



CT
Against
Gun
Violence

Firearm suicide prevention

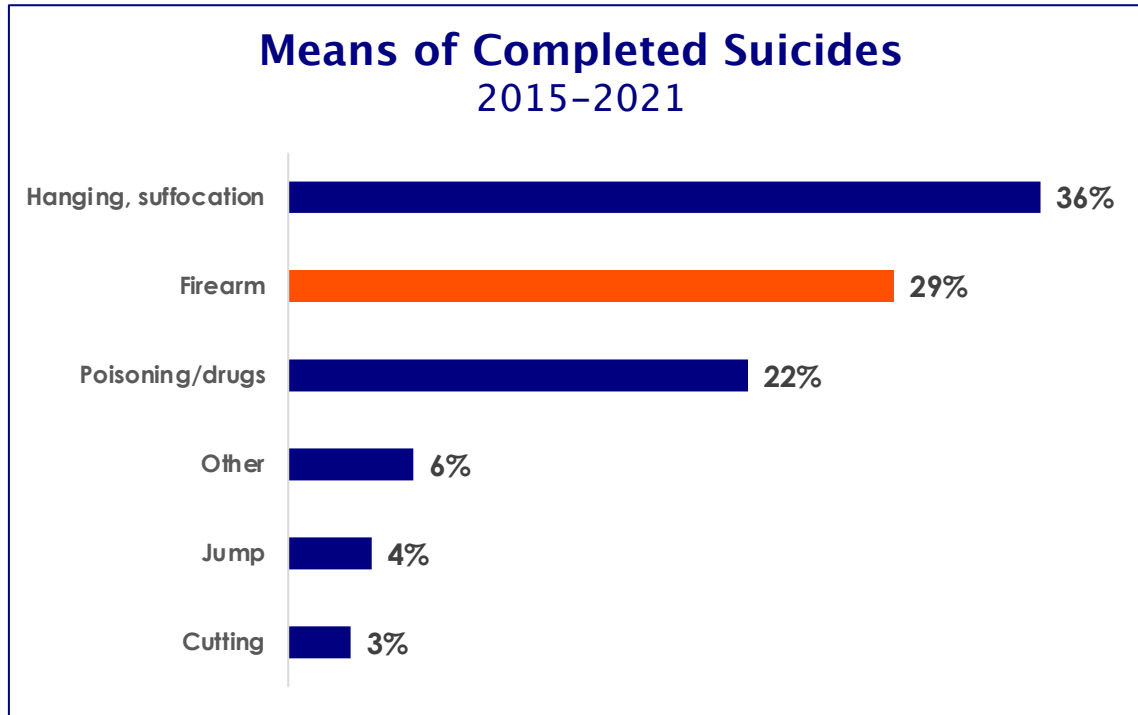
Wheeler Clinic/Connecticut Clearinghouse
September 28, 2023



To make progress on **ending suicide** in CT, we must address **firearm suicide**.

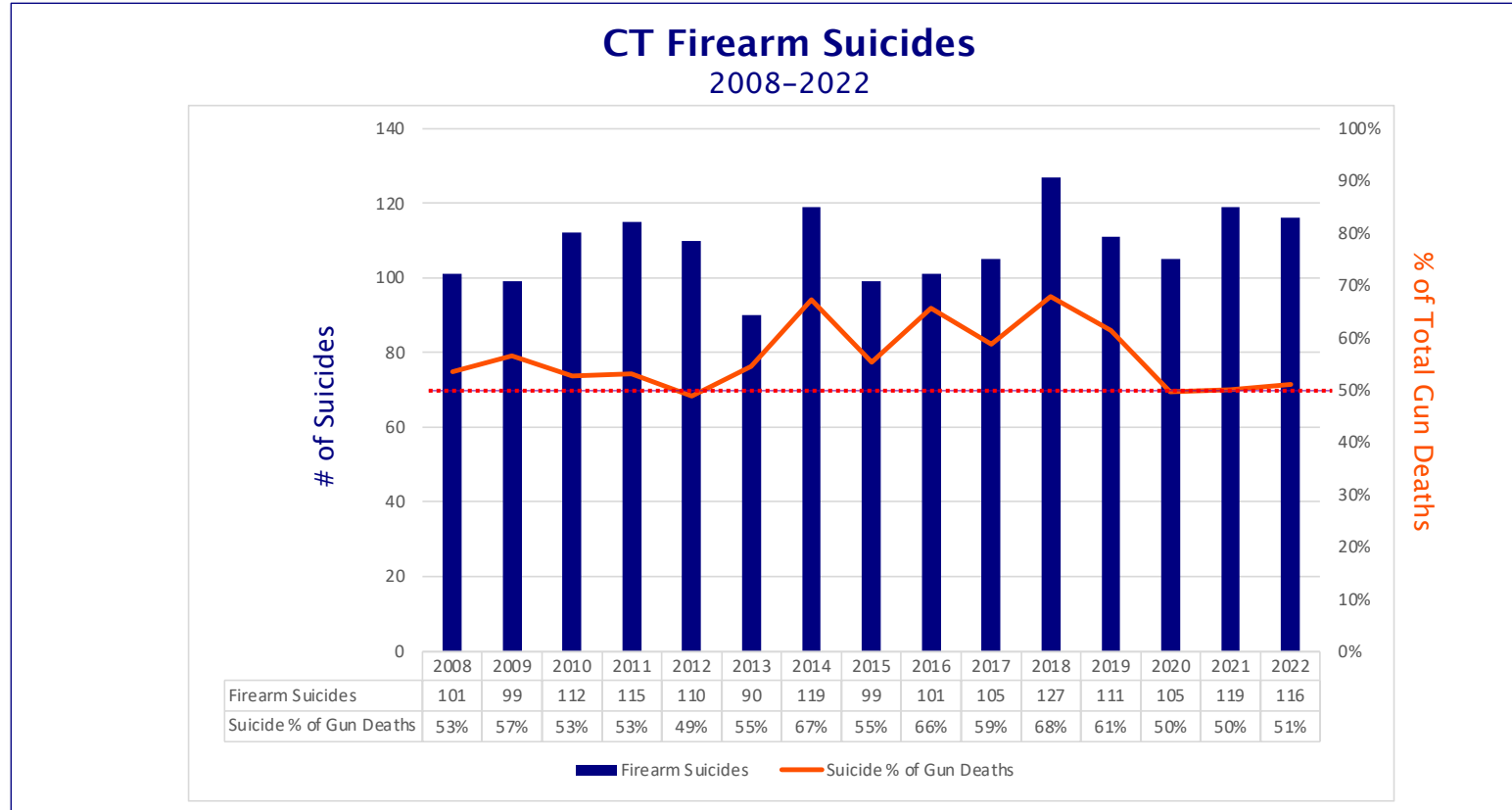
To make progress on **ending gun violence** in CT, we must address **firearm suicide**.

