

## THE RISKS OF GUNS IN THE HOME

In 2002, 30,242 people were killed by guns in America - 83 people a day - including 17,108 suicides; 11,829 homicides; and 762 unintentional or accidental shootings.[1]

A gun kept in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in an unintentional shooting (4 times), a criminal assault or homicide (7 times), or an attempted or completed suicide (11 times) than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense.[2]

An estimated 33-40% of households own guns [3, 4] and approximately 44-51 million Americans personally own guns.[5, 6] As of 1994, Americans owned an estimated 192 million firearms.[7]

One out of three handguns is kept loaded and unlocked. More than half of all handguns are kept either locked and/or unloaded.[8]

Nearly all childhood unintentional shooting deaths occur in or around the home. Fifty percent occur in the home, and 40% occur in the home of a friend or relative. Most of these deaths involve guns that have been kept loaded and accessible to children and occur when children play with loaded guns.[9]

When someone is home, a gun is used for protection in fewer than two percent of home invasion crimes.[10]

### Children and Teens

In the U.S. in 2002, firearm injuries were the third leading cause of death among children aged 10-14 and the second leading cause of death for ages 15-19.[11]

For children and teens, 19 years and under in the year 2002, we lost 1,830 to firearm-related homicide; 828 to firearm-related suicide; and 167 lives to unintentional shootings. One young life lost every 3 hours.[12]

### Storage

In 1998, it was estimated that 43% of households with children ages 3-17, keep at least one gun in the home. Of this 43%, 23% keep a gun loaded some of the time and 28% keep at least one gun hidden and unlocked.[13]

### Have you ever thought to ask?

According to a study by Peter Hart and Associates and The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, 42% of parents polled revealed that they would be extremely concerned about their child's safety if they knew there was a gun in the home of their child's friend. When asked if they ever thought to ask:

- 61% of parents reported that they never thought about asking;
- 30% reported that they have asked; and
- 6% thought about it, but never asked.[14]

A gun in the home increases the likelihood of an intentional shooting, particularly among children. Unintentional shootings commonly occur when children find an adult's loaded handgun in a drawer or closet, and while playing with it shoot themselves, a sibling or a friend. The unintentional firearm-related death rate for children 0-14 years is 9 times higher in the U.S. than in the 25 other high-income industrialized countries with populations over 1 million combined.[15]

For more information, visit The ASK Campaign at [www.AskingSavesKids.com](http://www.AskingSavesKids.com).

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## Endnotes:

1. WISQARS, *Injury Mortality Reports*. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control. [http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10\\_sy.html](http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_sy.html) (hereafter *Injury Mortality Reports*).
2. Kellermann, AL et al., "Injuries and Deaths Due to Firearms in the Home." *The Journal of Trauma, Infection, and Critical Care*, Vol. 45, No. 2, August 1998.
3. Tom W. Smith, "2001 National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings," National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, December 2001. <http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/online/guns01.pdf>. (33% of households own guns.)
4. The Gallup Organization, "Americans and Guns: Danger or Defense?" *Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing*, January 4, 2005. (40% of households own guns.)
5. Philip J. Cook and Jens Ludwig, "Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms," *Research in Brief*, National Institute for Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, May 1997. <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/165476.pdf>. (44 million individual gun owners.)
6. Smith, "2001 National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings." (50.6 million individuals who personally own a gun – Applying 24.2% estimate of adult gun owners to 2000 Census total of 209,128,904 adults).
7. Cook and Ludwig, "Guns in America: National Survey on Private Ownership and Use of Firearms."
8. Ibid.
9. Safe Kids USA, "Firearms: Why Kids Are at Risk." [http://www.usa.safekids.org/tier3\\_cd.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=317&folder\\_id=172](http://www.usa.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=317&folder_id=172)
10. Kellermann, AL, "Weapon Involvement in Home Invasion Crimes," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 273, No. 22, June 14, 1995.
11. WISQARS, *Leading Causes of Death Reports*. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control. <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10.html>.
12. WISQARS, *Injury Mortality Reports*.
13. Peter Hart Research Associates and the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Parents, Kids, & Guns: A Nationwide Survey," 1998. <http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/research/?page=hart98&menu=gvr>
14. Ibid.
15. Centers for Disease Control, "Rates of Homicide, Suicide, and Firearm-Related Death Among Children -- 26 Industrialized Countries," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Vol. 46, No. 5, February 7, 1997. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00046149.htm>