

Firearms and Suicide

Key Facts and Statistics

Guns are and have always been a part of American history and culture. Nobody wants firearms to be misused in suicides. Providing public education on safe use and storage of firearms, raising awareness of the warning signs of suicide, and increasing utilization of gun safes and other devices are crucial first steps to reducing suicide in Washington.



79% of all firearm deaths in Washington State are suicides.

Washington State Department of Health. "Fatal Injuries Statistics, 2013." <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/689152.pdf>.

More people die of suicide by firearm than by all other means **combined**.

U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injury, 2011." <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/suicide.htm>.

85% of firearm suicide attempts end in death--the most lethal of any method.

U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Surveillance for Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries." <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5307a1.htm#tab7>.

Other methods of suicide allow more time for a person to be **rescued** or to **change their mind** and decide to call for help.

People thinking about suicide have long suffered deep psychological pain, but the decision to act can be extremely impulsive: research shows that **1 in 2** suicide attempt survivors deliberated for less than **20 minutes** before attempting.

Simon et al. "Characteristics of Impulsive Suicide Attempts and Attempters." *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, Volume 32: 2001.

Therefore, if we make it **more difficult** for suicidal individuals to **access firearms** when they are at-risk, even if they choose another method (and some don't), their chances of survival will be drastically improved.

9 out of 10 survivors of a suicide attempt will not go on to die by suicide.

Harvard School of Public Health. "Means Matter: Suicide, Guns, and Public Health." <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>.

Suicide is preventable. Suicidal individuals want to end pain and suffering, not their lives.

What can you do to help?

L Look for warning signs.

E Empathize and listen.

A Ask directly about suicide.

R Restrict access to lethal means, such as firearms.

N Next level of care. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.