

Hosting a Stand-Alone Event on Safe Firearm Storage

NC S.A.F.E.



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NC S.A.F.E.
Secure All Firearms Effectively

Toolkit Instructions: Hosting a Stand-Alone Event on Safe Firearm Storage

Thank you for partnering with NC S.A.F.E. to share the message of safe firearm storage with your community. By hosting an event on safe firearm storage, you are playing a significant role in establishing safer communities across North Carolina. We appreciate your efforts to engage your community and galvanize community leaders to work together on this important topic.

This toolkit is designed to help you plan and execute an event on safe firearm storage. We've included:

- Ideas on types of events to host.
- Recommendations on what to consider in your planning efforts.
- A list of handouts and resources to distribute at the event.
- Ways to promote your event to the public.
- A link to a partner media toolkit to help you promote your event to local media.
- Talking points to guide conversations at the event.
- Links to PowerPoint presentations of varying lengths (useful if you have the opportunity to give a presentation at the event).

Event Preparation

What are some ideas for types of events I can host?

First, choose a convenient location that will entice members of the community to come out for an exciting event. If your ideal event involves children, be sure the space has something for them to engage with (e.g., a fun activity, a playground, or open space for play). Ideas for types of events include:

- Block parties.
- Picnics or gatherings at public parks.
- Community safety fairs or town halls.
- Gun safety workshops and training sessions.
- Fundraisers for relevant organizations.
- Events with law enforcement (e.g., “Touch a Truck”).
- Breakout events at conferences or meetings.

What elements should I consider during the planning process?

- **Date and Time:** Consider when people in your community might be most available to attend your event. For families, weekend mornings can be a good option. For adults, evening events may be more suitable. Consider other events that may be happening at the same time, such as sporting events, festivals, holidays, or other community activities or gatherings. Instead of hosting your own event, you might be able to maximize attendance by tying your event into an existing one.
- **Activities for Attendees:** Think about what audience members will do during the event. Activities like obstacle courses, face painting, or tours of law enforcement vehicles can be a way to draw in families. Hosting an event near a playground could also provide built-in entertainment for children. For adults, activities like raffles, opportunities for them to engage with one another, or games can be effective as well.
- **Food and Beverage:** Depending on the time of day and your audience, consider what types of food and drink you could offer at the event. Especially in the summer, cold water or popsicles can be a refreshing option. If you don't want to or can't provide food as part of the event, consider inviting food trucks to set up nearby.

- **Entertainment:** Consider featuring local musicians or music groups or inviting a community member to serve as a keynote speaker or lead a panel discussion. A family-friendly movie could also provide great entertainment for a large group.
- **Opportunities To Share Information:** As you plan your event, think about how you will engage audiences with messaging about safe firearm storage. This could be through a brief presentation, an information table at the event entrance, an opening speech before entertainers begin, or a variety of other ways.
- **Permits:** Some venues may require permits, or booking far in advance, so be sure to consider that as part of your planning process. You may also want to check whether liability insurance is required for your event.

What should my organization hand out at the event?

The NC S.A.F.E. website has several campaign flyers that you can download, print, and hand out at your event. These flyers are a great way to share information about safe firearm storage. Visit ncsafe.org/resources to view the flyer options, and see our specific suggestions in the Supporting Materials for the Event section of this toolkit. You can also download the [NC S.A.F.E. logo](#) if you would like to include it on any branded materials purchased by your organization.

Beyond the campaign flyers, other ideas for handouts include:

- Food and beverage options at the event.
- Branded promotional giveaways.
- Gun locks (these may be available through a partner organization or your local law enforcement).
- Fun, simple items for kids, such as bubbles, stickers, or crayons and coloring pages.

Event Promotion

Once you've planned your event, promoting it will be the next step to make sure audiences are aware of the event in advance and can plan accordingly. Below are ideas to promote your event to the public, as well as a media toolkit to promote your organization's involvement to local media.

How should I promote my event to the public?