Firearms 2nd leading cause of suicide in CT...



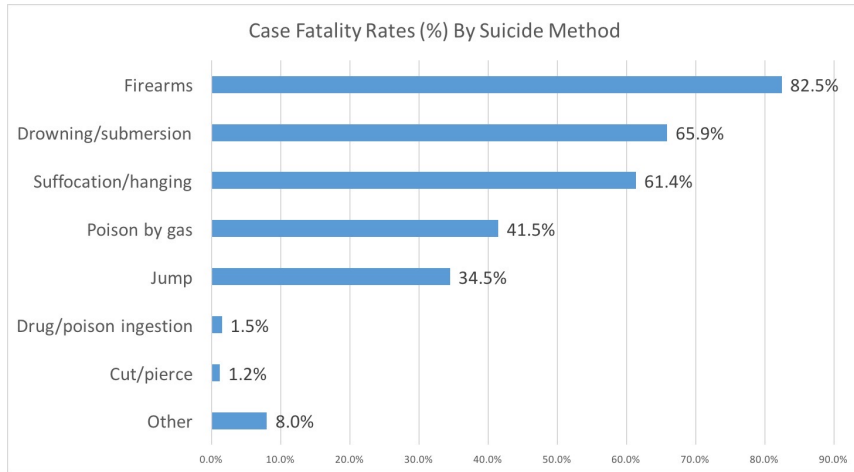
Source: CT Dept of Public Health, Violence Death Reporting System

...and suicide accounts for at least half of gun deaths



Source: CT Chief Medical Examiner Office

Firearms exacerbate suicide



- Highest fatality rate of any means¹
- Firearm owners at substantially higher risk of completed suicide²
 - 8x higher for men
 - 35x higher for women

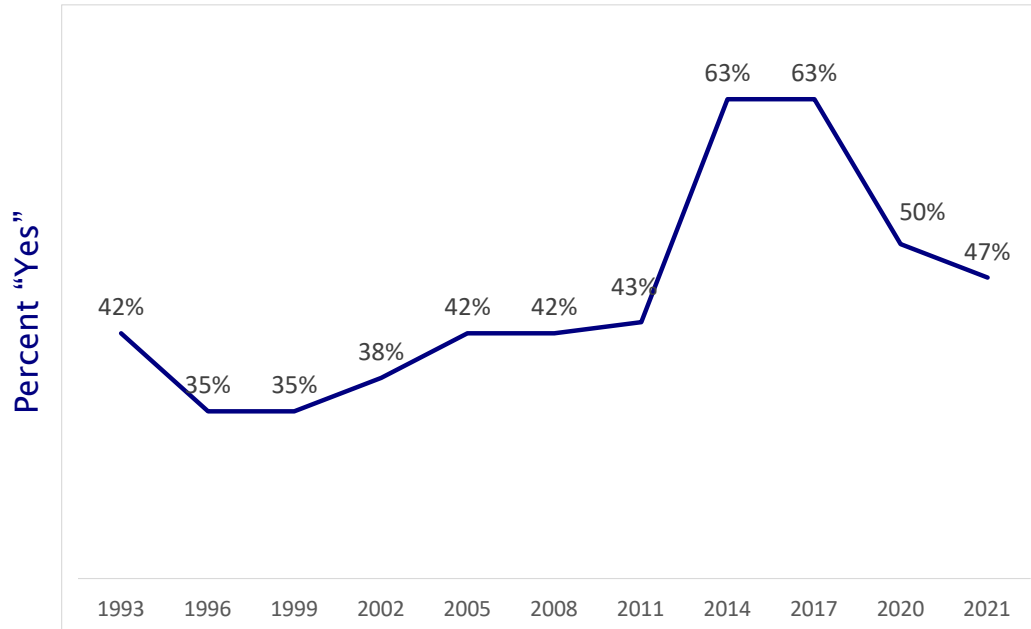
Sources: (1) American Journal of Public Health, 2000 (2) Stanford Medicine, Jun 2020

Strategies for firearm suicide prevention

	Gun Owner	Others
Education/training	√	
Safe storage		√
Voluntary relinquishment	√	
Extreme risk protection orders	√	
Waiting periods	√	
Smart guns		√

