Firearm Safety and Harm Prevention

Legal ownership of firearms comes with important safety responsibilities to prevent accidental firearm injuries and deaths, thefts, and suicide, including among children.

FIREARM SAFETY

Firearm safety is an important part of personal and public health. Most gun owners are responsible and deeply committed to gun safety. Like other potentially harmful household risks, there are steps that can help protect you and your family.

FIREARM STORAGE

Proper storage of firearms is an essential part of health and safety, and Michigan law requires guns to be stored safely, which means unloaded and securely locked with ammunition locked in a separate container.

If you or another person who has access to your firearms begins to think about harming themselves or others, there are steps you can take to keep yourself and others safe.

1. Lock your firearms, and give the key to a family member or friend.
2. Disassemble firearms and give critical parts (like the firing pin or slide) to a family member or friend.
3. Consider storing firearms off-site. Options for remote storage include:
   - In a secure self-storage unit that permits firearms.
   - In a bonded warehouse for gun storage.
   - Some police departments.
   - Some gun shops and shooting ranges.
   - Store the key in a remote location.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☑ I have spoken to my children about what to do if they find an unsecured gun.
- ☑ I discuss gun storage and safety rules with my children.
- ☑ I have passed a firearm safety course with a certified instructor.
- ☑ I store my guns unloaded and in a locked location like a gun cabinet, safe, or vault.
- ☑ I store ammunition or loaded magazines in a locked location separate from my guns.
- ☑ I have taken reasonable steps to make sure children and other unauthorized users can't find the keys or combination to my safe.

FIREARM FACTS

- 1st — Firearm injury is the leading cause of death in the United States for children and young adults.
- Over half of all firearm owners (including those with children at home) do not practice secure storage.
- 3x — Having access to a firearm can triple someone's risk of dying by suicide.
- Guns kept in homes are more likely to be involved in a fatal or nonfatal accidental shooting, criminal assault, or suicide attempt than to be used to injure or kill in self-defense.
- Increasing the time and distance between someone and a firearm can reduce suicide risk and save lives.
- The risk of unintentional and self- inflicted firearm injury is lower when all household firearms are stored and locked.

RESOURCES

- U of M Family Guide to Firearm Home Safety
- MDHHS Firearm Safety Information
- MDHHS Suicide Prevention (Michigan.gov/SuicidePrevention)
- If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988.

MDHHS
Michigan Department of Health & Human Services

Firearm Storage Requirements and Penalties

Updated February 2024

What are the firearm storage requirements under Michigan's safe storage law?[1]

If you store or leave a firearm unattended on premises under your control, and you know or reasonably should know that a minor is, or is likely to be, present on the premises, you are required to do one or more of the following:

- Store the firearm in a locked box or container.
- Keep the firearm unloaded and lock the firearm with a locking device that is properly engaged to render the firearm inoperable by any individual other than the owner or an authorized user.

If you enter onto the premises of another individual and you store or leave a firearm unattended on those premises, and you know or reasonably should know that a minor is, or is likely to be, present on the premises, you are required to do one or more of the following:

1. Store the firearm in a locked box or container.
2. Keep the firearm unloaded and lock the firearm with a locking device that is properly engaged to render the firearm inoperable by any individual other than the owner or an authorized user.
3. Before entering the premises, do both of the following:
    - Store the firearm in a locked box or container in your motor vehicle, or keep the firearm unloaded and lock the firearm with a locking device that is properly engaged to render the firearm inoperable by any individual other than the owner or an authorized user, and
    - Lock your motor vehicle.

[1] MCL 28.429, found at legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-28-429-added

Definitions

"Locked box or container"

Means a secure container, specifically designed for the storage of firearms, that is fully enclosed and locked by a padlock, key lock, combination lock, or similar locking device to which a minor does not possess the key or combination, or otherwise have access.

"Locking device"

Means a trigger lock, cable lock, or similar lock that prevents a firearm from discharging.

"Minor"

Means an individual less than 18 years of age.

"Serious impairment of a body function"

Means that term as defined in section 58c of the Michigan vehicle code, 1949 PA 300, MCL 257.58c.

What are the penalties under Michigan's safe storage law?

A criminal penalty under this law may be imposed in addition to any penalty that may be imposed for any other criminal offense arising from the same conduct.

You are guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than $500, or both, if you fail to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and both of the following occur:

- A minor obtains the firearm, and
- The minor (a) possesses or exhibits the firearm in a public place or (b) possesses or exhibits the firearm in the presence of another person in a careless, reckless, or threatening manner.

You are guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than five years or a fine of not more than $5,000 or both, if you fail to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and, as a result, a minor obtains the firearm, discharges it and inflicts injury upon the minor or any other individual.

You are guilty of a felony punishable by not more than 10 years or a fine of not more than $7,500, or both, if you fail to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and, as a result, a minor obtains the firearm, discharges it and inflicts serious impairment of a body function upon the minor or any other individual.

You are guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 15 years or a fine of not more than $10,000, or both, if you fail to store or leave a firearm in the required manner and, as a result, a minor obtains the firearm, discharges it and inflicts death upon the minor or any other individual.

Penalties will not be imposed under Michigan's safe storage law in the following circumstances:

If the minor:

1. Obtains a firearm with the permission of the minor's parent or guardian,
2. Uses or possesses the firearm while under the supervision of the minor's parent, guardian, or any individual who is 18 years of age or older and who is authorized by the minor's parent or guardian, and
3. Uses or possesses the firearm during (a) the minor's employment, (b) ranching or farming, or (c) target practice or instruction in the safe use of a firearm.

If the minor obtains a firearm with the permission of the minor's parent or guardian, and uses the firearm for the purposes of hunting and the minor is in compliance with all applicable hunting laws.

If the minor obtains a firearm through the minor's unlawful entry of any premises or a motor vehicle where the firearm has been stored.

If the minor obtains a firearm while lawfully acting in self-defense or defense of another.