



Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action (SAM-ILA)

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April 16, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Committee on Judiciary,

The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action, (SAM-ILA) is testifying Neither for Nor Against L.D. 1104 - An Act to Limit the Liability of Persons Who Provide Firearm Hold Agreements, and L.D. 1174 - An Act to Allow Gun Shops to Hold Firearms for Veterans of the United States Armed Forces and First Responders.

We believe there may be concepts within each bill that could be combined that may strengthen liability protections for FFL dealers who are willing to assist families and individuals who may choose to voluntarily give up their firearm temporarily. There is an urgent need statewide to find safe and reliable ways to store firearms in cases involving protection orders and voluntary relinquishment.

The SAM-ILA opposes L.D. 1120 - An Act to Promote the Secure Storage of Firearms and L.D. 1299 - An Act to Prohibit the Unsecured Storage of Handguns in Motor Vehicles.

The SAM-ILA has introduced and passed legislation to create incentives for safe storage, including a sales tax exemption for gun safes and lock boxes. We have also created programs like the Safer Homes program to educate on the importance of safe storage. In addition, we have worked with the Maine Bureau of Veteran Services in an educational initiative to help veterans and their families secure firearms when loved ones are in crisis. This program was expanded to include education initiatives involving FFL dealers. We are doing good work and bills like L.D. 1120 and 1299 detract from this important work by creating situations where law abiding citizens, many trying to defend their families and livelihoods, can be turned into criminals for owning or possessing a gun. There are enough laws on the books to address reckless storage of a firearm. Again, let's reject the division driven by national political groups and continue working on policies that make Maine a safer place to live and respect individual liberty.

Thank you,

David Trahan, Executive Director, SAM-ILA

Veteran-Centric Means Matters and Firearms Training for Mental Health Professionals

This course is intended for licensed mental health providers who are working with Veterans and their families.

Instructional topics will include:



Panel Discussion with Veterans
Firearms Safety Training
Range Practice with an NRA Certified Instructor



Means Matters (Firearms & Medication)
Role-play Exercises with Veterans and Counselors
Veteran Specific Safety Plans



Suicide Stigma Discussion
Family, Friends, and Veterans Involvement
0.7 CEU's available for \$12, refer to Eventbrite for details

Sign up Now!

Reserve your tickets at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/162571346273>

For any questions regarding the event please email Sarah Sherman.

Email: sarah.sherman@maine.gov

(50 student capacity)

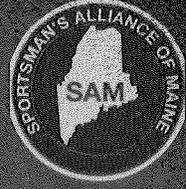
When & Where

September 10, 2021

8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Lunch: Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) or bring your own brown bag.

Sportsman's Alliance of Maine Headquarters
L.L. Bean Conference Center
205 Church Hill Road in Augusta



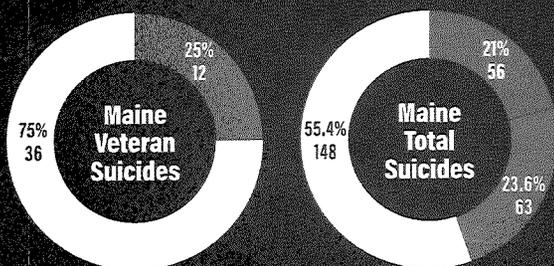
Sponsored by the Maine Safer Homes Taskforce

MAINE SAFER HOMES TASKFORCE

The Maine Safer Home Taskforce (MSHT) was formed, to endorse a public health approach to combat the issue of Maine's veterans' suicide rate, which is the highest in the northeast.

Members include: Maine CDC, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services, VA Maine Healthcare System, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Maine Vet Centers, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Maine Army National Guard Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention Team and other veteran-centric organizations throughout the state.

By utilizing the strong safety culture that already exists within the firearms community in Maine, the MSHT seeks to promote gun safety education, mental health resources, and practical off-site firearms and medication storage solutions with family, friends, other veterans, or law enforcement.



