

# FIREARM-RELATED ACCIDENT STATISTICS

HIGHLIGHTING TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES



## *Unintentional Deaths Involving Firearms at Record Low Level ...*

since record-keeping began in 1903, as shown by the data in the National Safety Council's Injury Facts online. In the last two decades, the number of unintentional firearm-related fatalities has declined by **47 percent** – from **866** unintentional fatalities in **1998** to **458** in **2018**. Firearms are involved in fewer than 1/3 percent of all unintentional fatalities in the United States. In side-by-side comparisons, firearm accidents continue to rank among the lowest forms of accidental injury.

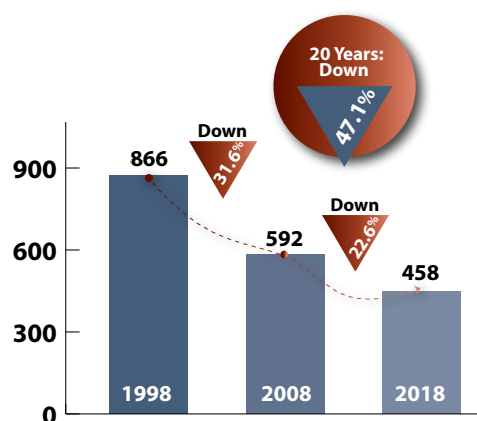


## KEY FINDINGS

- Unintentional firearm-related fatalities in the U.S. have been decreasing since record-keeping began in 1903 – dramatically in the last 20 years, down 47.1 percent, with the 2018 figure the lowest on record to date.
- From 2008 to 2018, unintentional firearm-related fatalities declined by 22.6 percent while firearm sales grew by an estimated 40 percent.
- Unintentional firearm-related fatalities are substantially lower than the number of unintentional fatalities from most other forms of injury.
- From 2017 to 2018, accidental fatalities of all principle causes decreased 1.7 percent, while unintentional fatalities related to firearms decreased 5.8 percent.
- Firearms are involved in fewer than 1/3 percent (0.3 percent) of all unintentional fatalities in the United States.
- In the last two decades (1998 to 2018), the number of unintentional firearm-related deaths involving children 14 years of age and under has decreased by 55.4 percent.
- Firearms are involved in 1.4 percent of unintentional fatalities among children 14 years of age and under, and are among the least likely types of unintentional fatalities among children.
- In the home, unintentional firearm-related fatalities have dropped by 50.0 percent from 1998 to 2018.

Note: The statistics presented in this issue are based on figures from the National Safety Council's Injury Facts® online data and other sources. For additional source information, please see last page.

# UNINTENTIONAL FIREARM FATALITIES DOWN 47%



Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts

Over the last two decades, the number of unintentional fatalities involving firearms has **dropped by 47 percent**.

This decline is attributed to a number of factors, including educational efforts by groups such as the National Shooting Sports Foundation and National Rifle Association, and state-affiliated hunter education programs. Industry-related initiatives include safety education programs such as NSSF's Project ChildSafe®, free firearm locking devices voluntarily supplied by firearm manufacturers with new firearms, and technological advances in firearm design and manufacturing.

## Unintentional Firearm Fatalities See Highest Rate of Decline

Compared to other principle types of unintentional fatalities in the United States, **firearms continue to show the largest percentage decrease during the past twenty years.**

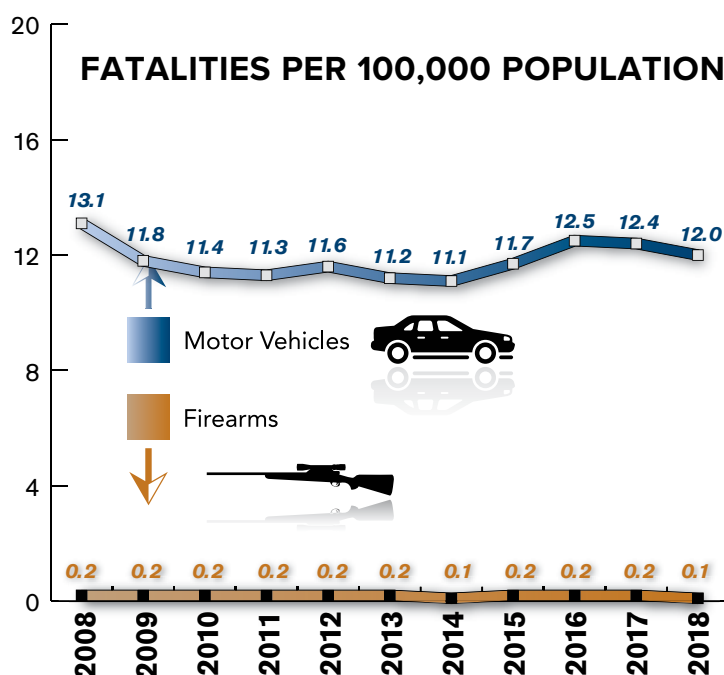
Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts online

