Secure Storage in California

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

To comply with this new law, all gun owners must securely store all firearms in their residence whenever the firearm is not being carried or readily controlled by the owner or a lawful authorized user.

Secure storage means securing the firearm with any firearm safety device or gun safe that is listed on the Department of Justice's roster of tested and approved firearm safety devices. The roster may be found at https://oag.ca.gov/firearms/fsdcertlist.

In addition, if a gun owner is leaving a handgun in an **unattended vehicle**, they are required to secure the handgun in one of the following ways:

- Lock the handgun in the trunk,
- Lock the handgun in a locked container** that is placed out of plain view or is permanently affixed to the vehicle's interior and not in plain view, or
- Lock the handgun in a locked toolbox or utility box (meaning a fully enclosed container that is permanently affixed to the bed of a pickup truck or vehicle that does not contain a trunk).

Gun owners may be subject to criminal penalties if they fail to follow these requirements. More serious penalties may result if a gun owner keeps a firearm in any premises they control where they reasonably should know that a child is likely to gain access to the firearm and a child gains access to their firearm and causes injury with the firearm or carries it off of the premises.

* Some cities and counties in California have enacted local ordinances that impose additional secure firearm storage requirements.
** A vehicle's utility or glove compartment does not constitute a locked container for purposes of this storage requirement.

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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