Ways to promote your event to the public could include:

- Creating an event website or social media event page to share information about the event and enable attendees to express interest and RSVP.
- Designing flyers or mailers and distributing them to the community.
- Securing placements on local event calendars.
- Working with local influencers, news reporters, or bloggers to help spread the word.
- Leveraging social media platforms through organic posts or sponsored ads.
- Including information about the event in local newsletters.
- Engaging partner organizations in your community to help spread the word to their audiences.

How should I promote my event to the media?

NC S.A.F.E. offers a [partner media toolkit](#) that you can use to promote your event to the media. This toolkit is designed to help your group gain media coverage of your involvement with the NC S.A.F.E. campaign by providing media talking points, ideas for op-eds, media pitching best practices, a sample email pitch to reporters, an event media advisory template, and an event news release template. Your organization can customize these templates and send them to local media. You can also identify spokespeople within your organization to speak about your involvement in the campaign; encourage them to use the talking points to help them prepare for these conversations.

Supporting Materials for the Event

Depending on the format of your event, the following materials may be helpful to use during your event.

What talking points should I use when speaking with audiences about safe firearm storage?

Review the following talking points before your event – and have any volunteers or staff working with you do the same – to better understand the topic of safe firearm storage and how to communicate with audiences across North Carolina. Familiarity with these talking points will help you speak confidently with audiences and answer any questions they may have.

Talking Point 1: There is an urgent need for gun owners in North Carolina to secure their firearms effectively.

- Too many guns are falling into the wrong hands. Children are gaining access to firearms in their homes, and gun theft – especially from cars – is on the rise throughout North Carolina.
- Firearms are now the leading cause of injury-related death for children and youth in North Carolina.¹
- Child deaths in North Carolina due to firearm injury skyrocketed in 2020 and 2021. The 2021 rate represents an increase of 231% since 2012.²
 - From 2012 to 2021, over 600 children died from firearm-related injuries.³
 - In 2021, firearms were the lethal means used in most youth suicides and homicides.⁴

1. <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/public-health-approaches-reduce-violence-and-firearm-misuse-leading-injury-and-death/open>
2. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/74156> (Page 16)
3. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/74156> (Page 16)
4. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/75628> (Page 16)

- In data obtained from the Durham Police Department, there were 331 gun thefts in the city from January 1 to November 26, 2022. In 56% of those cases, guns were stolen from cars. And in 62% of gun thefts from cars, the car was unlocked, meaning these are easily preventable crimes.⁵

Talking Point 2: There are many ways to effectively secure your firearms.

- Options to secure your firearm include cable locks, trigger locks, gun safes, lockboxes, and gun cases. Visit ncsafe.org to download a flyer that describes the various firearm storage options.
- Different types of locks provide different benefits. Whether you value low cost, mobility, or ease of use, there is a locking mechanism that's right for you.
- NC S.A.F.E. offers a checklist to guide you through the necessary steps so you can effectively secure your firearms.
- After finding the best lock option for your firearm, review the following tips:
 - If your lock uses a combination or code, choose one that can't be easily guessed by children or unauthorized users.
 - If your lock requires a key, make sure you hide the key someplace it can't easily be found.
 - Lock your firearm regardless of whether it's in your home or in your vehicle.
 - Consider storing ammunition separately.
- Many organizations agree on what constitutes safe storage. Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund (undated), the American Academy of Pediatrics (Schaechter, 2021), the National Shooting Sports Foundation (as part of its Project ChildSafe program) (NSSF, 2016), and the U.S. Concealed Carry Association (Alcazar, 2021) recommend that firearms be stored locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition, which should also be stored locked.⁶
- There are other ways to safely secure unwanted firearms. To find a location near you where you can temporarily store your unwanted firearms, consult the map at ncsafe.org/safestorage.

5. <https://www.wral.com/stolen-guns-from-cars-put-further-strain-on-durham-police/20653198/>

6. <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/personal-firearm-storage.html>

Talking Point 3: Safe firearm storage practices can help prevent unauthorized access to firearms.