\*\*Total includes types of injury not listed in the grid. Other injury type comparisons are not available because of changes in year-to-year classifications.

TYPE	1998	2008	2018	% change (10 yrs)	% change (20 yrs)
<b>Firearms</b>	866	592	458	<b>down 22.6%</b>	<b>down 47.1%</b>
Fires, Flames, Smoke	3,255	2,912	2,972	up 2.1%	down 8.7%
Motor Vehicles	43,501	39,790	39,404	down 1.0%	down 9.4%
Choking	3,515	4,366	5,084	up 16.4%	up 44.6%
<b>ALL TYPES**</b>	<b>97,835</b>	<b>121,902</b>	<b>167,127</b>	<b>up 37.1%</b>	<b>up 70.8%</b>

## Unintentional Fatality Rates: Firearms versus Motor Vehicles

- The rate of unintentional fatalities involving firearms continues to remain **historically low**.
- Since early record-keeping beginning in 1903, the rate of accidental firearm-related fatalities has dropped by 95.8 percent. The current 10-year average rate is 0.2. For motor vehicle accidents, the current 10-year average rate is 11.8.
- The rate of unintentional firearm fatalities is substantially lower than the rate of motor vehicle fatalities.
- A person is **120 times more likely** to be involved in an unintentional fatality with a motor vehicle than with a firearm.



Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts

# FACTS & FIGURES

## Firearms are Involved in Only 0.3 Percent of All Unintentional Fatalities (For All Ages)

<b>TOTAL U.S. POPULATION (2018): 327,167,434</b>		
<b>Total Unintentional Fatalities</b>	<b>167,127</b>	<b>100%</b>
Poisoning	62,399	37.3%
Motor Vehicle	39,404	23.6%
Falls	37,455	22.4%
Suffocation	6,701	4.0%
Drowning	3,710	2.2%
Fire/Flame	2,972	1.8%
Natural / Environmental	2,003	1.2%
Struck By/Against Object	827	0.5%
Transportation (other than land)	817	0.5%
Machinery	525	0.3%
<b>Firearms</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
All Other Accidents	9,856	5.9%

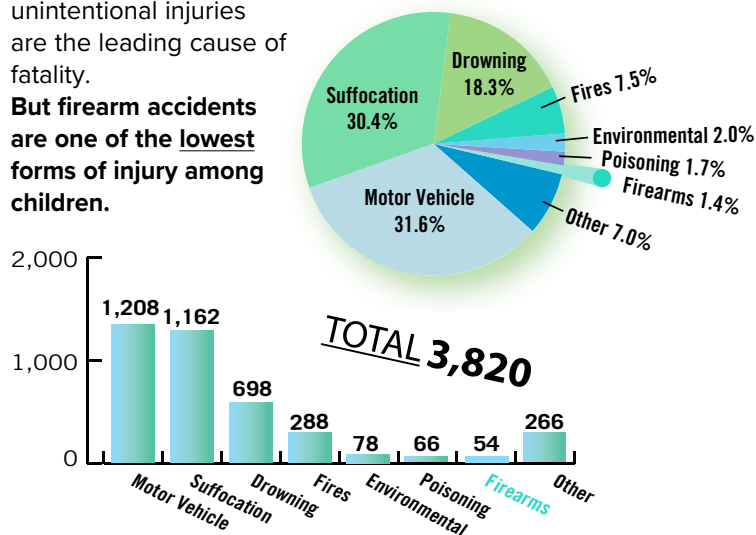
Source: CDC WISQARS 2018 data (data pulled March 2020)

## Firearms are Involved in 1.4 Percent of Unintentional Fatalities Among Children

For children 14 years of age and under, unintentional injuries are the leading cause of fatality.

