Media Toolkit

About NC S.A.F.E.

There is an urgent need for North Carolinians to safely secure their firearms in order to decrease childhood deaths, decrease firearm thefts and increase the safety of homes and communities. [NC S.A.F.E.](http://ncsafe.org/) (Secure All Firearms Effectively) is a statewide initiative — sponsored by the N.C. Department of Public Safety in partnership with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services — designed to raise awareness of the importance of safe firearm storage. Established in 2023, the program provides resources on best practices for firearm storage and safety. NC S.A.F.E. is not associated with any advocacy-based initiatives related to gun laws or regulations.

*A person wearing glasses and a suit

Description automatically generated with medium confidence*Bio

***William L. Lassiter: Deputy Secretary, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, North Carolina Department of Public Safety***

William L. Lassiter, an expert on school safety, is the primary spokesperson for NC S.A.F.E. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper appointed him chair of the N.C. Task Force for Safer Schools in October 2019. Lassiter has been featured on major news networks and in national publications, including CNN, Fox News, BBC, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times.

Media Contact

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Key Facts and Statistics

* Firearms are now the leading cause of injury-related death for children and youth in North Carolina.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* In North Carolina, the rate of child deaths caused by firearm injury rose by 231% from 2012 to 2021.[[2]](#footnote-2)
  + From 2012 to 2021, over 600 children died from firearm-related injuries.
  + In 2021, firearms were used in most youth suicides and homicides.
* On average, 1,470 people a year die by firearms in North Carolina.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* About 3.8 million adults in North Carolina have firearms in their homes.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Nearly 40% of all unintentional shooting deaths among children 11-14 years of age occur in the home of a friend.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Simple steps to properly secure firearms can keep your children and community safe.
* Some parents believe that simply hiding their guns will prevent children from accessing them. However, 75% of children who live in homes with guns know where the guns are stored.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* In data obtained from the Durham Police Department, 331 gun thefts occurred in the city from Jan. 1 to Nov. 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 were easily preventable crimes.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Graphics, Flyers, Videos and Photos for Media Use

* [Safe Storage Options Flyer](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-storage-options.pdf)
* [Safe Storage Checklist](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-safety-checklist.pdf)
* [Flyer for Parents](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-parent-flyer.pdf)
* [Shareable Graphics](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-shareable-social-media.zip)
* [Photo Bank](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-photo-bank.zip)
* [NC S.A.F.E. Logo](https://ncsafe.org/assets/visuals/placeholders/downloadable-materials/nc-safe-logos.zip)

In the News

[**Governor Cooper announces the first statewide Office of Violence Prevention in the South**](https://wlos.com/news/local/governor-cooper-violence-prevention-south-statewide-department-public-safety-violent-crime-gun-injries-death) **(WLOS Asheville)**

Gov. Roy Cooper signed an executive order, creating an Office of Violence Prevention within the Department of Public Safety. He also launched a public education campaign to encourage safe firearm storage.

[**Uptick in juvenile crime is reversible, but NC must act fast | Opinion**](https://www.charlotteobserver.com/opinion/article273126825.html) **(The Charlotte Observer)**

Deputy Secretary William Lassiter pushes for urgent action to reverse an increase in juvenile crime. He advocates for safe gun storage, investing in school resources and improving mental health services.

[**Gun expert: Safe storage is key to avoiding to accidental shootings**](https://www.wral.com/gun-expert-safe-storage-is-key-to-avoiding-to-accidental-shootings/20674948/) **(WRAL Raleigh-Durham)**

After an 8-year-old accidentally shot a 7-year-old relative, a gun expert weighed in on the importance of safe storage in preventing these senseless injuries.

[**What is causing more children to die in North Carolina?**](https://myfox8.com/news/north-carolina/what-is-causing-more-children-to-die-in-north-carolina/) **(WGHP Greensboro)**

The N.C. Child Fatality Task Force released a [report](https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/71090) that showed that firearm death rates for children increased by 120.8% from 2019 to 2021 and by 231.3% from 2012 to 2021. The report’s top recommendation was to launch a statewide education and awareness initiative focused on safe firearm storage.

[**Winston-Salem/Forsyth County students call for secure gun storage education**](https://www.wfdd.org/story/winston-salemforsyth-county-students-call-secure-gun-storage-education) **(WFDD Winston-Salem)**

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County high schoolers advocated for safe gun storage at a board of education meeting. They are part of a group called Students Demand Action, a national organization of young activists fighting gun violence.

1. <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/public-health-approaches-reduce-violence-and-firearm-misuse-leading-injury-and-death/open> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/74156> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [https://everystat.org/?\_gl=1\*45s8e4\*\_ga\*MTM5Nzk0MzM0OS4xNjc1OTU4Nzc1\*\_ga\_LT0FWV3EK3\*MTY](https://everystat.org/?_gl=1*45s8e4*_ga*MTM5Nzk0MzM0OS4xNjc1OTU4Nzc1*_ga_LT0FWV3EK3*MTY) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TL354.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/research/areas-of-research/center-for-injury-research-and-policy/injury-topics/general/gun-safety> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/research/areas-of-research/center-for-injury-research-and-policy/injury-topics/general/gun-safety> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.wral.com/stolen-guns-from-cars-put-further-strain-on-durham-police/20653198/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)