

Locked Firearm Storage & Child Access Prevention (CAP) Laws



WHAT IS LOCKED FIREARM STORAGE?

- Locked storage of firearms describes practices that are used to ensure that firearms are inaccessible to and safe from misuse by unauthorized users, including minors.
- This may include locking the firearm in a secure location, such as a safe, keeping it unloaded, and/or with a trigger or cable lock. (1)
- Only 46% of American firearm owners report that they store their firearms safely and securely. (1)

WHY IS LOCKED FIREARM STORAGE IMPORTANT?

- Locked firearm storage may decrease risks for unintentional firearm injury, suicide, carriage of a firearm to school by youth, and school/mass shootings.
- Since 2020, there have been several recorded instances of children gaining access to firearms within their home and injuring themselves, their siblings, their parents, and even bringing the firearm to public spaces like schools and parks. (2)

WHAT ARE CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION (CAP) LAWS?

- Child Access Prevention Laws, also known as CAP Laws, work to ensure children do not have access to firearms within their homes.
- CAP Laws require firearm owners to safely store their firearms locked and away from children, with the age below which firearms must be stored safely varying by state. (3)
- There is no federal CAP law; instead there is a patchwork of CAP laws across states as each state decides if and how they want to implement a CAP Law.
- CAP Laws have only been implemented in 24 states. Among these 24 states, each one differs in what its CAP Law requires and covers, some offering no definition of "minors" or "children" who cannot have access to the firearms.

WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE BASE?

- CAP laws are associated with reductions in unintentional firearm deaths of those under age 15. (4, 5)
- CAP laws are associated with reductions in firearm suicide for youth. (4, 5)
- CAP laws are associated with reductions in firearm homicides for youth. (4)
- CAP laws that hold firearm owners liable for unsafe storage practices are associated with greater reductions in child firearm fatality than are those CAP laws that only hold firearm owners liable for directly providing firearms to children. (4)



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