**But firearm accidents are one of the lowest forms of injury among children.**

### Unintentional Fatalities: (14 years of age and under)



Source: CDC WISQARS 2018 data (data pulled March 2020)

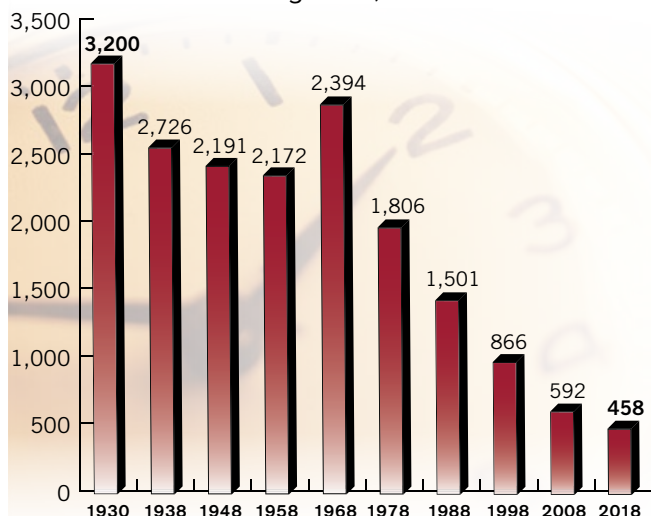
[projectchildsafe.org](http://projectchildsafe.org)



**HELP SPREAD THE WORD**

## Historical Flashback

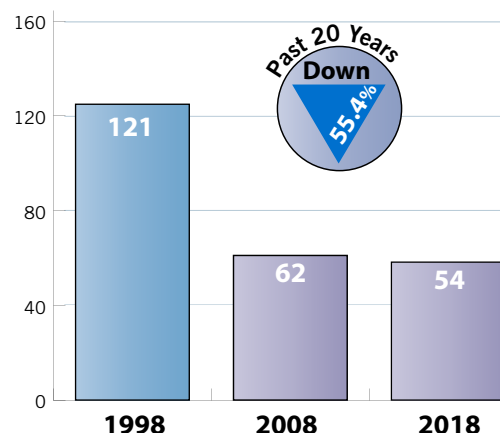
Today, the annual number of firearm-related accidents is down **85.7 percent** from a high of 3,200 in 1930.



Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts online

## Firearm-Related Fatalities Among Children Down 55 Percent

Over the last two decades the number of unintentional firearm-related fatalities among youth 14 years of age and under **decreased 55.4%** while the population for this age group increased **2.4 percent**.



Source: CDC WISQARS Injury Mortality Reports through 2018 (pulled March 2020)



### Most states reported very few or no fatal firearm accidents in 2018

State	# of Unintentional Firearm-related Fatalities*	Population	Crude Rate**
AL	24	4,887,871	0.49
AK	.	737,438	.
AZ	11	7,171,646	0.15
AR	13	3,013,825	0.43
CA	34	39,557,045	0.09
CO	.	5,695,564	.
CT	.	3,572,665	.
DE	.	967,171	.
DC	.	702,455	.
FL	16	21,299,325	0.08
GA	15	10,519,475	0.14
HI	.	1,420,491	.
ID	.	1,754,208	.
IL	.	12,741,080	.
IN	10	6,691,878	0.15
IA	.	3,156,145	.
KS	.	2,911,505	.
KY	23	4,468,402	0.51
LA	12	4,659,978	0.26
ME	.	1,338,404	.
MD	.	6,042,718	.
MA	.	6,902,149	.
MI	.	9,995,915	.
MN	.	5,611,179	.
MS	28	2,986,530	0.94
MO	10	6,126,452	0.16
MT	.	1,062,305	.
NE	.	1,929,268	.
NV	.	3,034,392	.
NH	.	1,356,458	.
NJ	.	8,908,520	.
NM	.	2,095,428	.
NY	.	19,542,209	.
NC	30	10,383,620	0.29
ND	.	760,077	.
OH	13	11,689,442	0.11
OK	.	3,943,079	.
OR	.	4,190,713	.
PA	21	12,807,060	0.16
RI	.	1,057,315	.
SC	18	5,084,127	0.35
SD	.	882,235	.
TN	11	6,770,010	0.16
TX	37	28,701,845	0.13
UT	.	3,161,105	.
VT	.	626,299	.
VA	10	8,517,685	0.12
WA	.	7,535,591	.
WV	.	1,805,832	.
WI	.	5,813,568	.
WY	.	577,737	.
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>327,167,434</b>	<b>0.14</b>