- Firearms
- Suffocation
- Other & low count methods

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

If a family member or friend is going through a rough time, such as alcohol or substance misuse, divorce or break-up, or major life-stressors, make sure they are safe from guns and medication.

As a community, let us
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND.



1-888-568-1112
MAINE CRISIS LINE
CALL. TEXT. CHAT.

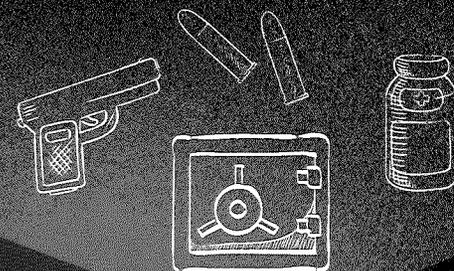


**Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

NATIONAL
**SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org



Sarah Sherman, Director of Strategic Partnerships
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Office - 207-430-5816
Email - sarah.sherman@maine.gov



GUN SAFETY & YOUR HEALTH

PROTECT YOU & HOPE FOR YOU

Promoting firearm safety in the home, safe storage and temporary removal of access to firearms as part of suicide prevention efforts. Learn common warning signs of suicide and what you can do to take action.





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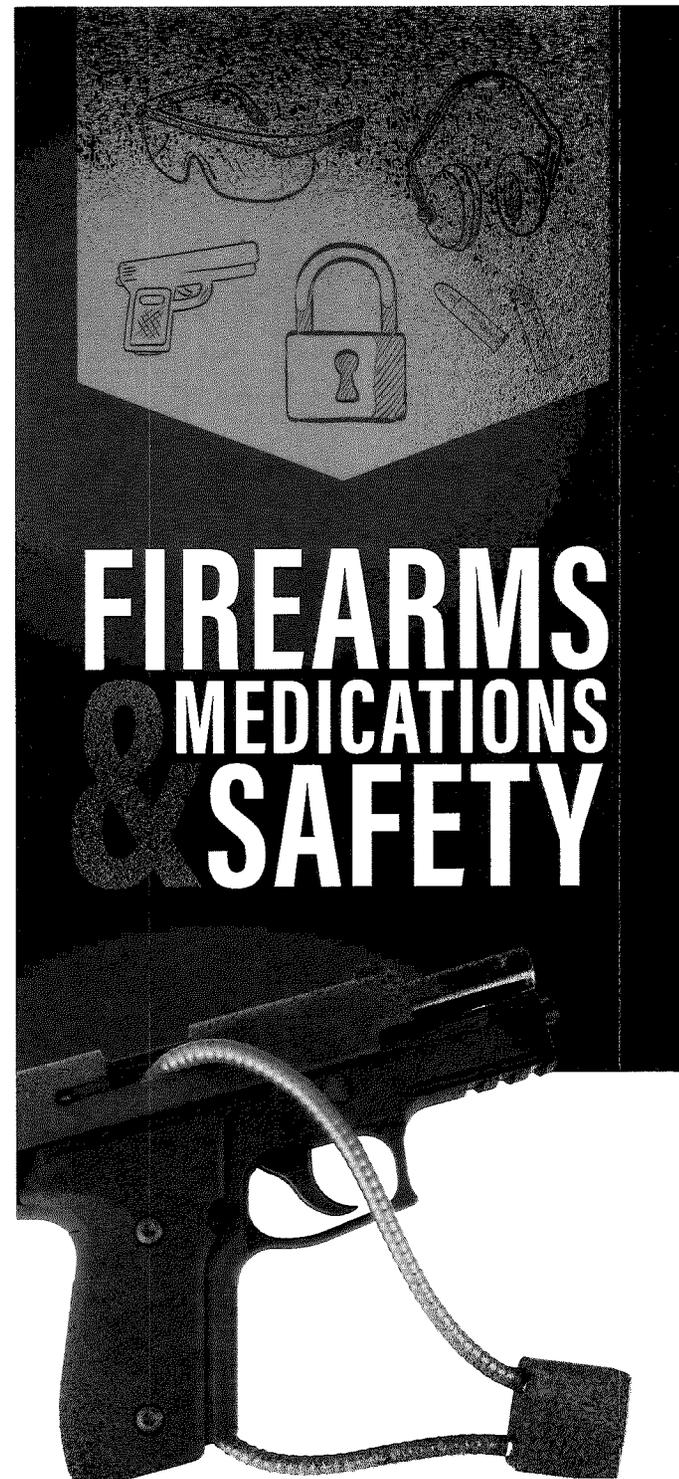