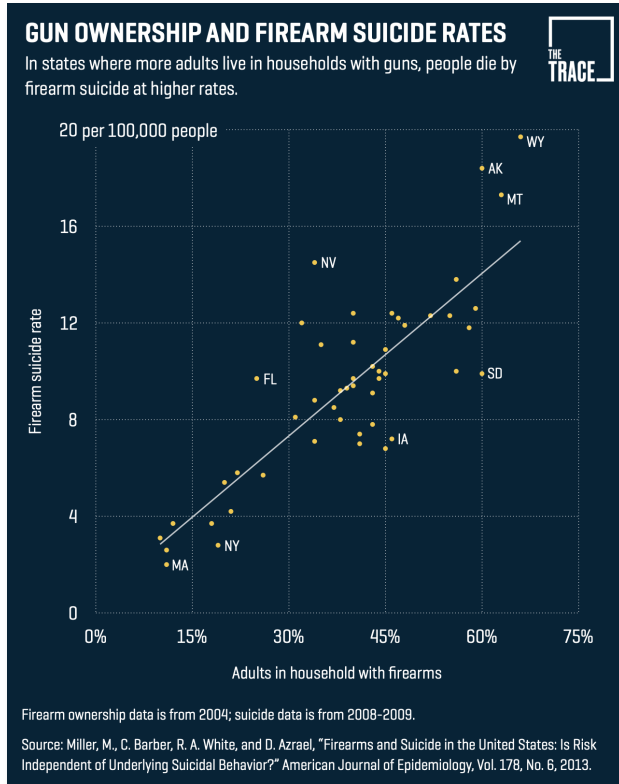
Many adults believe guns make us safer

Does having a gun in the home make it safer?



Source: Gallup

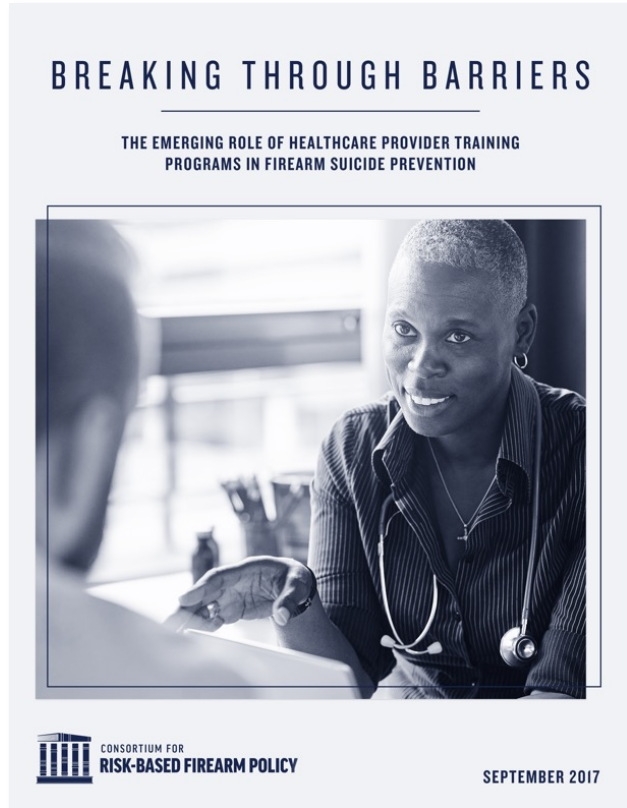
In fact, presence of firearms increases suicide risk



Academic studies find higher risk of suicide:

- From 2 to 10x higher than homes without firearms
- Not just gun owners, children and partners as well
- Over 80% of child firearm suicides use a gun belonging to a family member

HCPs are reticent to talk about firearm safety



- Healthcare providers avoid talking to patients about firearm safety
- Gap between clinician attitudes and reported behavior
 - As many as 9-in-10 clinicians surveyed thought they *should* be engaged in firearm safety screening and counseling
 - But as few as 1-in-10 reported that they actually did
- Among high-risk populations, screening and lethal means counseling generally acceptable

New safe storage law better protects against suicide

- Beginning Oct 1, Public Act 23-53 requires secure storage for loaded & unloaded firearms in homes, **without exception**, if firearm not in owner's immediate control
- Strengthens “Ethan’s Law” (2019) which requires secure storage in homes based on who else resides in the home
- Reduces theft, access by those not known to be at risk of harm to self or others

"I HAD NO IDEA"

Other provisions in Gov's Act Addressing Gun Violence

- Required firearm safety training must be completed within two years before applying for permit, must include safe storage legal requirements.
- Trigger locks must be supplied by gun dealers for all firearms, not just handguns.


At times of crisis, voluntary relinquishment is first line of defense

- Surrender to police department (1 year time limit)
- Transfer to permitted person (contact State Police Special Licensing and Firearms Unit)
- “Sell” to federal firearms dealer (privately held)
- Voluntary admission for treatment and/or services: automatic 6 month state prohibitor via DMHAS

Waiting periods put time between impulse and action



- Can reduce gun suicides 7-11%
- Suicide is impulsive
- Means substitution not inevitable
- Firearms substantially more lethal
- Most survivors don't ultimately die by suicide
- For new permits in CT, built in due to process

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a black handgun. The person's left hand is on the slide, and their right hand is on the grip. A small green laser dot is visible on the slide. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The promise of smart guns

- Unknown, but likely substantial proportion, of firearm suicides completed with someone else's gun
- 80% of youth firearm suicide use family member gun
- RFID/fingerprint allows only authorized user to discharge firearm
- Would prevent “3rd party” suicides



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“A lot of times the people who have their weapons seized are not having a bad life—they’re having a bad moment.”

