

California Department of Public Health Office of Suicide Prevention



Safe and Secure Storage of Firearms and Medications

By locking up firearms and prescription medications, **YOU** can help keep your loved ones safe.

Over 4,000 people die by suicide in California each year, and this unfortunate trend has been constant in the state since 2013. Firearms are one of the most common methods used for suicide. They are also the most deadly.

Suicidal crises are often temporary, and most people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide. **However, 9 in 10 people who attempt suicide with a firearm do not survive.** Reducing a person's access

to firearms and prescription medications when in crisis, for example by storing these items in a lock box, gives them time to reconsider their options and can save their life.

Additionally, children, in particular, are at risk of accidental poisoning and firearm injuries when firearms and medications are not locked up. Research shows that children often know where firearms are kept in the home and have handled them without their caregivers' knowledge. In 2022, there were more than 2,700 Emergency Department visits for unintentional firearm injuries; over 250 of these visits were for youth under the age of 18.

What is the safest way to store a firearm in a lock box or gun safe?

- Unload firearm
- Dismantle key pieces of long gun or rifle
- Lock firearm and ammunition separately and safely
- Keep keys and combinations out of reach from children, unauthorized users, or others in crisis



For more information on safe firearm storage, visit:

[Bulletpoints Project Safe Firearm Storage Devices Webpage](#)

Together we can protect our families, friends, and communities in California.

Overdose, injury, and suicide can be prevented. You already do so much to keep your loved ones safe such as using seat belts, smoke alarms, car seats, bike helmets, and first aid kits. **Preventing access to firearms and prescription medications by locking them up is one more step you can take to keep your loved ones safe.**

Need help? Know someone who does?

Call or text 988 for 24/7/365 access to trained crisis counselors that provide free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.