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Please support LD 1120

Please read information below, includes documentation.

Thank-you!

The Problem: More than half of gun owners report storing a firearm without using basic security measures like a trigger lock or gun case. (1)

Adult and youth suicides, acts of unintentional violence, widespread firearm thefts, and other criminal activity with guns are all made possible when guns are not safely stored. Maine has no law requiring firearm owners to securely store their guns, even if someone who is not allowed to have a gun can easily get to them. The state only penalizes those who allow young children to access firearms without parental permission, but this limited law does not mandate secure storage or prevent access by older children or others. These unsafe storage standards have dangerous consequences. Between 70% and 90% of firearms used by minors in suicides, unintentional shootings, and school shootings are found in the child's home or the home of a relative, and often are left easily accessible.(2)

To prevent these and other tragedies, it is crucial for firearms to be securely stored when they are not in use—especially in Maine, where nearly 90% of gun deaths are caused by suicide. (3)

(3) Randy Billings, “Gun suicides in Maine far outpace U.S. rate,” Portland Press Herald, June 8, 2022,

<https://www.pressherald.com/2022/06/08/gun-suicides-in-maine-far-outpace-u-s-rate/>

; Renee M. Johnson et al., “Who Are the Owners of Firearms Used in Adolescent Suicides?” *Suicide and Life-threatening*

*Behavior* 40, no. 6 (2010): 609-611

(2) “Child Access Prevention & Safe Storage,” GIFFORDS, last accessed April 2, 2025,

<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/child-consumer-safety/child-access-prevention-and-safe-storage/>.

(1) Cassandra K. Crifasi et al., “Storage Practices of US Gun Owners in 2016,” *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 4 (2018): 532–537; Michael D. Anestis et al., “Assessment of Firearm Storage Practices in the US, 2022,” *JAMA Network Open* 6, no. 3 (2023): e231447. See also, Norah W. Friar et al., “Firearm Storage Behaviors — Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Eight States, 2021-2022,” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 73, no. 23 (2024): 523-528.

Unsecured Firearm Thefts in Maine: Maine law enforcement has also noted a rise in thefts of unsecured firearms. These stolen weapons are often used to facilitate drug trafficking and other crimes. Examples from just the last few years include:

- In 2023, a man in Bowdoin with an extensive violent criminal history was able to gain access to unsecured firearms three days after being released from prison. He then killed four people, including his parents, before driving up I-295 shooting randomly at passing cars.

“Maine man pleads guilty to Bowdoin murders, I-295 shootings,” WGME, July 1, 2024,

<https://wgme.com/news/local/maine-man-pleads-guilty-to-bowdoin-murders-i-295-shootings-joseph-eaton-david-and-cynthia-eaton-bobby-and-patti-eger-murder-gun-violence-bowdoin>.

- In 2023, Maine State Police performing a traffic stop in Kennebunk found a loaded, stolen handgun in a vehicle along with thousands of dollars of fentanyl and cocaine.

- In 2024, Lewiston Police performing a raid recovered a stolen handgun alongside tens of thousands of dollars in fentanyl, cocaine, and drug proceeds.

The Solution: Maine must pass a complete safe storage law that ensures firearms are not easily accessible by our youth, by criminals, or by any others who should not have them, while safeguarding parents' right to allow their children to access a firearm with permission.

This type of law will keep Mainers safe by:

- Preventing suicide. Safe storage laws help prevent suicide by keeping guns out of the hands of youth and reducing access for lawful adult owners in crisis.
- Preventing gun theft. Securely storing guns helps keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, making it easier for law enforcement to keep communities safe.
- Preventing unintentional gun deaths. Safe storage prevents unintentional gun deaths by keeping firearms out of the hands of those who might handle them irresponsibly, protecting both themselves and others. Maine should follow states like Colorado, Oregon, and Vermont by requiring firearms to be securely stored with a trigger lock, gun case, or safe when not in use. The law must also hold owners accountable if a negligently stored gun is accessed and misused by a prohibited person.

These reforms will ensure that Maine has a comprehensive safe storage law that promotes gun owner responsibility and keeps communities safe.

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Edmond D. Shenassa et al., "Safer Storage of Firearms at Home and Risk of Suicide: a Study of Protective Factors in a Nationally Representative Sample," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 58, no. 10 (2004): 841–848.