



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yolo DA Encourages Gun Safety and Secure Storage of Firearms During COVID-19

(Woodland, CA) - (May 8, 2020) – (Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office would like to remind you during this current COVID-19 pandemic that it is the law and your responsibility to lock and secure your firearms. Kids are out of school and spending more time at home. The boredom and isolation they may be feeling pose additional risks to their safety. Securing all firearms in the home by storing them locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition can save your child’s life.

It’s clear that, in this uncertain and unprecedented time, many are purchasing firearms. Even as stay-at-home orders have devastated many businesses, retailers of guns and ammunition are reporting massive spikes in sales. Many stores are reporting that first-time gun owners account for a significant part of those surging sales.

If you’ve made the decision to own a gun and have it in your home, it’s important to know how responsible gun owners work to keep their families safe by reducing the risks associated with firearm ownership. Responsible gun owners securely store their guns so that they are inaccessible to children and other people who are at risk of harming themselves or others. Remember that every person who purchases a firearm in the state of California signs an agreement that they will use the issued gunlock and/or properly secure the firearm in a gun safe when they take the home. The proper storage of your personal firearm is the law in the State of California. California Penal Code 25100 discusses the conditions for a person to be charged with unlawfully storing of a firearm (<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/penal-code/pen-sect-25100.html>). California Penal Code 25105 discusses the exceptions to criminal storage of a firearm (<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/penal-code/pen-sect-25105.html>). The definition of a locking device according to California Penal Code 16860 means a device that is designed to prevent a firearm from functioning and, when applied to the firearm, renders the firearm inoperable.

It’s safe to assume that children and teens can find guns in your home. Not doing so brings great risk to your child’s safety. 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. 4.6 million American children live in homes with guns that are both loaded and unlocked. Every year, more than 600 children, 17 and under, die by suicide with a gun. 41% of adolescents in gun-owning households report having “easy access” to the guns in their homes. Nearly 350 children unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else each year. Also, in incidents of gunfire on school grounds, 78% of shooters under 18 obtained the guns from their home or the homes of relatives or friends. These incidents can be prevented with secure storage of your firearms.

It’s important to know that secure storage devices won’t stand in the way of getting to your gun quickly if you need it. There are plenty of affordable storage options – from lockboxes, to gun safes, to devices with biometric authentication (such as recognition of fingerprint and palm print) – that allow you access to guns in a matter of seconds while still preventing access by children and other unauthorized people.

Proper gun safety training on how to use your firearm and properly secure it are available online during COVID-19. Also, according to the recent, updated health order issued by Yolo County, there are relaxed restrictions on shooting ranges, so you can go to these locations for training and practice now to learn gun safety and storage in person.

For more information on gun safety and properly securing firearms in the house visit besmartforkids.org. SMART stands for: Secure all guns in your home and vehicles; Model responsible behavior around guns; Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes; Recognize the role of guns in suicide; and Tell your peers to be SMART. Also, you can call the Yolo County District Attorney’s Office at 530-666-8180 for information on gun safety and securing firearms in your home.

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