FIREFARM DEATHS IN COLORADO: CONCERNS, PERCEPTIONS, & REALITY 2023

WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF DEATH INVOLVING FIREARMS IN COLORADO?

PERCEPTION VS REALITY

Most Colorado adults (18+) believe **homicide** is the most common cause of death involving firearms in our state...

**BELIEFS AMONG COLORADO ADULTS**

- 24% Homicide
- 33% Suicide
- 26% Don't know
- 17% Accidental shooting

...however, the majority of firearm-involved deaths in Colorado are **suicides**.

**FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO BY INTENT (2017-2021, N=4221)**

- 75% Suicide
- 20% Homicide
- 2% Police-involved shooting
- 1% Accidental shooting
- 1% Other
- 1% Mass/school shooting

CONCERNS

Colorado adults are concerned about a variety of violent events occurring. **The event of highest concern is a school shooting.**

**PERCENTAGE OF COLORADO ADULTS CONCERNED ABOUT VIOLENT EVENTS HAPPENING:**

- To themselves or their families?
- In their local communities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Type</th>
<th>Concerned to themselves</th>
<th>Concerned in their local communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homicide (adult)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homicide (youth)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide (adult)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide (youth)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass shootings</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School shootings</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police-involved shootings</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental shooting (adult)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental shooting (youth)</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang violence</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner violence</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Quick Facts

- In Colorado, the most common cause of death involving a firearm is suicide, which accounted for 75% of all firearm-involved fatalities between 2017-2021.

- Between 2017-2021, only 1% of the firearm-related deaths in Colorado were due to a mass shooting or school shooting event. These events are statistically rare and occur far less often compared to other firearm-involved deaths.

- These large-scale events not only directly impact individuals injured or killed but also indirectly impact families, friends, communities, and society as a whole. This indirect, often psychological impact, can be heightened by media coverage, which can make the likelihood of these events happening seem higher than statistics suggest.

PERCEPTION vs REALITY

DOES ACCESS TO A FIREARM INCREASE THE RISK OF INJURY AND DEATH INVOLVING A FIREARM?

- **Yes**: 58%
- **No**: 42%

The risk is increased due to the high lethality of firearms. Situations involving unauthorized access, substance misuse, heated arguments, or mental health crises can quickly become fatal if a firearm is accessible.¹ ²³

DOES SECURELY STORING FIREARMS REDUCE THE RISK OF FIREARM INJURY AND DEATH?

- **Yes**: 88%
- **No**: 12%

Studies among children and adults consistently show a lower risk of firearm injuries and deaths in homes that practice secure storage compared to those with firearms stored unlocked and/or loaded.⁴⁻⁸

IF SOMEONE IS IN CRISIS, DOES TEMPORARILY REMOVING FIREARMS FROM THE HOME DECREASE THE RISK OF FIREARM INJURY OR DEATH?

- **Yes**: 71%
- **No**: 29%

Temporarily storing a firearm out of the home provides an additional degree of separation between someone in crisis and a highly lethal method of unintentional and intentional injuries.⁹⁻¹⁰

The Colorado Firearm Injury Prevention Survey (COFIPS) is a periodic anonymous, online survey that provides state-representative data on a variety of topics related to the impact and prevention of firearm-involved injury and death in Colorado.

COFIPS is conducted by the Firearm Injury Prevention Initiative at the University of Colorado School of Medicine and the Injury & Violence Prevention Center at the Colorado School of Public Health with funding from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

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Content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of the University of Colorado nor the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Office of Gun Violence Prevention.