

GUN SAFETY

Understanding the Impact

Gun violence is a significant public health concern in North Carolina. In 2022, firearms became the leading cause of injury-related deaths among children and teens aged 1–17 in the state. On average, one person is killed by a firearm every five hours in North Carolina, with gun violence costing residents over \$20 billion annually.

Gunshot wounds are among the most common injuries treated. Recognizing the critical need for immediate response, we offer “Stop the Bleed” training to empower community members to control life-threatening bleeding before professional help arrives.

**For more information or to enroll in
a “Stop the Bleed” course, please
contact:**

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Safe Storage Practices

- **Secure Storage:** Always store firearms unloaded and locked away, with ammunition stored separately.
- **Use of Safety Devices:** Employ gun safes, lockboxes, or trigger locks to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Community Resources:** Cumberland County’s Firearm Safety Team will provide free gun locks and safety education.



Educating Families and Children

Teach Children: Instruct them never to touch firearms and to inform an adult if they encounter one.

Model Behavior: Demonstrate responsible gun handling and storage.

Community Initiatives: Programs like Be SMART (<https://besmartforkids.org/>) offer guidelines for discussing gun safety with children and other families.

Addressing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Firearms are involved in over half of all suicides in North Carolina. Safe storage can be a critical factor in preventing such tragedies:

Talk openly with family members, especially children, about gun safety.

If someone in your home is experiencing depression, emotional distress, or a mental health crisis, consider temporarily removing firearms from the home. More information available [here](https://afsp.org/understanding-firearms-and-suicide-prevention/) (<https://afsp.org/understanding-firearms-and-suicide-prevention/>).

Encourage friends and relatives to safely store or secure any firearms in their homes when children are visiting.