

Firearm Safety Fact Sheet

Between 1991 and 2011, Sonoma County lost *58 children and teens* to firearm homicides, suicides and accidents.¹ To help decrease the number of children and teen deaths caused by firearms and to keep all our children safe, parents and gun owners are encouraged to follow these simple recommendations.

- ▶ **Store Firearms Safely.** Always store firearms in a locked container or lock the firearm with a locking device to temporarily keep it from functioning. Ammunition should be stored in a location separate from the firearm. Firearm locking devices can be obtained through most local police departments.
- ▶ **Know the Legal Risks.** Under California law, you may be guilty of a misdemeanor or a felony if you keep a loaded firearm within any premises under your custody or control and a minor uses it, resulting in injury or death to another person, or carries it to a public place, unless you have properly stored the firearm.
- ▶ **Talk to Children about Firearms.** Children are naturally curious about things they don't know about or think are "forbidden." Parents and gun owners are encouraged to talk to children about gun safety, including the following rules:
 - *Stop.* If children find or see a firearm, they need to stop what they are doing.
 - *Don't Touch!* A child should never touch a firearm that he/she finds or sees.
 - *Leave the Area.* The child should leave the area immediately, even if the child is trying to stop someone else from using the firearm.
 - *Tell an Adult.* The child should immediately tell an adult about the firearm that he/she has seen.
- ▶ **Supervise Use of Imitation Firearms.** Imitation firearms, including non-powder and ball-bearing guns, should only be used under the supervision of an adult and should always be stored and carried in a carrying case. Imitation firearms can cause serious injury and death and children should be educated about the dangers of these firearms. Modifications to imitation firearms, such as the removal of the orange tip from the firearm, are strongly discouraged as such modifications can often make the imitation firearm appear real.
- ▶ **Be a Good Role Model.** Actions speak louder than words and children learn most by observing the adults around them. Parents and gun owners need to set a good example by practicing safe gun handling around children.
- ▶ **Educate Yourself.** Take the time to educate yourself about guns and gun safety. To assist you, here are a few great resources:
 - *Tips for Gun Owners* | oag.ca.gov/firearms/tips
 - *A Dozen Things Parents Can Do To Stop School Violence*
www.ncpc.org/resources/files/pdf/school-safety/12parents.pdf
 - *Gun Safety Tips for Parents* | kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/gun_safety.html