Source: U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)

\* CDC WISQARS Fatal Injury Data (2008 forward) is suppressed where totals are too low. The figures reported for these states are not available. The TOTAL reported is the national total and will not equal the sum of the numbers supplied in the table. \*\* Per NCIPC, rates based on 20 or fewer fatalities may be unstable. Use with caution.

### 2018: Types of Unintentional-Injury Firearm-Related Deaths in the Home

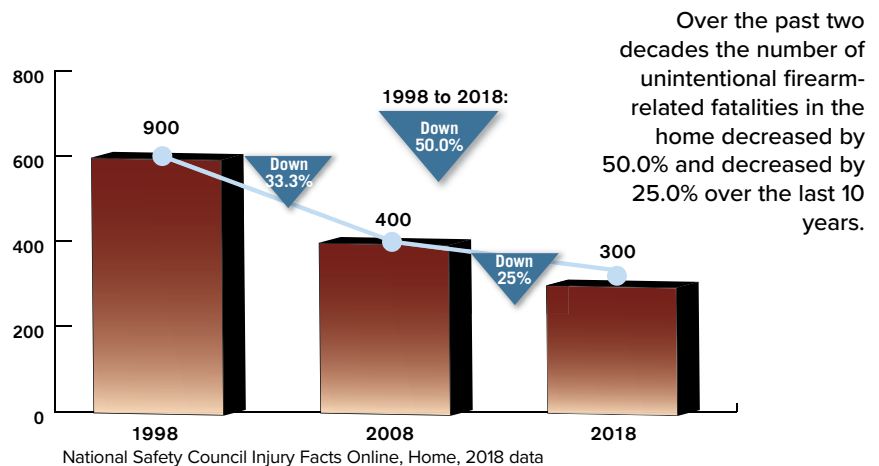


Less than one-half a percent (0.3%) of all fatal accidents at home involve firearms.

TOTAL HOME	89,300	%
Poisoning	50,800	56.9%
Falls	24,100	27.0%
Choking	2,700	3.0%
Fire, Flames, or Smoke	2,700	3.0%
Mechanical Suffocation	1,500	1.7%
Drowning	1,100	1.2%
Natural Heat or Cold	800	0.9%
<b>Firearms</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
Other	9,900	11.1%

Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts online, Home data, 2018, pulled March 2020

### Firearm-Related Home Fatalities Down 50.0%



### Firearm Accidents Decline Even as Firearm Sales Have Increased Dramatically

PAST YEARS	NSSF-Adjusted NICS* Data
2008	8,993,964
2009	9,534,131
2010	9,436,182
2011	10,791,275
2012	13,780,285
2013	14,796,872
2014	13,090,383
2015	14,244,240
2016	15,700,471
2017	13,967,825
2018	13,116,005
<b>Total Adjusted NICS Checks (2008 - 2018)</b>	<b>137,451,633</b>

Source: FBI NICS and NSSF research

\*National Instant Criminal Background Check System

# HUNTING ONE OF THE SAFEST ACTIVITIES IN AMERICA

“ In addition to hunting being a safe activity, so too is target shooting, an activity enjoyed by millions of people ranging in age from youth to adults. Unintentional fatalities connected with target-shooting are rare. The emphasis on firearm safety at shooting ranges, competitive and recreational matches and from sport shooting organizations all contribute to target shooting being a safe activity. ” - NSSF COMMUNICATIONS

