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GUN SAFETY

Putting A Lock On Safety In Your Home

This handout was adapted from Project ChildSafe - A nationwide program of the National Shooting Sports Foundation and its community partners to help ensure safe and responsible firearm ownership and storage.

<http://www.projectchildsafe.org/>

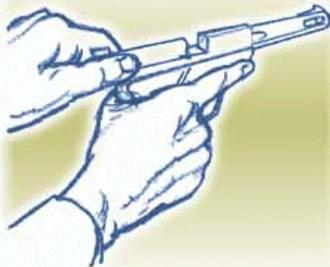


As a firearms owner, it is your responsibility to know how to properly handle any firearm you own and also to know how to secure your firearm(s) in a safe manner in your home. Project ChildSafe has been created to help you accomplish these very important safety goals.

If for any reason you feel uncomfortable with or are unable to accept these responsibilities, we strongly urge you not to own a firearm.

Handling Firearms in a Safe Manner

Firearms safety begins with understanding and carefully following all the rules of safe gun handling.



Before handling any firearm, you should be familiar with the following safety procedures:

Be sure you know how the firearm operates. Not all firearms are the same. Know how to safely open and close the action of the firearm and know how to safely remove any ammunition from the gun or from the gun's magazine. The manufacturer's name and location are on every gun. Write them for free safety and operating instructions.

Always keep a gun pointed in a safe direction, even when handling an unloaded gun. A "safe direction" means that the gun is pointed so that even if it were to fire it would not result in injury.

Never assume that a firearm is unloaded. Whenever you pick up a gun, the first thing you should do is to point it in a safe direction and make sure it is unloaded. Open the action and look into the chamber(s), which should be clear of ammunition. If the gun has a magazine, carefully remove it before opening the action. Then open the action to be sure the chamber is clear of ammunition.



Always keep your finger off the trigger, even when handling an unloaded gun. When handling a gun, rest your finger outside the trigger guard or along the side of the gun. The only time you should touch the trigger is when you are at a shooting range or other safe shooting location and you are actually ready to fire.

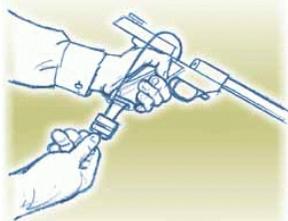
Remember, nearly all firearms accidents in the home can be prevented simply by making sure that guns are kept unloaded and locked up, with ammunition secured in a separate location.

Storing Firearms in a Safe Manner

As a firearms owner, you must make absolutely sure that guns in your home are stored so that they are not accessible to children or other unauthorized persons. Hiding a gun in a closet, drawer or similar location is not safe storage. Children are extremely curious and might find a gun in your home that you thought was safely hidden or inaccessible.

As with most all areas of home safety, your objective as a firearm owner is to put in place a series of simple precautions (multiple safeguards) that together help create a secure environment for firearms in the home. Each of these precautions is designed to prove an additional barrier against unauthorized use.

Key guidelines for safe storage include:



Unloaded firearms should be stored in a locked cabinet, safe, gun vault or storage case. Be sure to place a locked storage case in a location inaccessible to children.

Unloaded firearms can also be secured with a gun locking device that renders the firearm inoperable. A gun lock should be used as an additional safety precaution and not as a substitute for lock storage. If firearms are disassembled, parts should be securely stored in separate locations.

Store ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms.

Always re-check firearms carefully and completely to confirm that they are "still" unloaded when you remove them from storage. Accidents could occur if a family member has loaned or borrowed a gun and then carelessly returned it to storage while it was still loaded.

Firearms Kept for Home Security



The decision to maintain a firearm in the home for self-protection is a serious, personal matter. Unlike passive safety devices, such as alarm systems, firearms used for home protection require significantly more involvement by the owner. Any added safety benefit that may be derived from a firearm depends in large measure on the owner's commitment to appropriate training and a clear understanding of safe handling and storage rules. Are your security concerns realistic and consistent with local crime rates? Do other adults in your household support the decision to maintain a gun in the house? If they will have access to the firearm, will they join you in a firearms training and safety program? What precautions will be practiced to safeguard children? Do risk factors such as drug and alcohol abuse exist within your household? In addition, issues such as individual temperament, reaction to emergency situations, and specific family circumstances should also enter in the decision.

