



the key

*Unlocking
Solutions
To Everyday
Problems*



**Special
Edition**

Safety and Security Awareness Week

In keeping with Safety and Security Awareness Week, St. Luke's Employee Assistance Program would like to re-release the newsletter on gun safety.

Whether it is, duck, grouse or white tail deer hunting, fall is an exciting time for many hunters. It is also a perfect time to remind not only hunters, but all firearm owners to take time to exercise safe storage and theft protection.

*A couple minutes
of prevention saves
a lifetime of regrets.*

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Stop Gun Injuries & Death

Today's youth-one way or another-are getting their hands on firearms. As a result, more kids are dying of murder, suicide, and unintentional shootings.

We should remember the school shootings that have shocked the United States have not occurred in inner cities. They occurred in the small and mid-sized communities of Moses Lake, Washington; Pear, Mississippi; West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; and Conyers, Georgia.

All the schools shootings were committed by troubled, white males. The firearms they used were not bought on the streets. With the exception of Littleton, Colorado, where the two gunmen got the firearms from an older friend, all the youth took the firearms from their own home, their neighbor's home or their grandfather's home.

The 1998 Minnesota Student Survey data showed that six percent of 12th grade males carried a gun on school property during the past month. Where are these youth getting the guns? From home?

If we believe youth can be impulsive, do not think about the consequences of their actions, and kids will be kinds-then we must be adults. We must take responsibility for the way we store our firearms and ammunition in our homes. Forty-eight percent of Minnesotans have a firearm in their home (Minnesota Planning, December 1996). How many are secured from curious children and troubled youth?

Safe storage does not mean placing your loaded handgun on the closet shelf "out of reach". Nor is firearm safety training a substitute for a safe storage. Safe storage takes only five minutes and can be accomplished in three steps:

- 1) Unload the firearm when not in use. This is the first rule of gun safety and is taught by the National Rifle Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation;
- 2) Store the firearm and ammunition separately;
- 3) Lock the firearm. Use a quality trigger lock, cable lock, gun safe, or lock box.

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Parents, relatives, and neighbors should also consider removing firearms from the home if the youth is at risk for hurting him/herself, involved with drugs, depressed, or unsupervised in the late afternoon.

By eliminating unsupervised youth access to firearms, we are protecting our schools, our communities, and our children from injuries, suicide, and death.

***“It is unlawful to store or leave a loaded firearm where a child under the age of 18 can gain access.”
-MN Statute 609.666***

Safe Storage = Theft Prevention

Two greatest benefits of quality gun locks are:

- 1) Preventing theft.
- 2) Preventing the unintentional discharge of a firearm in the hands of a careless adult or curious child.

Gun locks come in a variety of styles:

- **Minimum** security lock makes a gun childproof.
- **Medium** security lock childproofs a gun and makes it harder to steal.
- **Maximum** security lock makes the gun inaccessible to children, careless adults and thieves. Some gun locks can be secured to a solid object (like a bicycle to a tree).

Gun locks are available from most sporting goods stores for about \$10.

Number of Kids Killed Last Year by Unloaded and Locked Guns: 0.

For more information visit: www.miph.org/guns