ACTIVITY (alphabetically)	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS (a) 2018	ESTIMATED INJURIES(b) 2018	INJURIES per 100,000 PARTICIPANTS	ONE (1) INJURY FOR EVERY x PARTICIPANTS
Archery (target)	7,700,000	4,602	60	1,673
Baseball	12,100,000	99,010	818	122
Basketball	24,900,000	435,452	1,749	57
Bicycle Riding	37,100,000	415,532	1,120	89
Billiards / Pool	20,400,000	3,503	17	5,824
Bowling	33,400,000	16,544	50	2,019
Cheerleading	3,600,000	30,034	834	120
Exercise with Equipment	56,500,000	68,760	122	822
Fishing	34,400,000	60,218	175	571
Football (tackle)	7,400,000	296,944	4,013	25
Golf	17,700,000	38,776	219	456
Gymnastics	6,000,000	34,730	579	173
Hockey (ice)	3,300,000	19,507	591	169
<b>Hunting w/ Firearms *</b>	<b>17,500,000</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3,723</b>
In-line / Rollerskating	4,400,000	36,569	831	120
Lacrosse	2,800,000	14,285	510	196
Martial Arts	6,000,000	27,596	460	217
Mountain Biking (off road)	5,600,000	8,834	158	634
Skateboarding	5,400,000	81,321	1,506	66
Snowboarding	3,900,000	21,093	541	185
Soccer	13,800,000	199,096	1,443	69
Softball	9,700,000	69,932	721	139
Swimming	47,100,000	111,523	237	422
Tennis	12,200,000	19,123	157	638
Volleyball	10,100,000	55,075	545	183
Water Skiing	3,600,000	3,700	103	973
Weight Lifting	36,500,000	103,815	284	352
Wrestling	3,200,000	36,299	1,134	88

SAFEST ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE OF INJURIES PER 100 PARTICIPANTS
1	Billiards / Pool	0.02%
2	Hunting w/ Firearms *	0.03%
3	Bowling	0.05%
4	Archery (target)	0.06%
5	Water Skiing	0.10%
6	Exercising with Equipment	0.12%
7	Tennis	0.16%
8	Mountain Biking (off road)	0.16%
9	Fishing	0.18%
10	Golf	0.22%

**FACTS:** Excise tax collections on items such as firearms and ammunition totaled nearly \$3.6 billion from 2014-2018. More than \$724 million was apportioned to states specifically for the purpose of hunter education and safety training. This, along with a strong network of 55,000 dedicated hunter education instructors, helps make hunting one of the safest activities in America.

Sources: USFW & IHEA

LESS SAFE ACTIVITIES		PERCENTAGE OF INJURIES PER 100 PARTICIPANTS
1	Football (tackle)	4.01%
2	Basketball	1.75%
3	Skateboarding	1.51%
4	Soccer	1.44%
5	Wrestling	1.13%
6	Bicycle Riding	1.12%
7	Cheerleading	0.83%
8	In-line Rollerskating	0.83%
9	Baseball	0.82%
10	Softball	0.72%

## Hunting versus other ACTIVITIES:

- A person is 27 times more likely to be injured playing softball than hunting.
- A person is 30 times more likely to be injured playing baseball than hunting.
- A person is 31 times more likely to be injured cheerleading or roller skating than hunting.
- A person is 42 times more likely to be injured wrestling or bicycle riding than hunting.
- A person is 54 times more likely to be injured playing soccer than hunting.
- A person is 56 times more likely to be injured skateboarding than hunting.
- A person is 65 times more likely to be injured playing basketball than hunting.
- A person is 149 times more likely to be injured playing tackle football than hunting.

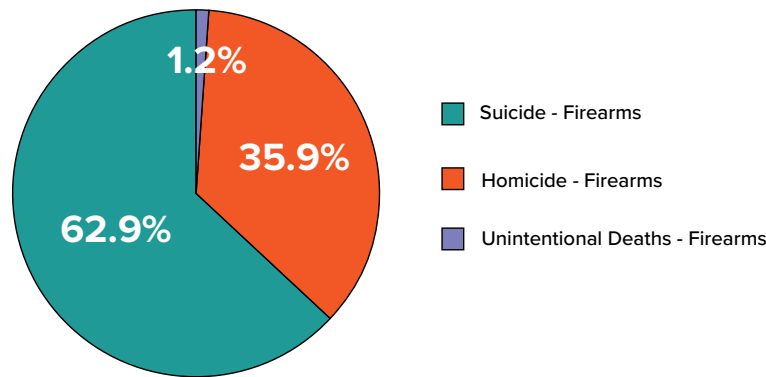
Sources:  
(a) Number of Participants: National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) Sports Participation 2018 estimates.  
(b) Total Injuries: Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) 2018 estimates.

