The Deadly Dangers of Lax Firearm Storage

Danger to Children

- It is well documented that the risk of teen suicide—the third leading cause of death among 15 to 19 year olds—increases when there is a gun in the home, even more so when the firearm is kept loaded.\textsuperscript{1} The rate of firearm suicide among children and teens has increased 61% over the past decade.\textsuperscript{2}

- Over 80% of child firearm suicides used a gun belonging to a family member.\textsuperscript{3}

- Studies show that child access prevention laws, and safe storage in general, reduce the risk of adolescent suicide. One found that keeping a gun locked lowers the risk of both unintentional injury and suicide for children and teenagers by 73%.\textsuperscript{4}

- Every day, eight children are unintentionally shot or killed by a gun.\textsuperscript{5}

- A study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition had an 85% lower risk of unintentional gun deaths compared to those who lock neither.\textsuperscript{6}

- 4.6 million children live in a home with an unlocked, loaded firearm.\textsuperscript{7}

- The U.S. General Accounting Office estimated that 31% of accidental deaths caused by firearms might be prevented with the addition of two devices: a child-proof safety lock and a loading indicator.\textsuperscript{8}

- More than 75% of 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} graders know where their parents keep their firearms and one-third admitted handling the weapons, contradicting their parents’ reports.\textsuperscript{9}

- In 2015, approximately 1.1 million students ages 12-18 reported having access to a loaded gun without adult permission.\textsuperscript{x}

- On average, there are 1,550 incidents of students having firearms at public schools each school year.\textsuperscript{xi} 75% of guns used in school shootings come from the shooter’s home or that of a relative.\textsuperscript{xi}

Danger of Stolen Firearms

- On average, a gun is stolen in the U.S. every two minutes.\textsuperscript{xii} More than 238,000 guns were reported stolen in the U.S. in 2016,\textsuperscript{xiii} although because of underreporting, the total number of gun thefts is much higher, estimated at 380,000 each year.\textsuperscript{xiv} It is estimated that in 2015 more than 2,600 firearms were stolen in Connecticut.\textsuperscript{xv}

- Circumstantial evidence suggests that most gun thefts are from owners who leave them unsecured in unlocked homes or cars.\textsuperscript{xvi}

- Theft is a key source of guns to the illegal market that are later used in the commission of crimes. Studies show that a majority of guns recovered from crime scenes were stolen. One such study of guns recovered by Pittsburgh police found that 80% of the suspects used guns owned by someone else.\textsuperscript{xvii}

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