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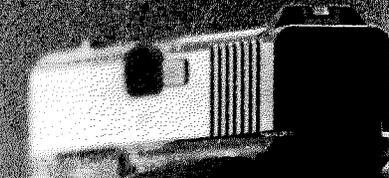
Sarah Sherman, Director of Strategic Partnerships
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Office - 207-430-5816
Email - sarah.sherman@maine.gov



FIREARMS & MEDICATIONS SAFETY

OWNING & HANDLING & A GUN

TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS IF IT WERE LOADED



1. Never handle firearms while under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Guns and impairment are never a good mix. In Maine, it's against the law to use a firearm under the influence of alcohol, any other drug or a controlled substance.

3. Seek proper training

Attend a reputable firearms safety handling course or seek private instructions before attempting to use a firearm. Know how to safely operate and maintain your firearm before shooting. Learn the specifics of each gun before you handle, shoot or clean it.

3. Wear ear and eye protection as appropriate

Shooting without protection will likely cause long term injury.

4. Use only the correct ammunition for your gun

Understand what ammunition your gun requires and use only the appropriate size and type.

5. Be sure of your target and what is beyond

Be sure you know the target. If there is any doubt, don't shoot. Also, if you don't have a backstop, be sure you know where the shot will go if it goes beyond your target.

6. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction

Be aware of the direction the firearm is pointed. Only point at things you intend to shoot.

7. Keep finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

Finger should never rest on the trigger unless in the deliberate act of shooting. Your trigger finger should be extended, pointing forward, pressed against the side of the gun and outside the trigger guard.

8. Be sure that your firearm is safe to operate

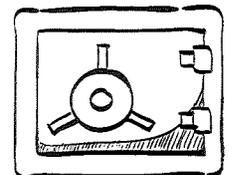
Always verify that the firearm is unloaded and that the muzzle is clear of obstruction.

9. Safely store guns to prevent unauthorized access

Store all firearms unloaded and locked when not in use. Lock ammunition in a separate location. Ensure household members who shouldn't have unsupervised access (children and teens, adults at risk for suicide or other misuse) don't know the combination to the locks or where the keys are.

10. Consider additional safety precautions if a family member may be suicidal

When someone is going through a crisis (such as a breakup, job loss, legal issues) and/or has a major change in their behavior (depression, violence, lack of selfcare, sleeplessness or heavy drinking or drug use), temporarily storing firearms or medication away from the home for a while may save their life.





Maine Safer Homes Taskforce Gun Shop and Range

Participation Agreement

We are excited that you would like to participate in this Maine-based program as designed by the Maine Safer Homes Taskforce: Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services, Department of Public Safety, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, Maine Center for Disease Control, Veteran of Foreign Wars, Veterans Benefits Administration, American Legion, VA Maine Healthcare System, Maine Vet Centers, and the Maine Army National Guard Behavioral Health and Suicide Prevention Team.

We ask that you provide us your contact information and sign this participation agreement indicating your willingness to be listed on the Maine Safer Homes Taskforce Website and Safe Storage Program Map.

By signing this form, you acknowledge:

- a. Your participation is voluntary.
- b. Your establishment will comply with all laws for providing temporary storage of firearms to customers.
- c. Your establishment agrees to be listed on the Maine Safer Homes Taskforce website and Safe Storage Program Map.