- Unsafe storage is very common among gun owners in North Carolina.
 - According to a 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, 42% of North Carolina adults have a firearm in or around the home, and over half of firearms that are stored loaded are also unlocked.⁷
 - According to a 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System survey, nearly 30% of North Carolina high school students reported it would take them less than an hour to get, and be ready to fire, a loaded gun without a parent or other adult's permission; for white males, it was 40%.⁸
- Safe storage can prevent suicide and school shootings.
 - A 2019 study in JAMA Pediatrics estimated that up to 32% of youth firearm deaths by suicide and unintentional firearm injury could be prevented through safe storage of firearms in homes with youths.⁹
 - An estimated 82% of adolescent firearm suicides involve a gun belonging to a family member.¹⁰
 - Eighty percent of school shooters under 18 access a firearm from their own home or that of a relative or friend.¹¹
- In April 2021, approximately 30 million children lived in households with firearms, 7 million more than in 2015.¹²
- Safe firearm storage is especially important in vehicles, which are hot spots for gun theft.
 - An estimated 250,000 gun theft incidents occur each year, resulting in about 380,000 guns stolen annually.¹³
 - If you keep a firearm in your car, it is important to secure it properly **and** lock your car.

7. <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/brfss/2021/nc/nccr/firearm5.html>

8. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CAHoekiVazRqCL6UC-uofT8uPW_afKan/view (pages 220-221)

9. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2733158>

10. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/health-policy-and-management/research-and-practice/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/solutions/safe-and-secure-gun-storage>

11. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/health-policy-and-management/research-and-practice/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/solutions/safe-and-secure-gun-storage>

12. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2789269>

13. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/departments/health-policy-and-management/research-and-practice/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/solutions/safe-and-secure-gun-storage>

What leave-behind resources can I use at the event?

Distributing resources is a great way to ensure the event message has an impact and continues to spread after the event. We recommend leaving behind the following materials for participants to take with them:

- Your business card or another item with your contact information.
- [NC S.A.F.E. safe storage options flyer](#).
- [NC S.A.F.E. safe storage checklist](#).
- [NC S.A.F.E. parent flyer](#).

Further, make sure participants have the NC S.A.F.E. website URL (ncsafe.org) and social media channels (@NC_SAFE on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube; @NorthCarolinaSAFE on Facebook). Explore additional resources that may be relevant to your audiences at ncsafe.org/resources.

What materials can I use if I want to host a presentation as part of my event?

The following PowerPoint files are designed for two different presentation lengths – brief (10 minutes or less) and full-length (15 minutes or more). You can download and customize these files to use during your presentation in case it needs to be slightly shorter or longer than the times provided. These can be saved as a PowerPoint file or PDF, depending on your presentation needs. If you are unsure about the technology available where you are planning to present, we recommend printing out the slides for attendees so they can follow along.

- [Brief presentation](#) (10 minutes or less)
- [Full-length presentation](#) (15 minutes or more)

The notes section in the PowerPoint files includes high-level talking points you can use to guide your presentation. Add anything else you think is relevant from the more in-depth talking points outlined in this toolkit.

How can I make my in-person presentation successful?

Here are some recommendations for making your presentation a success:

- Arrive at the venue early to set up, test the technology, and greet people as they enter the room.
- Before the event, print all handouts and customize the PowerPoint file for your presentation.

- Consider inviting other trusted figures to join in the presentation. These could include police officers, community leaders, and health care providers.
- Encourage audience participation and leave time to answer questions at the end, if possible.
- Share stories or examples that are relevant in your community to localize the message however possible.
- Leave behind resources for attendees to take with them.

Thank You!

Thank you for volunteering your time to share messages about safe firearm storage with members of your community. As a community host, you are an integral part of the NC S.A.F.E. campaign. By spreading knowledge and advocating for responsible and effective firearm storage, you are helping us take steps toward building safer communities.