

# Firearms in our Community

---

Storing firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition locked separately, can reduce the risk of injuries and deaths involving children and teens and prevent firearm theft.

## Did you know...?

- In the United States, 38,658 people died in 2016 as a result of firearms. Of these firearm deaths, 59% were suicides (22,938 died) and 37% (14,415 died) were homicides<sup>1</sup>.
- In Washington State, 20 children (ages 0-17) died as a result of firearms in 2016. This is the equivalent of a child or teen being killed by gunfire every 18 days<sup>2</sup>. An additional 30 children were hospitalized statewide. In Snohomish County, zero children died as a result of guns in 2016, and eight other children were hospitalized in Snohomish County during this period<sup>3</sup>.
- In 2016, an estimated 95,300 adults in Snohomish County reported keeping a firearm unlocked<sup>4</sup>.

## Children, youth and firearms

- During the 2015-2016 school year, the WA State Superintendent of Public Instruction reported 130 incidents involving a firearm on school premises, transportation systems, or school facilities. These incidents resulted in 62 suspensions and 36 expulsions. Of these, six suspensions and three expulsions were in school districts located in Snohomish County<sup>5</sup>.
- In 2016, 11% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 19% of 10th grade students, and 23% of 12th grade students in Snohomish County reported that they would not be caught if they carried a handgun without parental permission<sup>6</sup>.
- In 2016, 4% of Snohomish County 10th and 12th grade students reported having carried a gun on at least one day during the last 30 days<sup>6</sup>.
- Parent perceptions of children's behavior with firearms do not predict actual behavior. One study revealed that boys estimated to have "low interest" in playing with a real handgun were as likely to play with or pull the trigger as children perceived to have "moderate to high interest."<sup>7</sup>

## Firearm suicides

- Firearm suicides (512 died) are 75% of all firearm deaths (682 total deaths) and accounted for 45% of all suicides in Washington State in 2016<sup>2</sup>.
- Between 2014 and 2016, 125 youth (ages 0-17) died by suicide in Washington; 54 of these youth (43%) died from firearm suicide. During the same period, 15 youth died by suicide in Snohomish County; eight youth (53%) used firearms<sup>2</sup>.
- Adolescents with access to firearms are 2.6 times as likely to die by suicide as adolescents without access to firearms<sup>9</sup>.
- A study of adolescent suicides by firearm found that more than half were carried out with guns from the adolescent's home. More than 75% of Firearms used in suicide attempts and unintentional injuries were stored in the residence of the victim, a relative, or friend<sup>10,11</sup>.

## Gun violence, homicides and crime

- In 2016, 60% of homicides in Washington State were committed with firearms<sup>12</sup>.
- In 2016, 18 homicides occurred among youth (ages 0-17) in Washington State; eight (44%) of these youth died as a result of firearm homicides<sup>2</sup>.
- In 2015, 17 youth (ages 0-17) were hospitalized for firearm assault injuries in Washington; Snohomish County youth accounted for 35% of these nonfatal injury hospitalizations<sup>3</sup>.

## Firearms in Washington State, Snohomish County and the United States

- An estimated 34% of Washington adults (1,882,000 people) 18 years and older reported having a firearm in or around their home in 2016. Nearly half of these adults (47% or 876,000 people) reported storing a firearm unlocked<sup>4</sup>. Access to firearms, including storage practices, are a known risk factor for firearm suicide – especially among youth<sup>13</sup>.
- In 2016, approximately 37% of Snohomish County adults (222,000 people) reported firearms present in or around their homes. Among these adults, an estimated 35% (77,600 people) stored firearms loaded and an estimated 43% (95,300 people) stored firearms unlocked. Approximately 16% (36,000 people) of firearm owners reported storing them loaded and unlocked<sup>4</sup>.
- In 2015, 308 Washington State residents were hospitalized for nonfatal gun injuries, including 30 children younger than 18<sup>3</sup>.
- In 2016, 682 Washington State residents died from a firearm injury, including 20 children younger than 18<sup>2</sup>.
- In 2015, 30 Snohomish County residents were hospitalized for nonfatal gun injuries, including eight children ages 0-17<sup>3</sup>.
- In 2016, 64 Snohomish County residents died from a gun injury, all of them were adults age 18 or older.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2016, more than 237,000 guns were reported stolen in the United States. In the last decade alone, 2 million guns were reported stolen, although that number is likely higher because many incidents of gun theft are never even reported.<sup>14</sup>

### References

---

- 1) CDC WONDER (Wide-Ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research), Accessed May 2018
- 2) Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Data, 1990–2016, Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), October 2017.
- 3) WA Hospital Discharge Data, Comprehensive Hospitalization Abstract Reporting System (CHARS) 1987-2015. Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Community Health Assessment Tool (CHAT), August 2016.
- 4) Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, supported in part by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cooperative Agreement NU58/DP006066-02-02 (2016).
- 5) WA Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2015-2016 Weapons in Schools Report
- 6) WA State Healthy Youth Survey, 2016
- 7) Jackman GA, Farah MM, Kellerman AL, Simon HK. Seeing is Believing: What do Boys Do When They Find a Real Gun? *Pediatrics*. 2001; 107(6):1247-1250; DOI: 10.1542/peds.107.6.1247. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/107/6/1247>
- 8) Baxley F, Miller M. Parental Misperceptions About Children and Firearms. *Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med*. 2006; 160(5):542-547.doi:10.1001/archpedi.160.5.542. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=204929>
- 9) Anglemeyer A, Horvath T, Rutherford G. The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 160(2):101-110
- 10) Grossman DC, Reay DT, Baker SA. Self-inflicted and Unintentional Firearm Injuries Among Children and Adolescents: The Source of the Firearm. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 1999;153(8):875-878. doi:10.1001/archpedi.153.8.875. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=347593>
- 11) Wright MA, Wintente GJ, Claire BE. Gun Suicide by Young People in California: Descriptive epidemiology and Gun Ownership. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2008. 43(6):619-622
- 12) WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs, Crime in WA, 2016 Annual Report
- 13) Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries. *JAMA*. 2005. 293(6):707-714
- 14) <https://www.thetrace.org/features/stolen-guns-violent-crime-america/>

