

# SAFE FIREARM OWNERSHIP IN VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

One simple action can help save the life of a person having thoughts of suicide: preventing access to firearms or other lethal means. Creating time and distance between a person with suicidal thoughts and access to a means of self-harm can allow the period of heightened risk to pass. Because we know that suicide is preventable, there also are steps that concerned loved ones and friends can take well before a moment of crisis, such as having a conversation about safely storing firearms.

Discussing safe firearm storage with an at-risk veteran can sometimes be challenging. While it's important to acknowledge the importance of firearm ownership to veterans, there are options and plans for safely storing and protecting household firearms that can help reduce the risk of suicide.

## FIREARM SAFETY TIPS



- Explore options for safely storing firearms when not in use, including cable locks, gun cases, lock boxes or full-size gun safes. [Use this guide](#) to determine which device best suits your household and priorities.
- Use a gun locking device that renders the firearm inoperable when not in use. A gun lock should be used as an additional safety precaution and not as a substitute for secure storage. [Find a safety kit near you.](#)
- Make sure firearms are unloaded and placed in their secure storage location immediately after returning from a day at the range or a hunting trip.
- When having a conversation with a veteran about firearm safety, it can be helpful to frame your conversation around the safety of others — family, friends or children who may not know how to properly handle a firearm or understand that unauthorized access could result in accidental injury or death.
- Regularly reassess steps to ensure the safe storage and use of firearms, especially during periods of increased stress or emotional crisis. This may include having a trusted person hold the key to a safe or temporary offsite storage where permitted by law.

## AS A GUN OWNER



You have many options for safely storing and protecting household firearms when not in use.

## ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A VETERAN IN CRISIS?

- Connect with the 24/7, confidential [Veterans Crisis Line](#) to reach qualified responders with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of them are veterans themselves. Dial 988 then press 1.



- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' [Make the Connection Suicide Prevention Resource](#) has information on the warning signs of suicide, treatment options, self-help tools and real veteran stories to help veterans reconnect and find hope.

**MAKE THE CONNECTION**

- [The Warrior Box](#) is an innovative intervention that is designed to help Veterans stay connected with the people and values they choose to live for.

**THE WARRIOR BOX PROJECT**



The National Shooting Sports Foundation®, a leading organization promoting firearms safety and responsibility in the U.S., launched Project ChildSafe® in 1998 (prior to 2003 the program was called Project HomeSafe). Project ChildSafe is a nationwide initiative to promote firearms responsibility and provide safety education to all gun owners. While children are a focus, Project ChildSafe is intended to help young people and adults practice greater firearms safety in the home. The program has provided more than 38 million free firearm safety kits to gun owners in all 50 states and five U.S. territories. Firearms owners can find tools, tips and information about safe and responsible firearms storage at [projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org).