Secure Storage in Illinois

Under a new law that will take effect January 1, 2026, gun owners in Illinois will be required to store guns securely to prevent unauthorized access by children and teens.

To comply with this new law, gun owners will be required to securely store their firearms in any location where a child under 18, an individual prohibited from gun possession, or an individual at risk for suicide or causing harm to others is likely to gain access to them.

Secure firearm storage means securing the firearm **in a locked container that renders the firearm inaccessible or unusable** to anyone other than the owner or an authorized user.

This secure storage requirement applies to any location where a gun owner stores or leaves a firearm, including in a vehicle.

Gun owners may be subject to civil penalties if they fail to follow these requirements. More serious penalties may result if a child under 18, a prohibited individual, or an at-risk individual gains access to an improperly secured firearm and causes injury or death.

**There is a limited exception to these requirements when a gun owner is carrying the firearm or if the firearm is used for self defense.*

Keeping Your Homes and Vehicles Safe with Secure Storage

If you've made the decision to bring a gun into your home, it's important to know how responsible gun owners work to keep their families safe by mitigating the inherent risks associated with firearm ownership. Every responsible gun owner securely stores their guns so that they are inaccessible to children and other people who are at risk of harming themselves or others. Here's why:

- **More than 700 children die by gun suicide each year**, most often using guns belonging to a family member.
- **Nearly 360 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves** or someone else each year.
- At least **one-third of youth gun suicides and unintentional deaths could be prevented** with increased secure storage.
- **More than 200,000** guns are stolen from individuals every year—a significant portion of those are stolen from cars.

Safety is always an adult responsibility. Kids will be kids, so it's always an adult's responsibility to keep children safe. Always assume that curious or impulsive kids may find and touch an unsecured gun, even if they've been told not to. If a child handles a gun, a bad decision can quickly become a fatal one. Be SMART adults protect kids by making sure all guns are stored securely, which means they are inaccessible to kids, and by making sure children are never in the presence of unsecured guns.

The information provided here is not legal advice and should not be understood as such. Consult with an attorney if you have questions about how this law applies to your specific circumstances.

Learn more at BeSMARTforKids.org

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