– Prosecutor involved in risk warrant proceedings

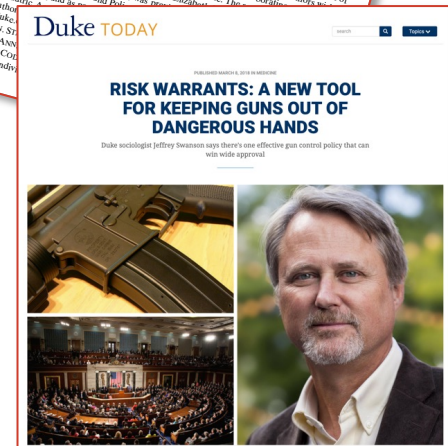
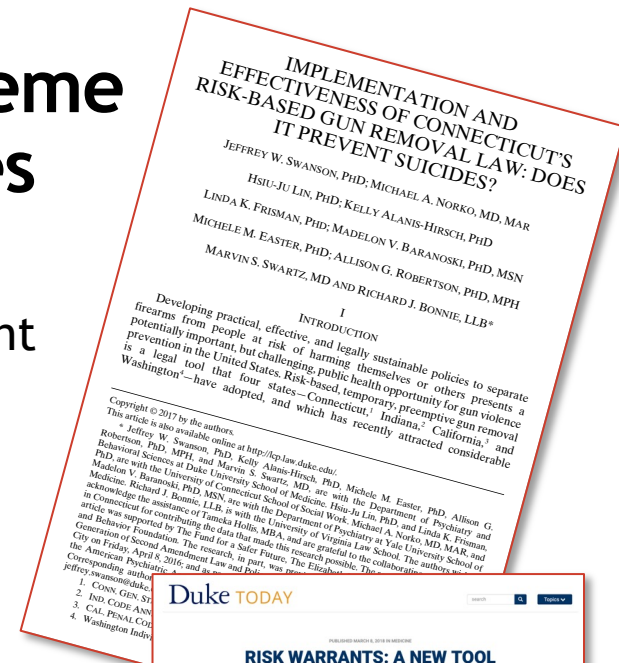
Extreme Risk Protection Orders

Gun purchase laws generally can't prevent suicide

- Waiting periods only effective for those who don't already own a firearm
 - In CT, permit-to-purchase acts as a waiting period
- Background check prohibiting criteria don't adequately screen for risk of self-harm
- Few have serious enough mental health diagnoses to prohibit gun ownership; in CT:
 - Involuntary admission for psychiatric condition past 5 years
 - Voluntary admission in past 6 months
- **Most important, conditions change**

When other interventions fail, Extreme Risk Protection Orders can save lives

- CT's ERPO (aka "risk warrant," Public Act 99-212) offers means of removing guns when there is imminent threat of harm to self or others
- Suicide impulsive, means substitution not a given
- Passed in 1999 to prevent mass shootings
- But most commonly used to prevent suicide—6 out of 10 cases
- Duke/UCONN/Yale study determined that one gun suicide averted for every 10-20 warrants issued



Public Act 21-67 strengthened ERPO



Substitute House Bill No. 6355

Public Act No. 21-67

AN ACT CONCERNING RISK PROTECTION ORDERS OR WARRANTS AND DISQUALIFIERS FOR FIREARM PERMITS AND ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 29-38c of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective June 1, 2022):

(a) Upon complaint on oath by any state's attorney or assistant state's attorney or by any two police officers, to any judge of the Superior Court, that such state's attorney, assistant state's attorney or police officers have probable cause to believe that [(1)] a person poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself or herself or to [other individuals, (2)] another person, the judge may issue a risk protection order prohibiting such person from acquiring or possessing a firearm or other deadly weapon or ammunition. As part of or following the issuance of such order, if there is probable cause to believe that (1) such person possesses one or more firearms or other deadly weapons, and [(3)] (2) such firearm or firearms or other deadly weapon or deadly weapons are within or upon any place, thing or person, such judge [may] shall issue a warrant commanding a [proper] police officer to enter into or upon such place or thing, search the same or the person and take into such officer's custody any and all firearms and other deadly weapons and

- Requires court hearing before firearms are returned
- Allows risk protection order even if subject doesn't currently possess a firearm
- Allows family members and healthcare professionals to directly petition the court

The ERPO process

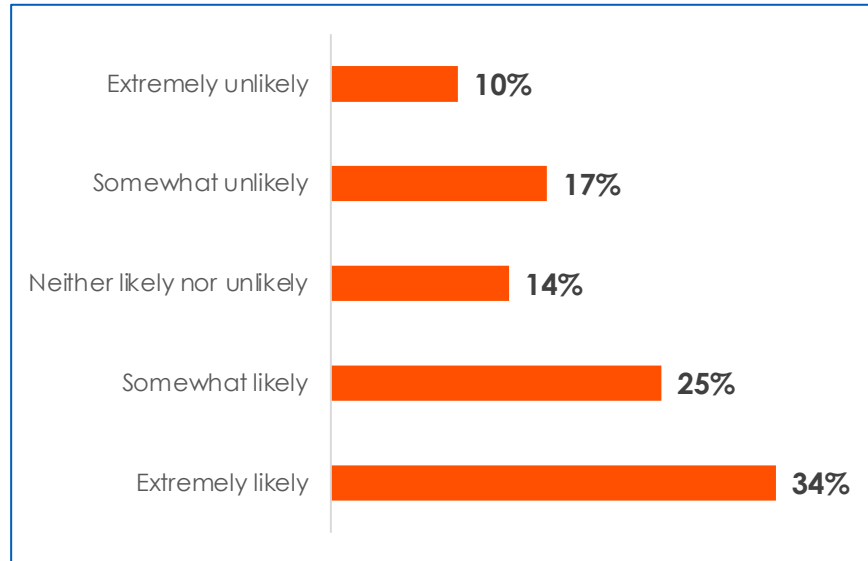
- Law enforcement investigation, findings to court within 24 hours
- Clear and convincing evidence of risk of imminent harm
- Search warrant for firearms, ammunition, dangerous weapons
- Civil court hearing within 2 weeks
- Firearms held indefinitely, request for return every 180 days
- Prevents permit/purchase in all 50 states when federal background check performed