“NOTE: Hunting with firearms total injuries/incidents include CPSC NEISS injury data for Tree Stands, as well as estimated injuries from IHEA Hunter Incident Clearinghouse. The vast majority of these incidents were neither fatalities, nor serious injuries.”

**FACT:**

Nationally on an annual basis, there's a greater number of suicides committed using a firearm than there are homicides committed with a firearm.

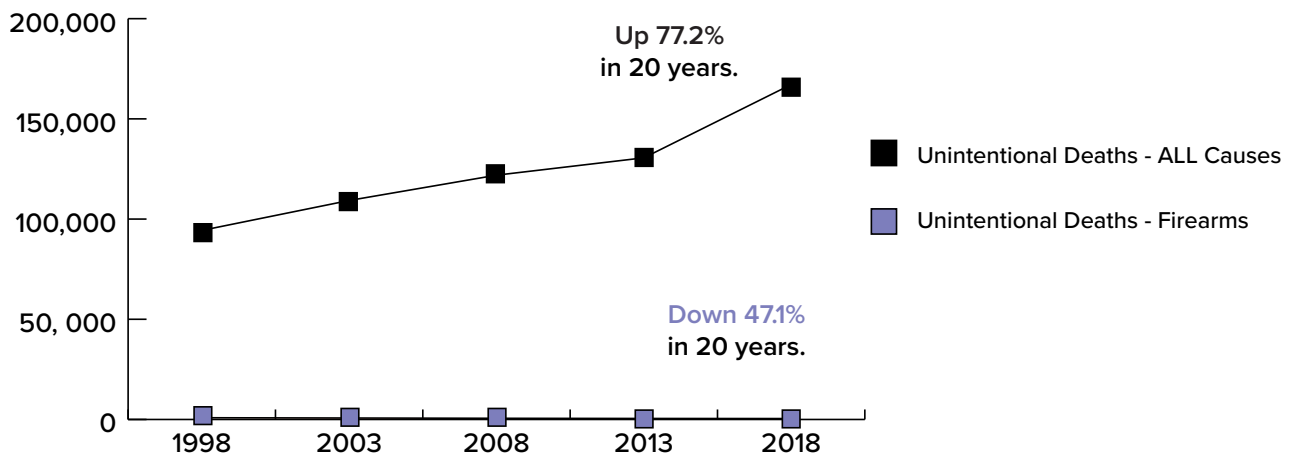
### FIREARM-RELATED DEATHS (2018) HOMICIDES, SUICIDE AND UNINTENTIONAL



Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC, NCHS Vital Statistics System for numbers of deaths. Bureau of Census for population estimates. Reported figures for All Ages which include those of unknown age.

Recognizing that nearly two-thirds of all firearm-related deaths are suicides, NSSF and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention have developed a Suicide Prevention Toolkit to help firearm retailers, shooting range operators and customers understand risk factors and warning signs related to suicide, know where to find help and encourage secure firearm storage options. Learn more at [nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention](https://nssf.org/safety/suicide-prevention). NSSF also participates in a similar suicide prevention initiative with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs and AFSP.

### UNINTENTIONAL DEATHS: ALL CAUSES VS. FIREARM-RELATED



Data Source: NCHS Vital Statistics System for numbers of deaths. Reported figures are for all ages which include those of unknown age. Produced by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

## INDUSTRY EFFORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO **HELP PREVENT FIREARM MISUSE**



**OWN IT? Respect It. Secure It.®**

**As a responsible firearm owner, you know safe handling and secure storage go hand in hand.**

Join **Project ChildSafe®** to help better educate more gun owners about safe and proper storage when firearms are not in use.

