

# FIREARMS RESPONSIBILITY IN THE HOME



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# fact:

Accidents involving firearms in the home have decreased significantly over the last 20 years, according to the National Safety Council.

By strictly following the common-sense rules listed in this brochure, parents and children can prevent firearms accidents in the home and ensure that this downward trend continues. All you have to do is act responsibly and insist that other members of your family do the same.



## Firearms Responsibility In The Home

As a firearms owner, you are responsible for knowing how to properly handle your firearms and how to secure your firearms in a safe manner in your home. This brochure underscores the responsibilities each and every one of us must accept when we bring firearms into our homes.

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



# RULES FOR SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

Always **unload sporting firearms carefully and completely** before taking them into the home, remembering to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Never load a sporting firearm in the home.



Always **make absolutely sure that firearms in your home are securely stored out of the reach of children and other unauthorized persons.**



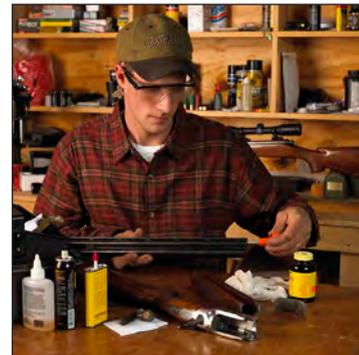
Unloaded firearms can be secured with a firearm locking device to make them inoperable. Unloaded firearms also can be stored in a locked cabinet, safe, firearm vault or storage case.



Always **store ammunition in a locked location** separate from firearms and out of the reach of children.



Always **clean and place firearms in their proper storage location** immediately after returning from a hunting trip or a day at the range.



Always **re-check firearms carefully and completely** to be sure that they are still unloaded when you remove them from storage.



Accidents have occurred when a family member has borrowed or loaned a firearm and returned it to storage while it was still loaded.

## remember:

You are responsible for making certain the firearms in your home are not casually accessible to anyone — especially curious young people.

**FIREARMS ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME** can be prevented simply by making sure that firearms are kept unloaded and safely stored, with ammunition secured in a separate location.

# SAFE AND SECURE STORAGE OPTIONS

More than 40 million Americans enjoy using rifles, shotguns and handguns for hunting and target shooting. When these firearms are not being used, they must be safely and securely stored. This is where firearms responsibility in the home begins — and ends.

Options to help you safely store your firearms include:

## FIREARM CASE



## CABLE LOCK



## ELECTRONIC LOCK BOX



## LOCK BOX



## FIREARM SAFE



important:

**ALWAYS**  
*make absolutely sure that firearms in your home are securely stored and inaccessible to children.*

A firearm locking device is intended only to **deter access** to a firearm by unauthorized persons, particularly children. A firearm locking device is not intended to withstand forced entry by someone determined to defeat the lock by using tools or other aggressive means. A firearm locking device should be considered as only **one element** of a safe storage program for firearms.



Securely storing firearms when not in use is the

**no. 1**  
way to help prevent accidents.

Check municipal, county, state and federal law for any requirements about safe storage of firearms and ammunition, as well as requirements about having loaded firearms and the discharge of firearms in your community.

# FIREARMS KEPT FOR HOME SECURITY

## The decision to maintain a firearm

in the home for self-protection is a serious, personal matter. Any added safety benefit gained from owning a firearm depends in large measure on the owner's having appropriate training and clear understanding of safe handling and storage rules. Factors such as individual temperament, reaction to emergency situations, specific family circumstances and support for your having a firearm in the home from other adults in the household must be considered.

If you feel the need for quick access to a loaded firearm in your home, you must take special safety measures. Keeping a firearm to defend your family makes no sense if that same firearm puts family members or visitors to your home at risk.

In keeping a firearm for home security, your objective should be to have the firearm readily available to you, yet not accessible to others. Special lockable cases that can

## responsible:

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



**Your home will be as safe as you choose to make it.**

be quickly opened by authorized individuals are options to consider.

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



Fatal home firearms accidents can occur when children discover firearms that adults thought were safely hidden or out of reach.

# DETERRING ACCESS BY

# AT-RISK AND PROHIBITED



PERSONS

**Firearms owners who live with a** person who is at-risk or legally prohibited from possessing a firearm may wish to consider upgrading their storage levels to better meet their safe-storage responsibilities. You must be absolutely certain that no firearm can be accessed by an at-risk or prohibited person. Simply hiding a firearm is not secure storage and poses a risk.

