

# Safety In The Home

## The Time Is Now To End Family Fire

by Joseph V. Sakran, MD, MPH, MPA

(NAPSA)—Many Americans would agree that it's past time we change the discussion around guns, gun safety and gun violence. As a trauma surgeon and victim of gun violence, I actively discuss and participate in gun safety conversations with my patients and their families every day. You, too, can become part of the conversation. While there are numerous issues one could focus on, let me describe one that each and every one of us can help play an active role in changing today: safe storage.

There are currently over 4.6 million homes with children where guns are sitting around unlocked and loaded. Every day, senseless, unintentional injuries and deaths are a direct result of unsecured guns in the home. These injuries and deaths, known as Family Fire, have harmed thousands of American children. This isn't a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It's an American issue that each individual, every home and every gun owner has the ability to change for the better. Fortunately, responsible gun owners will tell you that safe storage prevents injuries and deaths.

As the public becomes more aware of proper gun safety storage, it will increase the ability of communities to disseminate information that will make homes safer for everyone.

Gun violence is an enormous issue in America and it takes place in different forms: from suicides to deadly mass shootings at schools to young children unintentionally killing a sibling. Guns are often mistaken for toys. Adolescents should not live in homes with unsecured deadly weapons.

If you're a gun owner or have friends and family with guns in their homes, please educate yourself and adopt gun safety practices. These simple procedures can save nearly 3,000 kids a year from getting injured or killed. If you have a gun, protect your family by storing it safely. The safest way to store a gun



**To protect your loved ones from "Family Fire," doctors advise, keep any guns unloaded and securely locked up.**

in your home is unloaded and securely locked, with the ammunition locked in a separate safe. This can prevent tragic Family Fire incidents.

The American public has the ability to end Family Fire, which is as large a health and public safety issue as the opioid epidemic, drunk driving and tobacco addiction. A few things my colleagues and I always remind patients of to help prevent Family Fire situations include:

- Guns should be unloaded when not in use and locked up in a gun safe or lock box.
- Ensure the combinations or keys to your gun safe or case are secure.
- Always store ammunition away from firearms.
- Teach your kids that firearms are not toys and educate family and friends on proper gun safety.
- Continue the conversation with your children's friends and all your loved ones.

As Americans, we have both the possibility and the responsibility to raise awareness and take action around gun violence and safe gun storage. The opportunity to make a difference is significant and the time is now.

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