

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS: PREVENTING UNAUTHORIZED USE

THE PROBLEM

Both unintentional shootings and suicides, which combined account for tens of thousands of deaths each year, often result from the unauthorized use of an easily accessible firearm stored in the home.

Between 1999 and 2010, over 8,300 people in the United States were reported as killed in unintentional shootings, including 2,383 children. On average, over 16,000 individuals in the United States are treated each year in hospital emergency rooms for unintentional gunshot wounds. Suicide by firearm is also an enormous problem in the United States, with more than 19,000 deaths in 2010 alone.

KEY FACTS ABOUT GUN STORAGE

- A 2005 study found that nearly 1.7 million children live in homes with loaded, unlocked firearms. 73% of children under age 10 in homes with guns knew the location of their parents' guns.
- A 1999 study found that over 75% of guns used in youth suicide attempts and unintentional injuries were stored in the home of the victim, a relative, or a friend. At least two studies have found that the risk of suicide increases in homes where guns are kept loaded or unlocked.
- Easily accessible home firearms are also used in mass shootings. A 2004 Secret Service and Department of Education study found that in more than 65% of school shootings, the attacker obtained the gun from his or her own home or that of a relative.

UNSAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS POSES A THREAT IN HOMES WITH CHILDREN

A study found that in homes with children and firearms...



**HAD FIREARMS IN
UNLOCKED PLACES**



**KEPT GUNS WITH NO
TRIGGER LOCKS IN
UNLOCKED PLACES**

THE SOLUTIONS

Smart Guns

“Smart guns,” also known as “owner-authorized” guns, incorporate technology preventing their use except by authorized users. The technology incorporated into these firearms can generally be divided into two categories: token-based technologies, which use a ring or watch to activate the firearm, and biometric technologies, which utilize unique features of the user.

Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Jersey each have laws addressing personalized gun technology. In 2002, for example, New Jersey adopted a law that will eventually require smart gun technology to be incorporated into all handguns sold in the state.

At least one personalized handgun system entered the U.S. market in 2013: the Armatix iP1, which includes a handgun and a watch containing a radio frequency identifier that the user must wear to activate the gun.

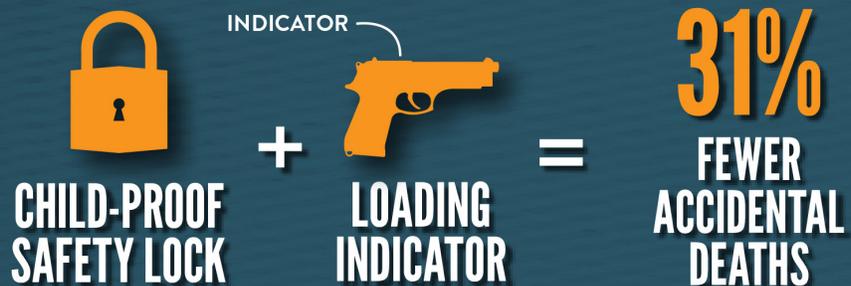
Locking Devices and Chamber Load Indicators

Firearm locking devices include a wide range of disabling devices designed to keep unauthorized users from gaining access to guns and to make unintentional deaths and injuries less likely. These mechanisms include: 1) internal locks, which are normally mounted in the grip of the gun and either lock the manual thumb safety into place or internally secure the hammer, and 2) external trigger locks, the most common of which cover the trigger mechanism on either side with two metal or plastic pieces that clamp around the trigger guard and completely cover the trigger.

- **A national survey conducted in January 2013 found that 67% of respondents support laws requiring gun owners to lock up any guns in the home when not in use to prevent handling by children or teenagers without adult supervision.**
- Under federal law, it is illegal for any licensed importer, manufacturer, or dealer to sell or transfer any handgun unless the transferee is provided with a secure gun storage or safety device. However, the law does not apply to transfers by private sellers and does not require that transferees use the device.
- Eleven states have laws concerning firearm locking devices. Massachusetts is the only state that generally requires that all firearms be stored with a lock in place. California, Connecticut, and New York impose this requirement in certain situations.
- The U.S. General Accounting Office has estimated that 31% of accidental deaths caused by firearms might be prevented by the addition of two devices: a child-proof safety lock and a loading indicator—a safety device that indicates whether a firearm is loaded and a round remains in the chamber.
- California, Massachusetts, and New York define “unsafe handguns”—the sale of which is prohibited—as those lacking certain specified safety features that protect users against unintended discharge, including chamber load indicators.

SIMPLE SAFETY DEVICES CAN PREVENT ACCIDENTAL DEATHS

About a third of accidental deaths caused by firearms can be prevented by the use of a child-proof safety lock and a device that indicates whether a firearm is loaded.



ABOUT THE LAW CENTER TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (formerly known as the Legal Community Against Violence) was founded after the 1993 shooting in San Francisco that left eight dead. Today, it is a prominent national law center focused on providing comprehensive legal expertise in support of gun violence prevention. As a nonprofit organization, the Law Center is dedicated to preventing the loss of lives caused by gun violence by providing trusted, in-depth legal expertise and information on America’s gun laws. The Law Center partners with state legislators, advocates, community groups, and others to advance its mission to prevent gun violence in America.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE [SMARTGUNLAWS.ORG](https://www.smartgunlaws.org)
OR CALL OUR OFFICE AT (415) 433-2062.