Please complete the following information so we can add you to the program:

Name (First and Last): _____

Firearm Store Name: _____

Store Address: _____

Store City: _____

Store Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Please sign here:

I am authorized to sign for the Firearms Store or Range and provide this service.



Maine Safe Storage Program - Proposed Process:

1. The veteran brings their firearm/s into a gun shop or range to be logged in for safe storage.
2. They arrive at shop with a trusted family member or friend (designee) and the business checks the firearm/s into their gunsmith log and tags them with a safe storage tag and number that matches the book entry. The firearm/s are put on a work order and accounted for in the business' gunsmithing logbook.
3. The veteran reviews and signs the contract and a specific number of months are assigned to the storage request. The veteran, designee, and the store owner keep a copy of the contract for their records.
4. At drop off, it is explained that any ammunition brought, and left is forfeited, and the business will use it for test firing and/or dispose of it.
5. At the end of the designated time period, the veteran will be contacted by the gun shop/range to assess if they wish to retrieve their firearm/s back or if they would like to extend the hold for an extended time period.
6. When the veteran is ready to receive their firearms back and the agreed upon amount of time has passed, they make an appointment and return with their designee and receive the firearm/s back and the business logs them out of the book as return to customer.
7. At this point, the business owner respectfully reminds the veteran and the designee that they can't sell them new ammunition as a condition of the program.
8. If after a period of time the veteran decides that they would rather not have the firearms in their possession but have the designee take responsibility for them, they make an appointment and the designee fills out a Firearms Transaction Record (Form 4473), and once they clear a background check, the designee takes possession of the firearms and the business logs them out of the book to the new individual as a legally transferred firearm.

Note: *The only time the business would request a Firearms Transaction Record (Form 4473) is if the designee is taking custody of the firearms. The must to conduct a background check for that individual to ensure that the designee is not prohibited from possessing firearms.*

9. If after a period of time the veteran contacts the business and states that they would like to sell the firearms. They are logged out of the gunsmithing log and into the business' retail book. The business sells the firearm/s, takes a commission, and pays the remainder owed to the veteran.



Tips for Maine Firearm Retailers and Range Owners

The leading method of suicide in Maine is firearms. Recent findings suggest that often impulsive, crisis-driven suicides occur with guns purchased within that same week, usually within hours. Using your knowledge and expertise as a retailer you can often spot when a sale does not feel right, and that could reduce the odds that a gun bought at your store today is used in a suicide tomorrow. Your vigilance could save a life!

Signs that a potential buyer could be suicidal - *None of these signs clearly indicate someone is suicidal, but if any are present (especially if more than one is present), use extra caution in deciding whether to proceed with the sale.*

- No knowledge about guns and no interest in learning; asks no questions.
- Doesn't care which gun he/she purchases/rents or seem unresponsive to your questions about the purchase.
- Gives unconvincing response when asked what he/she intends to use the gun for, or about prior experience or training.
- No interest in firearm instruction, maintenance, safety, or safe storage.
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback.
- Makes comments that could suggest suicidality, e.g., "I don't need a lot of ammunition; I won't have the gun for long."
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact, conveys a sense of hopelessness.
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears) or under influence of drugs or alcohol.

Options for responding to a potentially suicidal buyer

- Notify store owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective sale or rental.
- Urge customer with little firearm experience to seek training or a class before buying.
- Ask the customer why he/she wants a firearm and how and where s/he plans to use it.
- Suggest the customer take some more time to think it over before buying.
- If he/she claims to be buying for self-defense, offer to sell pepper spray instead.
- Ask person directly if he/she is suicidal (it is well proven that asking about suicidal intent does not spur the thought, and it is well proven that asking about suicide intent and offering help saves lives); If yes, offer the Veterans Crisis Line – Dial 911 then press 1 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-TALK [8255]) and stop the sale.
- Notify nearby dealers that someone you denied a sale to may go to their store; notify police who can check welfare later.
- Trust your instincts, you are an expert in this field; you are under no obligation to sell a gun to anyone.