Criteria for judging risk of imminent harm

- Recent acts/threats of violence
- Recent acts/threats of self-harm
- Recent acts of cruelty to animals
- Reckless use, display, brandishing of firearm
- History of attempted, threatened, actual use of physical force
- History of involuntary psychiatric confinement
- History of illegal drug use, alcohol abuse

HCPs view ERPO as a useful tool

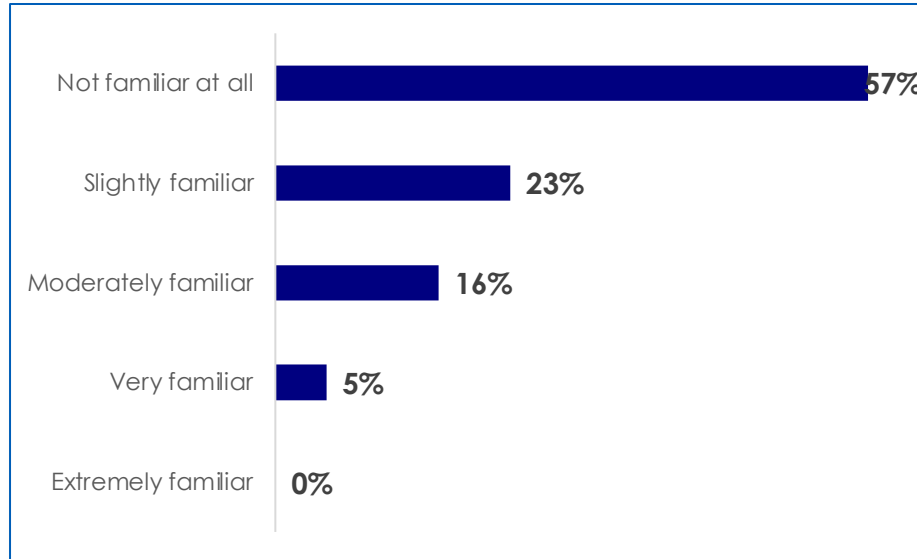
How likely are you to call the police to request ERPO for a patient at extreme risk of violence or suicide who you believe has access to firearms?



Source: Unpublished 2022 study on use of ERPO by HCPs, conducted by Sarah Raskin in collaboration with Trinity College, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Yale New Haven Hospital

But few HCPs are familiar with ERPO

How familiar are you with CT ERPO (red flag law)?



Source: Unpublished 2022 study on use of ERPO by HCPs, conducted by Sarah Raskin in collaboration with Trinity College, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Yale New Haven Hospital

Who needs to know?

Healthcare Professionals & Service Providers

- Behavioral health
- ER
- Primary care
- Eldercare

Behavioral Health Organizations

- Professional groups (MSWs, etc.)
- Suicide prevention (AFSP, etc.)
- Support/advocacy (NAMI, DBSA, etc.)

Community Leaders

- Faith leaders
- Elected officials

Gov't Agencies

- Police chiefs
- Rank & file law enforcement
- Judges/court personnel
- Social services agencies

Families of High Risk Populations

- Gun owners
- Military
- Veterans
- Law enforcement

Raising ERPO awareness

- CAGV 2020 mailing to behavioral health professionals
- CAGV volunteers and others distributing CAGV ERPO brochures
- PreventSuicideCT.org
- CT Judicial Branch brochure
- Presentations

Apr 2020 mailing to 2,500 behavioral health providers



Dear Healthcare Professional,

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, firearm suicide was a public health crisis in Connecticut. Two-thirds of the state's gun deaths—more than 100 every year—are by suicide and one-third of suicides are by firearm. With the dramatic social isolation, stress and anxiety caused by the current conditions, the risk of suicide is unquestionably higher.

That's why I'm writing to make sure you are aware of Connecticut's Extreme Risk Protection Order law. The measure offers a way to remove firearms from individuals at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others, while respecting their Second Amendment rights. A 2017 study conducted by researchers at Duke, Yale and UKOH found that for every 10 to 20 risk protection orders issued, one suicide was averted. Unfortunately, our research suggests that not enough people are familiar with this life-saving tool—especially medical and behavioral health providers.

In your role, you are more likely than others to come into contact with individuals who may be at risk of suicide. If you're not familiar with ERPO, please see the enclosed brochure to learn how the law works.

The brochure describes the conditions under which ERPOs may be granted by a court and how to initiate the process. It also has information we've been asked for by healthcare professionals about exceptions to patient confidentiality and how to have discussions about firearm safety.

We would like to hear from you to learn if this information is helpful, and if you have questions. Please go to www.surveymonkey.com/r/rerpo_hcp_mailing_420 to complete a short survey. You will also be able to order additional copies of the brochure for colleagues, and order a version of the brochure to give to other people that doesn't include the panel of information for healthcare professionals.

Thank you for taking time to review information about Connecticut's Extreme Risk Protection Order. We are certain that greater use of risk protection orders can save lives.

Thank you for all you do to keep people healthy, especially in these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Stein

Jeremy Stein
Executive Director
CT Against Gun Violence Education Fund

P.S. Please let us know what you think about the brochure, and order more copies, at www.surveymonkey.com/r/rerpo_hcp_mailing_420 or email us at erpo@cagv.org.

Important information about preventing firearm suicide.

Important information for healthcare professionals.

Exceptions to patient confidentiality.

