Children and Gun Safety

Categories : Public Safety

On average, eight children and teens are unintentionally injured or killed every day due to an unlocked or unsupervised gun in the home. Safe gun storage (guns unloaded and locked, ammunition locked separately) reduces children's risk of injury. According to a recent FBI study, three-quarters of the firearms used in school shootings were obtained from the home of a parent or close relative.

Every household can take the following precautions to help protect their children and the community from gun violence:

- If firearms are located in a home, individuals have a responsibility, and in Connecticut, a legal obligation, to protect children and others from gaining access to them.
- Hiding firearms is not enough. Children often know where parents' and relatives guns are kept, and they can't always tell the difference between real and toy guns.
- Even if individuals do not have firearms in the home, individuals want to be sure a child doesn't encounter one at the home of a friend or relative. Organizations such as Brady and Everytown offer resources on how to have the conversation in a non-confrontational way and what to ask for to ensure a child is safe.
- Adolescent suicide risk is strongly associated with firearm availability, and physician counseling of parents about firearm safety appears to be effective, more so often then firearm safety education programs directed at children.

In Connecticut, firearms must be securely stored if:

- A minor under the age of 18 living in or visiting the home is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's parent,
- If a resident in the home is ineligible to possess a firearm or if
- A resident poses a risk of imminent harm to self or others. Beginning Oct 1, 2023, firearms must be securely stored, regardless of who else resides in the home, even if the firearm owner is the sole resident.
- Under Connecticut law, firearm owners are responsible for determining how to best secure their weapons to meet their legal obligation. However, firearm safety experts, including the ATF, recommend storing firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition also locked in a secure location away from the firearm.

Connecticut Resources

- CT Against Gun Violence
- Project ChildSafe, a program of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, offers further guidance on secure storage

To Find Providers in Connecticut's Community Resources Database:

Search by service name: Firearm Safety Education

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SOURCES: Connecticut Against Gun Violence; Giffords Law Center: Child & Consumer Safety; U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Brady; Everytown; State of Connecticut Public Act No. 23-53; Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI); U.S. Department of Justice; Firearm Industry Trade Association
PREPARED BY: 211/tb
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