC

There are dangerous people who will bring dangerous weapons to public places like schools and shopping centers. It does not happen often, but when it does, it is important for everyone's safety that people are able to act in a manner that helps and doesn't make the situation worse.

Acknowledge to children that school is a safe place, but sometimes bad things can happen there. Children should tell an authority if they see a weapon, suspect someone has a weapon, or overhear a threat that someone is planning on bringing a weapon to school or other public place.

If they encounter a firearm when away from home, they should still follow the steps practiced and tell an authority. It is not tattling, but it could save a life.



**When a toddler's thumb pushes against a trigger, the barrel is most likely pointed at their face.**

## AVOIDING TRAGEDY

Unintentional death from firearms is avoidable. Check your firearms and safety equipment on a regular basis, replace broken safety equipment, and be sure children cannot access firearms.

Talk to children often about firearm safety. Even if you do not own firearms, you should talk to your children and remind them what to do if they encounter a firearm. Preparation for the worst case scenario can be the thing that saves a life.