While healthcare professionals have an obligation to maintain the confidentiality of provider-patient communication, there are exceptions, including when a client is suicidal.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, in a December 2013 letter to healthcare providers:

"The HIPAA Privacy Rule does not prevent your ability to disclose necessary information about a patient to law enforcement, family members of the patient, or other persons, when you believe the patient presents a serious danger to himself or other people."

A healthcare provider is presumed to be acting in good faith:

"when his or her belief is based upon the provider's actual knowledge...or in reliance on a credible representation by a person with apparent knowledge or authority."

What is a Protection Order?

The HHS guidance letter is available at tiny.cc/letter-hcp-disclosure.

In Connecticut, statutes provide a range of behavioral health specialists (including psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers) exceptions to obtaining patient consent to reveal conversations between themselves and the patient, or the patient's family, when they have a good faith belief that there is a risk of imminent personal injury to the person or to other individuals.

How the

1. Contact your local or state police and explain your concern.
2. The police will investigate the situation.
3. If no other alternative exists to keep the person safe, the police will ask the court for a warrant to remove the firearms.
4. If the ERPO is approved, police will remove all firearms and ammunition in the areas the judge authorizes.
5. The person's pistol permit and eligibility certificate will be revoked to prevent them from buying another firearm.
6. The person has the right to a court hearing within 14 days. At the hearing the police will order the firearms be held by the police for up to one year, legally transferred to a gun dealer or someone else, or returned to the owner. The person who reported the concern usually doesn't have to go to the hearing.
7. If the order is upheld the court will notify the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Approximately one-third of all Connecticut suicide deaths are from firearms.

Connecticut's Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) offers a way to remove firearms from those at imminent risk of harming themselves or others, while respecting their Second Amendment rights.

For every 10 to 20 ERPOs issued, one suicide is prevented. Because suicide is impulsive, temporarily restricting access to firearms increases the chances of surviving a suicidal crisis and saving a life.

Suicide attempts are often preceded by warning signs.

Suicidal crises may come on quickly, but there are often warning signs. Family, friends, co-workers and healthcare professionals are all in a good position to identify someone at risk of suicide. If you see these warning signs, get the person help as soon as possible.

If they are talking about:

- Wanting to die or kill themselves
- Great guilt or shame
- Being a burden to others

If they appear to be feeling:

- Hopeless, trapped, or having no reason to live
- Extremely sad, anxious, agitated, or full of rage
- Unbearable emotional or physical pain

If they are showing these behaviors:

- Making a plan or researching ways to die
- Not seeing friends, saying good bye, giving things away
- Talking dangerous risks
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Using drugs or alcohol more often



If you or someone you know needs help now, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text "CT" to 741-741 for free 24/7 support.

For further information on preventing suicide, visit www.preventionlifeline.org

The law providing for Extreme Risk Protection Orders is Conn. General Statutes, Chapter 529 §29-38b. Sections of firearms and ammunition laws impose penalty risk of firearm possession after to self or others. See www.cga.ct.gov/curran/2019/04/04_0027.htm#toc-29-38b.

Disclaimer: This pamphlet does not provide legal or medical advice and the information is intended for general informational purposes only. If you need legal or medical advice, please contact an attorney or mental health professional. Call 2-1-1 for further information.

1. Swanson, Nadeau, Liu, et al. Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut's Risk-Based Gun Removal Law. *Drug & Alcohol Dependence* 184: 2017

2. Warning Signs of Suicide. National Institute of Mental Health. NIMH Bulletin No. 04B-0418

3. Angermeyer A, Horowitz L, Buchnerford G. The accessibility of firearms and risk for suicide and homicide victimization among household members. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2004;140:90-95.

4. Johnson RM, Baxter C, Aznar D, Clark DE, Hemenway D. Who are the owners of firearms used in adolescent suicide? Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior. 2010;40(6):630-631.



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How You Can Prevent Firearm Suicide with an Extreme Risk Protection Order.



If you know someone at immediate risk of suicide who has access to firearms, Connecticut's Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) offers a legal process to temporarily remove them; helping to keep the person safe while respecting gun owner rights.

Focus on health.

As a healthcare professional, you are equipped to advise patients about the potential health risk of access to firearms and how to reduce the risk.

Start with open-ended questions to avoid sound judgmental.

For example, say "Do you have concerns about the accessibility of your firearms when you may be in crisis?" instead of "Have you considered removing access to your guns?"

Ask questions in a non-accusatory fashion.

If a patient is struggling with suicidal thoughts, don't say, "Do you have a gun?" Instead, say, "Some of my clients have firearms, and some with suicidal thoughts choose to make their firearms less accessible for their own safety. Is this something you would like to talk about?"

Guide the client to a solution of his own.

For example, see the alternatives for voluntarily preventing access to firearms discussed elsewhere in this pamphlet.

Learn more about lethal means counseling at rlh.ynh.org/lethal_means_ohs

ERPOs are not just for preventing suicide

ERPOs don't just protect people at risk of suicide. If you know someone who is threatening others with a firearm, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Securely storing firearms prevents

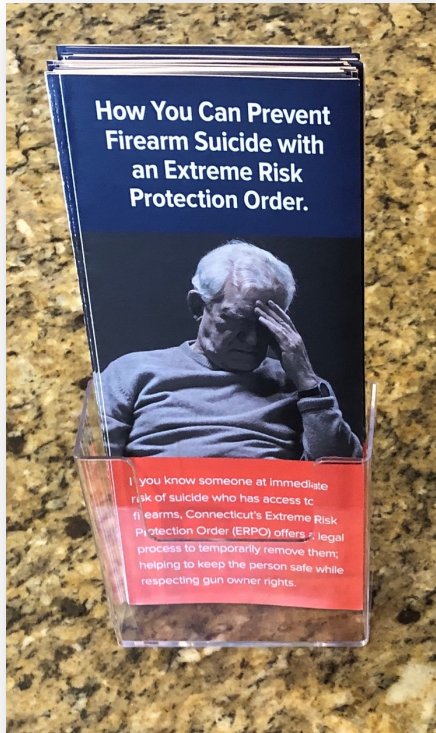
Unsecured firearms in the home raise the risk of suicide for everyone, especially teens. Four out of five adolescents who die by firearm suicide use a firearm belonging to a family member.

