Secure Storage in Maine

Gun owners in Maine must store guns securely to prevent unauthorized access by children and teens.

Gun owners in Maine may be subject to criminal penalties if a child under age 16 gains access to a negligently stored loaded firearm and uses it in a reckless or threatening manner or in the commission of a crime, or discharges the firearm in the following circumstances:

- They failed to store the firearm in a locked box, locked gun safe, or other secure locked space,
- They failed to store the firearm in a secure location, or
- They failed to secure the firearm with a trigger lock or other device that prevents the firearm from discharging.

Exceptions may apply if the gun owner has no reasonable expectation that a child is likely to be present on the premises where the loaded firearm is stored or if the firearm is being carried or close enough to be readily retrieved as if being carried.

To avoid potential criminal liability under state law, gun owners should store loaded firearms in a securely locked box, safe, or other securely locked space, in a secure location, or secured with a trigger lock or other device that prevents it from being discharged to prevent children from gaining unauthorized access to them.

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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