If you must have quick access to a loaded firearm in your home, you need to take special safety measures. Keeping a gun to defend your family makes no sense if that same gun puts your family members or visitors to your home at risk. Many home firearms accidents occur when unauthorized individuals, often visitors, discover loaded firearms that were carelessly left out in the open.

If you choose to keep a firearm for home security, your objective should be to create a situation in which the firearm is readily available to you, yet inaccessible or inoperative to others. Special lockable cases that can be quickly opened only by authorized individuals are options to consider.

You must exercise full control and supervision over a loaded gun at all times. This means the gun must be unloaded and placed in secure storage whenever you leave the gun in your home or elsewhere. Secure ammunition separately.

Your most important responsibility is ensuring that unsupervised children cannot encounter loaded firearms. The precautions you take must be completely effective. Anything less invites tragedy and is a serious violation of your responsibility as a gun owner.

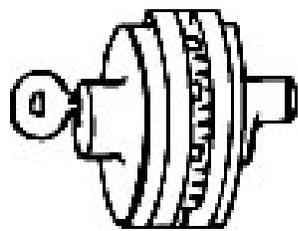
A Message for Your Children

Young people are naturally curious about firearms and, as a result, may be tempted to "play" with a firearm they find. Make sure young people in your home are aware of and understand the safety guidelines described below.

1. Don't go looking for guns in your house or a friend's house. Don't let other kids look for guns in your house.
2. If you find a gun in your house, or anywhere else, STOP! Leave it alone. Don't touch it. Don't let anyone else touch it. Leave the area and be sure to tell an adult at once.
3. Even if a gun looks like a toy, don't touch it. Some real guns may look like toy guns, so don't take a chance. Leave the area and immediately tell an adult.

REMEMBER: IF YOU FIND A GUN, DON'T PICK IT UP. JUST LEAVE IT ALONE, AND GO TELL AN ADULT RIGHT AWAY!

Options for Securely Storing Firearms

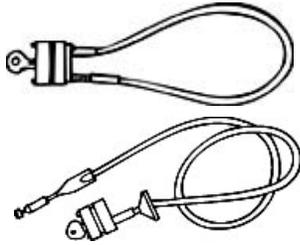
Method	Features	Comments
Trigger Lock 	Widely available, can effectively block trigger but does not prevent loading.	Caution: should never be used on a loaded gun because it can cause the gun to fire under certain circumstances; can't be used on lever-action firearms; keys and combinations must be kept away from children and other unauthorized persons.

Method

Features

Comments

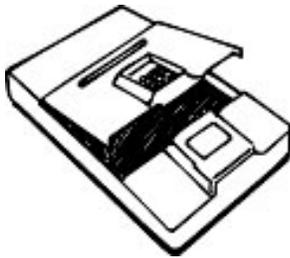
Cable Lock



Widely available, can be used on most firearms, and can also be used to lock a gun to a solid object.

Be sure to install according to directions, not around trigger!; keys, combinations must be kept away from children; cable can be cut.

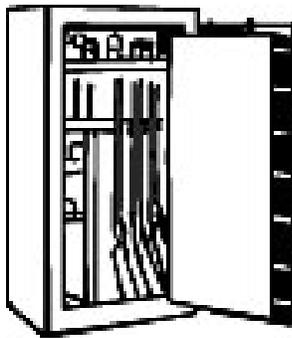
Lock Box (Mechanical & Electronic)



Conceals and protects guns.

Provides secure storage for loaded or unloaded firearm, but in electronic models batteries will need replacement; depending on size, locked box can be stolen; keys and combinations must be kept away from children and other unauthorized persons.

Gun Safes



Most secure storage for multiple guns

Certain models are heavy, expensive; keys and combination must be kept away from children and other unauthorized persons.

Disassembling



Creates a condition where gun cannot be fired.

Not possible with all guns; requires knowledge of correct assembly and disassembly procedures; don't lose the parts.