Persons considered to be at-risk may include those with symptoms or history of treatment for mental illness, increasing patterns of alcohol/substance abuse, isolation or violent behaviors, or recent experience with a major life event—such as divorce, job loss or financial trouble. It also can be someone who you, the firearms owner, have good reason to believe is likely to do harm to themselves or others.

A person is legally prohibited from possessing a firearm if he or she is a convicted felon, fugitive from justice, unlawful user of any controlled substance, illegal alien, dishonorably discharged from the military, subject to a court restraining order, has been convicted of a crime involving domestic violence, has renounced U.S. citizenship, or who has been deemed mentally incompetent (“a mental defective”) by a court or involuntarily hospitalized for psychiatric care.

In this situation, consider storing firearms not in use in a locked gun safe or other appropriate security device that is resistant to tampering by an adult. If for any reason you as a firearms owner feel uncomfortable with or are unable to accept these safe-storage responsibilities given the circumstance

of having an at-risk or prohibited person living with you, we strongly urge you not to own a firearm.

Temporary off-site storage is an option. Such storage can be effective, for example, if an individual living with you is in emotional crisis or exhibits significant behavior change. Friends who are gun owners might offer storage. Your local firearms retailer may know of options for off-site firearms storage in your area.

Secure storage options for gun owners living with at-risk or prohibited persons include a locked gun safe, gun cabinet, lock box or storage case. For added security, portable storage devices can be secured to a wall or the floor, or both, to prevent removal. In addition to locked storage, unloaded firearms can be secured with a gun-locking device that renders the firearm inoperable. Firearms can also be disassembled, with parts securely stored in separate locations. Please review fully the sections in this booklet titled “Storing Firearms in a Safe Manner” and “Options for Securely Storing Firearms.”

Learn more about at-risk behavior and find resources at the National Institute of Mental Health website: [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov). As a family member or friend, you may be in a position to encourage a person in distress to seek assistance from a qualified provider.

Learn more about persons who are legally prohibited from possessing firearms at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives website: [atf.gov/firearms/how-to-identify-prohibited-persons.html](http://atf.gov/firearms/how-to-identify-prohibited-persons.html).



# SAFE HOME CHECKLIST

-  Firearms kept for security reasons are fully controlled at all times.
-  Firearms are securely stored in a location inaccessible to children and other unauthorized persons.
-  Sporting firearms are unloaded before they are brought into the home and never loaded while in the home.
-  Sporting firearms are immediately cleaned and placed in secure storage when they are returned from hunting or target shooting.
-  When firearms are removed from storage, they are always carefully checked to confirm that they are unloaded.
-  Ammunition is stored under lock and key, separately from firearms.
-  The owner's manual that came with the firearm must be read and understood.

## SAFETY TIPS

### GENERAL FIREARM HANDLING



Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.

Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.

Keep your fingers off the trigger. Don't rely on your firearm's "safety" device.

Keep the firearm unloaded when not in use.



**All members** of the household must understand and follow the requirements of *Firearms Responsibility In The Home*.

**NOTE TO PARENTS:**  
Read with your children and have them sign the attached special Kids Message and Contract.

For more information about firearms ownership and storage visit:  
[projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org)



# Kids

## A message to kids about Firearms Responsibility



There is one important step you can take right now to prove you are responsible about firearms. Sign this Firearms Responsibility Contract and give it to your parents.

### FIREARMS RESPONSIBILITY CONTRACT

#### I Hereby Promise:

- I will not handle guns without permission from a grown-up that I know.
- I will never play with guns.
- I will not go snooping or allow my friends to go snooping for guns in the house.
- If I find a gun, even if it looks like a toy, I will not touch it; I will tell a grown-up I know right away.
- I will obey the rules of safe gun handling.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Not long ago, in another town, some kids found a firearm. Maybe they were looking for it because of something they saw on television. Maybe one of them dared the other to find it. Maybe they just found a firearm that was left out by mistake. It doesn't matter why they found it. What matters is the firearm was loaded, and they played with it. Now they are very sorry they did. Don't let this happen to you. Always follow these safety rules:

- Don't go looking for firearms, in your house or a friend's house. Don't let other kids look for firearms in your house.
- If you find a firearm in your house — or anywhere else — leave it alone. **Don't touch it!** Don't let anyone else touch it! Tell an adult.
- Even if a firearm looks like a toy — don't touch it! Some real firearms look like toys. Don't take a chance. Tell an adult.



**Remember...if you find a firearm, don't pick it up. Just leave it alone and tell an adult right away.**



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PROMOTE      PROTECT      PRESERVE