In Connecticut, firearm owners are required to securely store firearms when a child under the age of 18 resides in the home. If a resident poses a risk of harm to self or others, it is ineligible to possess a firearm.



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CAGV-led ERPO brochure distribution



- Libraries, police stations, town halls, communities centers, healthcare facilities
- More than 200 locations around CT
- 74 towns
- Ongoing

PreventSuicideCT.org brochure

Safe-Guard Your Home

Suicide Prevention Measures in Your Home to Lessen Harm and Reduce Risks

1 WORD VOICE LIFE
Be the one to start the conversation.

Steps Toward a Safer Home When Someone is in Crisis



FOR HELP CALL 2-1-1 AND PRESS 1
OUTSIDE OF CT 1-800-273-8255
TEXT CT TO 741741 FOR FREE 24/7 CRISIS SUPPORT

1 WORD VOICE LIFE
Be the one to start the conversation.

No method of means restriction is foolproof. If you are concerned about a loved one, seek help.

PREVENTSUICIDECT.ORG

Medications

Medications can be helpful. Medications can also cause harm if used in the wrong way, in the wrong way, or by the wrong person.

- **Lock:** Safely store all medications including prescription, over-the-counter, herbs, vitamins, and supplements in a locked location. Lockboxes can be ordered free of charge from drugfree.org.
- **Limit:** Keep only small amounts on-hand.
- **Dispose:** Properly dispose of unneeded medications year-round. Find a medicine drop-off program at takebackday.dea.gov.

Firearms

Preventing access to firearms by unauthorized persons helps keep everyone safe. Firearms should be stored unloaded and locked when not in use, separate from ammunition, in a safety device such as a lock box. Locate a free Safety Kit on ProjectChildSafe.org.

By Connecticut law, firearms must be securely stored in homes where children under age 18 reside, or if a resident is at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others.

If you believe a person is in crisis, the safest option is to call 2-1-1.

- Call local law enforcement to have the firearms temporarily removed for safekeeping.
- Call the State Police at (860) 426-1000 to have the firearms legally transferred to a family member, trusted friend or gun dealer.

As a last resort, if an owner has a court order for the return of their firearms and you believe there is a risk of self-harm, contact tactical law enforcement to seek a protection order to have the firearms removed by court order.

Other Precautions

- Keep knives and sharp objects hidden or out of reach
- Keep your vehicle keys with you at all times or consider locking them in a lock box when not in use.
- Lock all toxic household cleaners, pesticides, and industrial chemicals away.
- Consider limiting ropes, electrical wire, and long cords within the home or lock them away.
- Secure and lock high level windows and access to rooftops.

Safe storage
Voluntary
relinquishment
ERPO

CT Judicial Branch brochure

State of Connecticut
Judicial Branch

ESPAÑOL | POLSKI | PORTUGUÊS

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The mission of the Connecticut Judicial Branch is to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient and open manner.

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Feature Public Attorneys Jurors Victims Media

Pathways Process
The *Pathways Process* in Your Divorce, Custody or Visitation Case

Supreme Court | Appellate Court | Superior Court

Latest News, Notices and Updates

06/03/22 -- A Remote Fairness Hearing will be held in [Chandler v. Ruby Tuesday, DOCKE](#) a.m.

06/01/22 -- [Risk Protection Order and Risk Protection Order Investigation Brochure](#)

Disclaimer

The Judicial Branch created this brochure as a public service and to satisfy the requirements of General Statutes §§ 29-38c and 46b-15e(a)(2) and Public Act 21-67 § 2. It is based on the Connecticut General Statutes and the Judicial Branch procedures in effect at the time the Judicial Branch created this brochure.

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www.jud.ct.gov

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JDP-CL-140 (Rev. 6/22)

Risk Protection Orders and Risk Protection Order Investigations

If you believe that someone is at immediate risk of causing personal injury to themselves or another person, you have 2 options to try to get a court order that will keep that person from having or getting firearms, deadly weapons, or ammunition:

- A Risk Protection Order
- A Risk Protection Order Investigation

What is a Risk Protection Order?

A Risk Protection Order is an order that the police can ask the court to issue that prevents a person who is at immediate risk of causing personal injury to themselves or another person from having or getting firearms, deadly weapons, or ammunition. As part of this process, the court can also order the police to take any firearms, deadly weapons, or ammunition that the person at risk has away from them.

A Risk Protection Order will prohibit the person subject to the order from having or getting these items at least until the court holds a hearing to decide whether the person is a risk.

What is a Risk Protection Order Investigation?

A Risk Protection Order Investigation is an order that a person can ask the court to issue directing the police to investigate whether there is enough evidence to ask the court for a Risk Protection Order. If the court orders this investigation, and the police find evidence that the person is a risk, they will ask the court for a Risk Protection Order.

A Risk Protection Order Investigation will prohibit the person being investigated from having or getting firearms, deadly weapons, or ammunition. If the police get a Risk Protection Order after the investigation, the person will not be able to get or have these items at least until the court holds a hearing to decide whether the person is a risk. If the police do not find evidence that the person is a risk during the investigation, they will tell the court and the person will be able to have and get these items again.

