

Veterans Crisis Line Gun Safety Video Talking Points Feb. 3, 2014

About the Video

- **What:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) suicide prevention program office has developed an outreach video to emphasize the importance of taking precautions at home when a firearm is present.
- **How it will be used:** The video will primarily be used by VA Suicide Prevention Coordinators (SPCs) in their community outreach and education efforts.
- **The main message:** Simple actions can help individuals and families stay safe, especially during emotional or stressful times, or when someone in the home is in crisis. This video encourages Veterans, Service Members, and their families to make sure guns and ammunition are safely secured in their home, particularly when someone is experiencing a period of depression or crisis.
- **Experts consulted:** Content and messaging for this video was developed with assistance from subject matter experts at the [Harvard Injury Control Research Center](#) and the [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#). Veterans of various ages, service eras, demographics, and geographies also contributed.
- **Where:** The video is available on the Veterans Health Administration YouTube page, at <http://youtu.be/-fGHTvTsApg>. You can also talk with a SPC at your local VA Medical Center who can share the video file with you.

About Firearms, Safety, and Deaths

- **Gun deaths:** Firearms were one of the top five leading causes of injury-related deaths nationwide in 2010.¹
- **Veterans and guns:** Data collected between 2003 and 2006 show that Veterans use firearms more frequently than the general population in acts of suicide. Male and female Veterans are, respectively, 1.3 and 1.6 times more likely to use firearms compared with non-Veterans.²
- **Guns in homes:** Research conducted in 2012 showed that firearms could be found in roughly 34 percent of homes nationwide.³

¹ National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Leading Causes of Death Reports, National and Regional, 1999-2010*, at http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10_us.html (last updated Feb. 19, 2013).

² Kaplan M.S., McFarland B.H., Huguet N. *Firearm suicide among veterans in the general population: Findings from the national violent death reporting system*. *J. Trauma*. 2009;67:503-507 at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19741391>.

³ General Social Survey, 2012 <http://www3.norc.berkeley.edu/GSS+Website>.



- **Lessening the risk:** There is an 80 percent reduced risk of unintentional firearm deaths among youths when guns and ammunition are stored separately in a lockbox.⁴

If you have any questions, please contact Brian Radford at brian.radford@va.gov or at 202-461-4164.

For more information, please visit:

Veterans Crisis Line: VeteransCrisisLine.net

VA suicide prevention program office: [MentalHealth.va.gov/Suicide Prevention](http://MentalHealth.va.gov/Suicide_Prevention)

⁴ Grossman, et al. 2005. Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries. JAMA. Vol 293: 707-741

