



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

---

# Reducing Firearm & Other Household Safety Risks for Veterans and Their Families



**Firearm safety is an important public health issue that can affect your health and your family's well-being.**

If you own a firearm, or live in a household where there are firearms, the following information can help keep you and those around you safe. Similarly, reducing access to other household risks, like medications, can help ensure your family's safety.

## Firearm Safety

---

Nearly half of all Veterans own a firearm, and most Veteran firearm owners are dedicated to firearm safety. Firearm injuries in the home can be prevented by making sure firearms are **unloaded, locked, and secured** when not in use, with ammunition stored in a separate location.

## Firearm Storage Options

---

There are several effective ways to safely secure firearms, as shown below. Learn more and find the option that works best for you and your family from the National Shooting Sports Foundation at [www.nssf.org/safety](http://www.nssf.org/safety).



**Cable Lock**

**Price: \$10–\$50**



**Lockbox**

**Price: \$25–\$350**



**Gun Safe**

**Price: \$200–\$2,500**

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 firearm or other household risks.

## Talking About Suicide Risk

---

You can take simple steps to protect yourself and your family, particularly if you or others in the household are in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

If you are worried about a friend or family member, ask them directly about suicide and encourage them to seek help. Talk about safe firearm storage and the possibility of temporarily storing firearms with a trusted friend, relative, or elsewhere (check state and local laws).

You can ask for help from a primary care physician, mental health counseling center, or local emergency department. The Veterans Crisis Line also offers free, confidential support and crisis intervention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. To reach the crisis line, call **1-800-273-8255 and Press 1**, text to **838255**, or chat online at **[VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)**.



## Additional Safety Tips: Medication Storage

---

Taking medications is part of a healthy life for some Veterans and their family members, but medications should be safely and securely stored when they are not in use.

- ✓ Keep medications out of children's sight and reach.
- ✓ Other options for preventing intentional or unintentional overdose include:
  - Having a family member or friend help manage your medication dosages
  - Asking your doctor or pharmacist to limit the number of refills or the quantity of medication
  - Portioning out pills for a week and locking the rest away
- ✓ Check the date on everything in your medicine cabinet and dispose of medication if any of the following is true:
  - The medication is past its expiration date
  - You have not used the medication in the past 12 months
  - You no longer need the medication

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about options for safely storing medications or disposing of unused medications.

Talk to your primary care team about firearm, medication, and other safety concerns and the positive impact secure storage can have on the well-being of you and your loved ones.

## Resources

---



[www.nssf.org/safety](http://www.nssf.org/safety)