How do I get a Risk Protection Order or a Risk Protection Order Investigation?

If you want the police to start investigating whether someone is a risk right away, you can contact any police officer to ask them to investigate whether there is enough evidence to ask the court for a [Risk Protection Order](#).

If you don't want to go to the police yourself, you can apply to the court for a [Risk Protection Order Investigation](#). You can go to any G.A. Courthouse to apply for a Risk Protection Order Investigation. You will need to prove to the court that you have a good faith belief that the person is a risk of causing immediate personal injury to themselves or another person. And, you will need to file an:

- *Application for Risk Protection Order Investigation*, form JD-CR-198, and
- *Affidavit for Risk Protection Order Investigation*, form JD-CR-199.



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Help us get the word out!



- Sign up to distribute in your town, facility



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School Firearm Safety Campaign

Goal: talk about safe storage



Dear Farmington Families,

As we move further into the spring and summer months, we are writing to remind you of the importance of safety across our community. Together, the Farmington Public Schools and Farmington Police Department work collaboratively to ensure a safe environment for all of our students, families, faculty and staff. Many of the reminders to our school community regarding safety in the past have related to school safety, internet safety, safe travel to and from school and weather preparedness. These still remain vitally important. After recent communication with representatives from the Connecticut Against Gun Violence organization, we also reflected on the importance of firearm safety. In June, we will be embarking on the four year anniversary of Ethan's Law, Connecticut legislation mandating that firearms must be securely stored within your home for any homeowners who have minors within their household.

We are writing to ask for your awareness and support in keeping our community safe. Under Connecticut law, firearm owners are responsible for determining how to best secure their weapons. However, firearm safety experts, including the ATF, recommend storing firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition also locked in a secure location away from the firearm. Project ChildSafe, a program of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, offers further guidance on secure storage. The Sandy Hook Promise offers additional guidance on safe storage of firearms. Even if you do not have firearms in your home, you want to be sure your child doesn't encounter one at the home of a friend or relative. Always ask, "Is there a gun in the home, and if so, how is it secured"? Finally, the Farmington Police Department stands ready to support you should you have any questions.

Beyond the dangers of your own home, there are other deadly weapons in our community. Connecticut statute, is as follows, "A handgun, a rifle, a shotgun or a switchblade knife, or any other device designed for violent purposes."

Please join us in promoting safe storage of firearms and ammunition you may have in your home. We are a vibrant and caring community of all members of our community.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Grisdler
Superintendent of Farmington Public Schools

A message about gun safety

Dear parents and guardians,

Given the incidents that have been happening across the country as well as in neighboring towns, the Board of Education and I believe this letter may be helpful in reminding all of us about gun safety.

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. As parents, we want to make sure that our children are never in the home of a friend or relative where a gun is not properly secured.

The recommended safety experts, including the ATF, recommend storing all

firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition also locked in a secure location away from the firearms. Our vigilance when it comes to gun storage will help our students stay safe.

Hiding firearms is not enough. Children often know where their parents' guns are kept and cannot always tell the difference between real and toy guns. In Connecticut, firearms must be securely stored if:

1. A minor under the age of 18 living in or visiting the home is likely to gain access to the firearm without the permission of the child's

parent;

2. If a resident in the home is ineligible to possess a firearm; or

3. If a resident poses a risk of imminent harm to self and others.

Our goal is to prevent further incidents from occurring and to continue to provide our students and staff a safe school environment by ensuring that ammunition and firearms are safely secured in all households.

Sincerely,
Brian J. Benigni
Superintendent of Schools

- Get school officials to send letter to parents about locking up guns in the home, and CT law
- More than 75% of Americans agree: gun owners should be mandated to lock up guns



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Campaign Toolkit



School Firearm Safety Campaign Toolkit

School Superintendent Letter to Parents about Secure Gun Storage

Here is guidance for contacting your town's school district superintendent (or board of education, or head of your child's independent school) to ask that they communicate to parents about secure firearm storage.

Please complete this short [form](#) if you're planning or thinking about participating so we can keep track of and support everyone's efforts.

1. Your request will have more authority if it represents members of the community. A simple way to collect names is to get friends and neighbors in your town to sign our [petition](#): *Tell school administrators: lockdowns aren't enough, ask parents to secure their guns* (use this link: www.change.org/talk-about-safe-gun-storage).

Contact us for tips on how to spread the word. You can see the current total of petition signers in your town [here](#). We'll update the numbers periodically (last updated 3/13/23). When you're ready to make the request, contact us and we'll send you the list of names of petition signers from your town.

2. Draft your request letter. Use our [template](#) as a starting point. On Google Drive, use <File/Make a Copy or <File/Download> to make a copy you can edit. Contact us if you need assistance.
3. Send your letter to the appropriate school official, with the template school official [letter](#) for them to customize and send to parents attached to your request. Download a PDF version of the template letter [here](#).
4. Follow-up with the school official, multiple times if necessary. Get a firm commitment as to when the letter will be sent to parents.
5. If you don't get a positive response, consider publishing your request as an open letter in a local news outlet. You can invite others to sign on to your letter, but don't use names from the petition without their permission. You can also bring the matter to your school board; writing to them or raising it at a board of ed public meeting which usually allow for public comments.
6. Confirm that the letter gets sent.
7. Keep us posted, and especially let us know when you succeed, and send us a copy of the letter ultimately sent to parents.

Thanks so much for your support!

4-26-23 rev2.1

- Build support in the community (petition)
- Make the request
- Follow-up
- Publicize

Toolkit: bit.ly/cagv-school-letter-toolkit



CT
Against
Gun
Violence

Thank you!

Questions?