

# SECURE FIREARM STORAGE

**“Secure firearm storage”** means locking your firearm(s) in a location or with a device that prevents unauthorized users from accessing them.

## WHY IS SECURE FIREARM STORAGE IMPORTANT?

Secure storage is a key component of responsible firearm ownership and ensuring household and community safety.

### IT CAN PREVENT

- 1 Theft and the likelihood that the stored firearm(s) be used in criminal activity.
- 2 Accidental injury and death, especially among children.
- 3 Fatal suicide attempts by delaying access to a highly lethal method of self-injury.

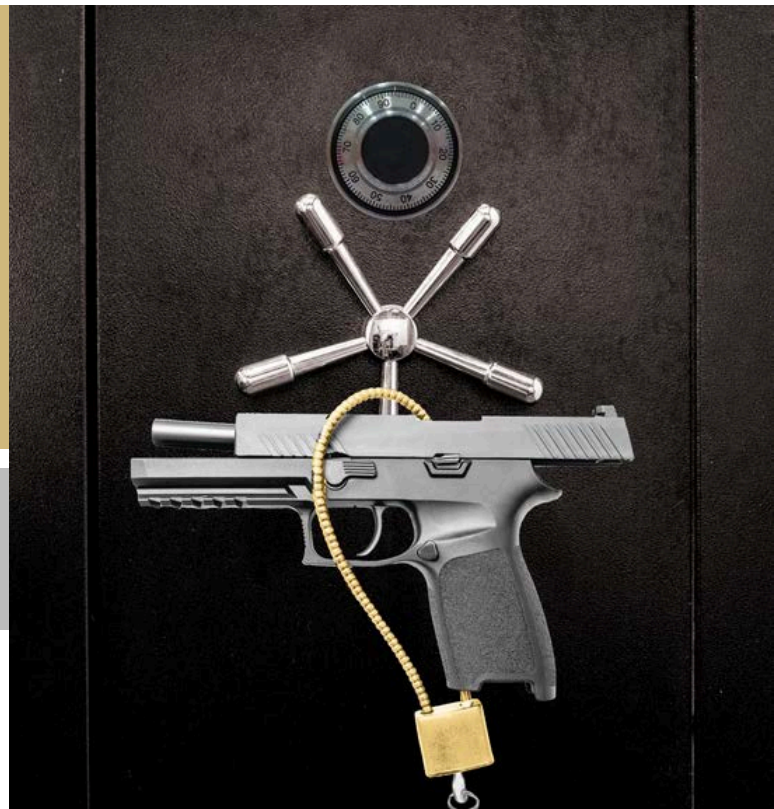
## WHAT SHOULD I AVOID?

Sharing information about the locations of device keys or device locking combinations with unauthorized firearm users.

Giving access to household members who may be at risk of hurting themselves or others, whether related to a mental health condition, drug or alcohol use, cognitive impairment, or life stressors.

Giving unsupervised access to children and adolescents under the age of 18. Children and adolescents can face mental health challenges and life stressors, and some states have Child Access Prevention laws governing youth firearm access.

Hiding firearms without locking devices as the main method of secure firearm storage. Research has shown that in households where firearms are hidden, children often know the hiding place.



## WHAT COULD SECURE FIREARM STORAGE LOOK LIKE IN MY HOUSEHOLD?

Firearm trade organizations and medical professionals recommend that firearms be stored locked and unloaded, with ammunition stored separately.

Deciding what storage will look like in your home will be influenced by:

- Type and quantity of firearms owned
- Intended use
- Financial limitations
- Household composition

### FOR EXAMPLE:

- If you are primarily a hunter, recreational shooter, or collector and immediate access is not a priority, a large safe or secure gun room may be appropriate.
- If you use a firearm for home- or self-defense, that firearm can be securely stored but remain quickly accessible by using locking devices with biometrics (e.g., fingerprint) or traditional locking features (i.e., keys, number codes).



Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

# WHAT DEVICES CAN BE USED TO SECURE MY FIREARMS?

Locking devices designed for firearms are best, but any locked room, cabinet, or device which limits access is better than leaving firearm(s) unsecured and accessible to anyone who may find them or knows where they are stored.

## DEVICES HAVE A VARIETY OF LOCKING MECHANISMS



## SECURE STORAGE & FIREARM SUICIDE PREVENTION

In 2023, **71% of firearm-involved deaths in Colorado were suicides.**<sup>1</sup> Firearms are particularly dangerous in times of suicide risk because they are lethal: **90% of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal.**<sup>2</sup>

Among the Colorado youth who die by suicide every year, **40% use a firearm and 80% of the time that firearm belongs to a family member.**<sup>3</sup>

The good news is that suicidal crises are often brief, with only minutes between the final decision to attempt suicide and the act itself. **Putting time and space between an at-risk person and a lethal method (like a firearm) can be lifesaving.**<sup>4</sup>



If you're worried about suicide, **reducing firearm access can save lives.** You should also seek professional help. Call 988 or visit [coloradocrisiservices.org](https://coloradocrisiservices.org) for free support.

## TEMPORARY OUT OF HOME STORAGE

Sometimes, the safest option is to move all firearms out of your home, such as during a family crisis or if you or a family member is suicidal. In Colorado, individuals can transfer firearms to immediate family members without going through a firearm transfer process or background check. Locations in your community, such as firearm businesses and law enforcement agencies, may also be willing to store your firearms temporarily.

Find locations  
in Colorado



## COMMON FIREARM-SPECIFIC DEVICES INCLUDE:

### Large gun safes

Depending on the model, large gun safes can store up to a dozen firearms or more, including long guns.



- Prevents theft
- Prevents damage
- \$\$\$

### Smaller lockboxes or vaults

Range of sizes capable of holding one to several handguns. Many models can be mounted securely into vehicles, cabinets, drawers, etc.



- Portable
- Prevents damage
- \$\$

### Trigger or cable locks

These devices work for a single firearm and can typically accommodate handguns and long guns of varying types.



- Prevents theft
- \$

## SECURE STORAGE AND THEFT PREVENTION

Thousands of firearms are stolen in the United States each year, some of which are then diverted to crime.<sup>5</sup> Secure storage inside the home can help prevent theft. Firearm owners are advised against storing firearms in their cars/vehicles, especially if they are unsecured.

## EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER (ERPO)

If a person poses an immediate risk to themselves or others, and voluntary reduction in access is not possible, an ERPO may be an option. An ERPO is a legal order prohibiting an at-risk individual from possessing or purchasing firearms. In Colorado, ERPOs can be requested by law enforcement officers, family or household members, teachers, medical and mental health providers, and attorneys. A judge determines whether to issue an order, which can be for 14 days or (after a hearing) up to one year. Learn more via the Colorado Judicial Branch or by calling the 24/7 Colorado ERPO Hotline at 855-999-ERPO.

Colorado  
Judicial Branch



### SOURCES:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/create-tables/>
- Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center for Suicide Prevention, U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/vsn19/lethalmeanssafety/evidence/>

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, <https://afsp.org/understanding-firearms-and-suicide-prevention/>
- Harvard Injury Control Research Center, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter>
- Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/research-reports/firearm-violence-in-the-united-states>