What else can I do?

- Display a suicide prevention hotline poster in your store.
- Distribute firearm safety brochures to buyers (Gun Safety & Your Health and Firearms & Medications Safety) that include information about recognizing suicide warning signs and keeping firearms away from suicidal or depressed family members.
- Always sell or inquire about a gun locking or safe storage device at point of purchase.
- If you are a firearms instructor, consider discussing suicide prevention in your classes. Safe Community can provide you with links to information to meet your curriculum.
- Spread the word. Ask other dealers you know to visit our website to request our free materials.



Contract To Hold Firearms - Maine Safe Storage Program

A service provided to veterans to thank them for their service.

This service is to provide a temporary safe firearms storage option. You may also use this opportunity to dispose of unwanted ammunition.

This contract is between firearm(s) owner, their Designee, and the Gun Shop or Range.

Owner of the firearm(s): _____ **Phone:** _____
Email address if consent to contact this way: _____

Designee: _____ **Phone:** _____
Email address if consent to contact this way: _____

Gun Shop or Range: _____ **Phone:** _____
Email address if consent to contact this way: _____

Store or Range Address:

As the owner or designee, you are voluntarily turning over your firearm(s) to the (Gun Shop or Range) to be logged in for a temporary safe firearms storage option and will pick the duration of time they are held.

At the end of _____ month(s), you will be contacted to assess if you wish to retrieve your firearm/s or if you would like to extend the hold for another _____ month(s).

At the end of the storage your firearm(s) will be returned to you and/or your designee. If you would like to sell your firearm(s), the gun shop/range could assist you with that process.

- *It is **not** necessary to make an appointment to drop your firearm(s) off.*
- *Your firearm(s) will be logged in to provide a record of them and the condition they were received in.*
- *Photo ID is required, e.g., Driver's License, State ID, VA ID Card to participate - ID Form used and number: _____*

Please read and initial the following:

_____ I understand that it is necessary to make an appointment with the Gun Shop/Range to retrieve my firearm(s).

_____ I understand that my firearm(s) cannot be returned before the end date of this contract.

_____ I understand that myself or my designee will need to pick up the firearm(s).

_____ I understand I will not be able to buy any ammunition from this store during the time my firearm(s) are being stored.

_____ I understand I will not be able to buy any ammunition during the time of firearm(s) pickup and for a period of 30 days after pickup at this location.

_____ I understand the store will not return or refund any ammunition that was disposed of when my firearm(s) were dropped off.

_____ I understand my name, firearm(s) and the reason for storage is private (between the firearm(s) owner and the business owner), except as necessary for federal licensing requirements.

_____ I understand that my firearm(s) will not be returned to me if I am impaired by drugs or alcohol or are at eminent risk of harming myself.

_____ I understand that the _____ month pick-up dated is _____.

_____ I understand that the pick-up date, which is the maximum limit of storage time offered, is (_____).

_____ I understand that if the firearm(s) is/are not picked up by this date _____, the gun shop will place the firearm/s into consignment. Proceeds from sale will be distributed to the veteran (firearm(s) owner) or their designee after the gun shop fees have been charged.

Description of Firearms - Make, Model, and Caliber

LOCK IT AWAY LIVE TODAY

GUN SAFETY PROTECTS YOU & YOUR LOVED ONES

**Veterans practicing safe storage can
decrease risk for suicide.**

Since many suicidal crises are brief, safe storage practices can save a life by increasing the amount of time and space between the suicidal impulse and access to a firearms or medications.

Statistically speaking, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports, Maine has the highest veterans' suicide rate in the Northeast and in 2020, 71.1% of our state's veterans' suicide completions were by firearms (meaning 27 out of 38 veterans utilized this method).

One option for safe storage is taking firearms to a gun shop or range. Go to the Maine Safer Homes Taskforce interactive map to find the nearest business participating in the program



**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE
MAINE SAFER HOMES TASKFORCE, VISIT: (WEBSITE HERE)**

