

THE NUMBERS

Firearms are the leading method of suicide in Wisconsin and nationally. In 2014, the state lost 755 people to suicide, a number far higher than the national average, and the #2 cause of death in people between the ages of 15 and 35.

In Dane County alone we lose more than a person a week, that's 50 to 60 people each year, with 500 hospitalized or admitted to emergency departments due to injuries sustained during suicide attempts. Suicide is the number one cause of violent deaths.

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

We know that suicide is often preventable with education, treatment, and support, so in 2016 Safe Community launched a suicide prevention initiative based on a successful New Hampshire project called **THE GUN SHOP PROJECT**.

The project was founded by partners from public health and mental health practitioners, firearms rights advocates, and firearms dealers. The goal is to help gun retailers avoid selling firearms to a new customer who may be suicidal and to educate existing customers in a supportive environment how to recognize a suicidal crisis in a household member and to urge them to store firearms away from the home until the person recovers.

Our first step to reduce this number of suicides is to follow the **11 COMMANDMENTS OF GUN SAFETY**.

GETTING HELP

If a family member is going through a rough time, make sure he or she can't get to your guns. Keep them stored away from home. Just like a friend takes the keys from a friend who has had too much to drink, offer to safely store firearms for a friend who may need your help in finding resources to overcome a life struggle. To learn more about what to do to get help, **call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

ABOUT THE COALITION



Safe Communities of Madison - Dane County is a local non-profit coalition that brings together public and private sector partners to save lives, prevent injuries and make our community a safer place.

Our core areas of work correspond to our community's top causes of injury and injury-related death: Traffic Safety, Pedestrian Safety, Child Safety, Drug Poisoning Prevention, Falls Prevention, and Suicide Prevention.

More than 350 organizations - including area businesses, law enforcement and fire/EMS services, neighborhoods, health care leaders, youth and senior-serving agencies - actively collaborate with us on programs to make Dane County a safer place to live, work and play.

www.safercommunity.net



GUN SAFETY RULES

11 ~~10~~ COMMANDMENTS OF GUN SAFETY

Look inside
To see
what's new!

SHOOTING A GUN

1. Seek Proper instruction. Attend a reputable firearms safety handling course or seek private instruction before attempting to use a firearm. Before handling a new gun, learn how it operates. This includes knowing its basic parts, how to safely open and close the action, and how to safely remove any ammunition if loaded. Remember, a firearm's mechanical safety device is never foolproof. The safety device can never replace safe firearm handling.

2. Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate. Firearms are loud. They can also emit debris and hot gases that can cause injury. For these reasons, safety glasses and ear protectors are recommended.

3. Be sure your gun and ammunition are compatible. Only cartridges or shells designed for a particular gun can be safely fired by that gun. Most guns have their cartridge or shell type stamped on the barrel. Ammunition can be identified by information printed on the box and stamped on each cartridge. Do not fire the gun if there is any question about the compatibility of the gun and ammunition

4. Carry only one gauge/caliber of ammunition when shooting. Smaller ammunition can be accidentally placed in a gun chamber designed for larger ammunition, creating an obstruction and a very hazardous situation. Remove unfired ammunition from clothing when

you are shooting to avoid accidentally mixing different ammunition next time you go shooting.

5. Be sure of your target – and what's beyond. Be absolutely sure you have identified your target without any doubt. Equally important, be aware of the area beyond your target. This means observing your perspective area of fire before you shoot. Never fire in a direction where there are people or any other potential for mishap. It's simple: *think first, shoot second*.

6. Don't mix alcohol or drugs with shooting. Alcohol, as well as any other substance likely to impair mental or physical functions of the body, should not be used before or while handling firearms.

OWNING & HANDLING A GUN

7. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot. There's a natural tendency to place your finger on the trigger when holding a gun. Avoid it! Your trigger finger should be extended, pointing forward, pressed against the side of the firearm, above the trigger area.

8. Keep the action open and the gun unloaded until ready to use. Whenever you pick up any gun, immediately check the action and check to see that the chamber is unloaded. If the gun has a magazine, make sure it is empty. Even if the magazine is empty or removed, a cartridge may still remain in the firing chamber. If you do

not know how to open the gun's action, leave it alone or get help from someone who is knowledgeable.

9. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. Whether you are shooting or simply handling your gun, never point the muzzle at yourself or at others. Common sense should dictate which direction is safest depending on your location and various other conditions. Generally speaking, it is safest to have the gun pointed upward or towards the ground.

10. Store your guns safely and securely when not in use. Hiding guns where you think children or others will not find them is not enough. Always store your guns unloaded and locked in a case or gun safe when not in use, with ammunition locked and stored in a separate location.

11. Consider temporary off-site storage if a family member may be suicidal. When there is an emotional crisis (like a break-up, job loss, legal trouble) or a major change in someone's behavior (like depression or anger, more drinking) that causes concern, storing guns outside the home until situation improves may save a life. Friends and some police departments (if an officer is called to your home to assist) may provide temporary storage. Any firearms retailer can recommend and sell you a secure gun safe or gun lock. Putting time and distance between a firearm and a suicidal person saves lives.