Since its inception 20 years ago, Project ChildSafe has distributed more than **38 million safety kits** with gun locks and safety education materials to communities nationwide, in partnership with more than 15,000 law enforcement and community partners to help prevent firearm accidents, thefts and misuse, including suicide. Project ChildSafe helps save lives.

Visit **ProjectChildSafe.org** to learn more about secure storage options, become a program supporter, and download tools to help you educate others, Including children, about firearm safety and security.

Brought to you by the firearms industry

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association







## WE ARE THE FIREARM INDUSTRY

# WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR REAL SOLUTIONS & SAFER COMMUNITIES



### FixNICS®

FixNICS® is a program NSSF developed to improve the reporting of all prohibiting record to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). FixNICS® has helped improve background checks across 16 states and resulted in a 240% increase in records submitted to the FBI. This effort was the model for the Fix NICS Act passed by Congress on a bipartisan basis and signed into law by the President in 2018.



### Project ChildSafe®

Project ChildSafe® promotes responsible firearm storage and is a nationwide effort that aims to help prevent firearm accidents by providing free information and gun locks—to date, more than 38 million free gun locks have been distributed.



### Operation Secure Store®

Operation Secure Store® works with Federal Firearms Licensees and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to prevent thefts, and keep criminals from stealing guns by making gun stores more secure.



### Don't Lie For The Other Guy™

The "Don't Lie for the Other Guy" campaign, run in cooperation with ATF, helps educate retailers to detect and prevent illegal "straw" purchases and conducts outreach to the public through in-store, outdoor, radio and social media advertising.



### Suicide Prevention

The firearm industry actively partners with local and national suicide prevention organizations to help communities engage in safe firearm-storage practices and understand risk factors and warning signs related to suicide. The Department of Veterans Affairs and NSSF have launched a pilot program to help prevent suicide among veterans and active servicemen and servicewomen.

[nssfreesolutions.org](http://nssfreesolutions.org)

**NSSF**  
The Firearm Industry  
Trade Association

## About NSSF®

The National Shooting Sports Foundation is the trade association for the firearm industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports.

Formed in 1961, NSSF's membership consists of manufacturers, distributors, firearm retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen's organizations and publishers. For more information, visit [nssf.org](https://nssf.org).

## Sources

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL (NSC) INJURY FACTS®	<p>The National Safety Council, chartered by an act of Congress, is a non-government, not-for-profit, public service organization with a mission to educate and influence people to prevent unintentional injury and death. Injury Facts, the Council's annual statistical report on unintentional injuries, is prepared by the Research and Statistical Services Group. It has Reported Accidental Firearms Injury Statistics since 1903. Data is now reported online.</p> <p><a href="https://nsc.org">nsc.org</a></p>
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)	<p>The CDC is one of the major operating components of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. WISQARS is the CDC's Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2005)[cited 2020 March 25].</p> <p>Available from: <a href="https://cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/">cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/</a></p>
NATIONAL SPORTING GOODS ASSOCIATION (NSGA)	<p>The NSGA Sports Participation report provides data on total sports participation, new participation and frequency of participation.</p> <p><a href="https://nsga.org">nsga.org</a></p>
INTERNATIONAL HUNTER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION (IHEA)	<p>The International Hunter Education Association-USA is the professional hunter education association affiliated with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the 50 state fish and hunter education programs. The programs employ 55,000 instructors/volunteer instructors that teach hunting and shooting safety and responsibilities throughout the United States.</p> <p><a href="https://ihea-usa.org">ihea-usa.org</a></p>
CONSUMER PRODUCTS SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC) NATIONAL ELECTRONIC INJURY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (NEISS)	<p>The CPSC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) is a national probability sample of hospitals in the U.S. and its territories. Patient information is collected from each NEISS hospital for every emergency visit involving an injury associated with consumer products. From this sample, the total number of product-related injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms nationwide can be estimated.</p> <p><a href="https://cpsc.gov/en/research--statistics/neiss-injury-data/">cpsc.gov/en/research--statistics/neiss-injury-data/</a></p>

Report provided by NSSF. For additional research materials, please visit [nssf.org/research](https://nssf.org/research)

