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...

Means of Completed Suicides
2015–2021

- Hanging, suffocation: 36%
- Firearm: 29%
- Poisoning/drugs: 22%
- Other: 6%
- Jump: 4%
- Cutting: 3%

Source: CT Dept of Public Health, Violence Death Reporting System
...and suicide accounts for at least half of gun deaths
Firearms exacerbate suicide

- Highest fatality rate of any means\(^1\)
- Firearm owners at substantially higher risk of completed suicide\(^2\)
  - 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gun Owner</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education/training</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Safe storage</td>
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<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary relinquishment</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme risk protection orders</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Waiting periods</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart guns</td>
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<td>√</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Many adults believe guns make us safer

Does having a gun in the home make it safer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Source: CDC
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

Source: CDC
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
“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
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

- 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?

- Extremely unlikely: 10%
- Somewhat unlikely: 17%
- Neither likely nor unlikely: 14%
- Somewhat likely: 25%
- Extremely likely: 34%

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)?

- Not familiar at all: 57%
- Slightly familiar: 23%
- Moderately familiar: 16%
- Very familiar: 5%
- Extremely familiar: 0%

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

Important information about preventing firearm suicide.

Importantly, healthcare professionals are on the front line of preventing firearm suicide. As such, they are responsible for identifying patients who are at risk of suicide and taking appropriate action. This involves asking directly about firearm access and engaging in open, non-confrontational discussions about firearm safety. It is critical to ensure that patients understand their rights and responsibilities under Connecticut law and to provide information about firearm access and safety.

This document contains information about how to identify patients at risk of suicide, the process for obtaining a Suicide Prevention Order of Protection (ERPO), and tips for having conversations with patients about firearm access and safety. It is important to note that this information is intended for general informational purposes and should not be used in place of medical or legal advice.

If you have any questions or concerns about how to prevent firearm suicide, please contact the Connecticut Against Gun Violence Education Fund at 1-800-273-7852 (1-800-273-TALK) or visit www.preventsuicidect.org.

CT Against Gun Violence Education Fund
P.O. Box 123
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Important information for healthcare professionals.

Exceptions to patient confidentiality.

While healthcare professionals have a legal and ethical obligation to protect patient confidentiality, there are exceptions, including those required by law or a court.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, in 2020, Connecticut’s Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) offers a way to remove firearms from individuals at risk of inflicted harm to themselves or others, while respecting their Second Amendment rights. A 2017 study conducted by researchers at Duke, Yale and UCONN found that for every 10 to 20 ERPOs issued, one suicide is prevented by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs. Suicide attempts are often preceded by learning signs.

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CT Against Gun Violence Education Fund
P.O. Box 123
Ridgefield, CT 06877
CAGV-led ERPO brochure distribution

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

Steps Toward a Safer Home When Someone is in Crisis

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

- **Lock:** Safely store all medications including prescription, over-the-counter, herbals, vitamins, and supplements in a locked location. Lockboxes can be ordered free of charge from drugfreect.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, storing firearms off-site is the safest option:
- Call local law enforcement to have them temporarily hold firearms for safekeeping; or
- Call the State Police at (860) 685-8290 to inquire about legally transferring firearms to a family member, trusted friend or gun dealer.

As a last resort, if an owner won’t voluntarily relinquish their firearms, and you believe they are at risk of imminent self-harm, contact local law enforcement to ask for a “risk protection order” to have them immediately remove the firearms 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 taping ropes, electrical wire, and long cords within the home or lock them away.
- Secure and lock high level windows and access to rooftops.

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

PREVENTSUICIDECT.ORG
Risk Protection Orders and Risk Protection Order Investigations

Information about the process to prevent anyone who is at immediate risk of causing personal injury to themselves or another person from having or getting firearms, deadly weapons, or ammunition.

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.

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.
Help us get the word out!

- Sign up to distribute in your town, facility
School Firearm Safety Campaign
Goal: talk about safe storage

- 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

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 communications from representatives of the Connecticut Against Gun Violence organization, we also reflected on the importance of firearms safety. In June, we will be embarked on the four-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook事故发生. 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 South End Press 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 need.

Beyond the dangers of your or other deadly weapons constituting a mandatory secure, it is essential to all devices designed for violence.

Please join us in proactive and ammunitions that you can value and concerning comment of all members of our community.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Golder
Superintendent of Farmington

A message about gun safety

Dear parents and guardians,

Given the incidents that have been happening across the country as well as in our neighboring town, the Farmington Public Schools and Farmington Police Department continue to remind us of the importance of 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 firearm. 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 be blocked from being removed by real and toy firearms. 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;
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 securely secured in all households.

Sincerely,
Brian I. Belfanti
Superintendent of Schools
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!

Thank you!

Questions?